

FESTIVAL OF THE MASTERS

ORLANDO AGENDA

November, 1995

Orlando, Florida

By Banister Pope

Everybody,

I've got an agenda for our Friday night meeting in Orlando. I'm certainly not looking to be the chief, but I used to run a pretty tight meeting in a previous life. If it's OK with you, I'll lead us through this, so we can leave prepared for Saturday's membership meeting. Let's agree to take care of business first and save any digression for later. Please read over this so you'll kind of know what your thinking is on each topic and what jobs you're willing to do.

Agenda

We've said what it is that we intend to do and we're asking our peers to accept our provisional leadership. The immediate next step is to agree among ourselves who'll accept responsibility for what. So here we go:

Expanding our membership is primary.

There are several ways to tackle this at once.

1. Contact everyone who has volunteered for anything and ask that they shepard the enrollment of a half a dozen artists. This means contacting them, explaining what we're up to and staying after them until they've returned a survey.
2. Ask Greg Lawler to include one more round of the survey in his mailing. Also Larry Harris.
3. Ask Sunshine Artists to publish an announcement of our formation with an address for inquiries.
4. Include the survey in our initial newsletter.

We must get a credible newsletter out soon.

New years seems to be a good target date. To do this will require:

1. Immediate employment of volunteers to assemble and submit information.
2. Gathering information submitted and deciding what to include.
3. Working with Bo Sterk (who has agreed to design the format) to make it all fit.
4. Getting it printed, assembled and mailed.

This will be time-consuming, but there are lots of volunteers and certainly no shortage of ideas on what to include. So who'll do it?

Who'll begin as editor?

Also the Web site. Can we ask Michael Hamilton and Bruce Teschner to do this? They may already have it in place.

Next, we have to decide who'll assemble teams and lead the effort in each of the areas we intend to address. We'll all have to help each other, of course, but when we meet tonight, one person has to stand up and say "I'll be working on this."

Teams

1. Promoting the improvement of existing shows and developing new markets.

This is directly tied to our functioning as a source for show directors. In order to develop a perception of our organization as a desirable (and, in time, an indispensable) asset, we've really got to have a hell of a helpful package to offer them. Here's what I see are necessary components of that package:

1. A "National Standards" guideline to encompass what information should be included in every prospectus, postmark rather than date of receipt, space allotments, security concerns, jurying procedures, judging guidelines, standard categories, slide requirements, etc.
2. A list of artists in show area willing to serve on "advisory boards." (Artists recommended for advisory boards will need to have a grasp of all the information we have to offer.)
3. A list of recommended jurors/judges.
4. A report on the educational impact shows have on communities.
5. Suggestions and "how-to" information for children's activities.
6. List of our membership for mailings.
7. An overwhelmingly rosy synopsis of our member artists achievements that can be used for publicity purposes.
8. Highlights of, and a way to access, the "Charney Plan."
9. For new shows, an overview of pertinent demographics that underscore the potential of that community. This package should be assembled and ready to present prior to our contacting shows. Again, we can all contribute to the development of this and we can all call on volunteers, but someone has to coordinate all this.

Who will it be among us?

This part could be fun. Armed with evidence of our collective purchasing power (i.e. 200 artists use 300,000 gallons of gas, rent 10,000 hotel rooms each year, eat 30,000 meals, buy a million dollars worth of materials every year, imagine what 1,000 artists do and consider that there may be 5,000 of us out there!). We're certainly not out of line in pursuing some perks. This involves figuring out (though understanding costs and pricing dictates) what is reasonable to ask, finding out who to ask, getting to that person and asking. The people who do this might look at it as a great big scavenger hunt! Okay, this needs a coordinator.

Who'll do it?

3. Secure "pro-bono" legal counsel by region.

This one is easy. I'm sure everyone of us could find among our patrons a lawyer or two who would be willing to provide counsel (not representation) to artists. They could advise us, as needed, and maybe write a letter to a "bad check" for individual artists and cleverly write off their own costs. Someone needs to identify and contact these lawyers.

Who'll do it?

4. Establish an annual convention. Explore health care options/ "artist welfare" programs.

These are really long-term considerations. They take some smart research and time.

Who'll develop our thinking in this direction?

5. Provide support for emerging artists.

This is something we should all, and by all I mean the collective membership, do. It's easy. A brief bit in the newsletter could establish the mechanism for doing this. Works like this:

Somebody calls me, or you, and says, "Hey, I saw a new artist. A photographer. Here's their name and address." So I call Ray and Rick and ask them to write an encouraging note expressing their willingness to share information. It's easy and helps the industry.

Who'll do it?

6. Next, we have to have some (smarter) one among us develop a financial plan for the association.

Frankly, I don't know what considerations apply here. I suppose: 1. Figuring out what we need, 2. figuring out how to get it, and 3. keeping track of it (being the treasurer).

Who'll do it?

Initially, I thought we'd have to have a "front man/woman" to be the designated liaison between the association and everyone else. I don't think so anymore. Now I think that if we're all available it will be easier for everyone. As a steering committee, we should all be up on what's happening and be able to refer any question to the one of us dealing with that specific area. Between us, we either know or are known to a great many artists and we can avoid any reluctance that an interested person may have in contacting a total stranger. The more of us that are listed as contacts, the more accessible we are. (We'll include names and our addresses in the newsletter.)

Someone has to get the mail. Can we keep the Alpharetta POB? Will Rick and Lenny redistribute as necessary?

So that we're all kept abreast, can we send seven copies of whatever matters out? Is there a better way? What is it? Okay, so what will the mechanism be?

**Orlando, FL
November, 1995**

**ARTISTS!
SATURDAY, 6PM, LAKEFRONT STAGE**

If you're reading this, it's because as an artist who does outdoor shows you're already part of a casual but amazingly effective information network. Most of what we know about shows and what's happening on the show circuit we learn from other artists. Collectively, we share a huge amount of knowledge and experience, and we share many of the same concerns.

Remarkably, what we haven't established until now is a collective voice. Because of this, we've had very little input into the direction our industry has taken. As artists, we comprise the essential core of the festival phenomena, but it's as if we've been on cruise control. Now, all of a sudden, 75% of us are into our forties and many agree that the time has arrived to make a concerted effort to exert some large and positive influence on the future of our community. Collectively, we can accomplish much.

The National Association of Independent Artists has been formed, having grown from the dialog begun in Chicago in June and carried forward by a group of your peers who've invested the time and energies it has taken to get us to this point. Already, we are more than 100 artists strong and recognizing the need to share the load among us, almost everyone has indicated a willingness to contribute some volunteer time to some aspect of our effort.

To be our most effective, we need to experience a rapid swelling of our membership. Toward that end, there will be a short meeting Saturday night at the Lakefront Stage to introduce the volunteers who have agreed to act as an initial steering committee and lead groups of volunteers in the pursuit of our goals. We'll try to be prepared to answer questions at this meeting, but as everyone would like to keep it short and sweet, here's an overview of what the association hopes to accomplish:

The purpose of the association is to enhance the economic well-being of people who exhibit their work at outdoor and indoor art and/or craft shows, to encourage creative expression and artistic excellence, and to expand public awareness, appreciation and acquisition of American art and fine craft.

We recognize that the full range of what we might accomplish has not occurred to us, but here are some of the things we intend to do:

- Promote the improvement of existing shows and the development of high quality shows in promising new markets.
- Establish a newsletter and Internet Web site to provide membership with information and to serve as a forum for the discussion of our ideas and concerns.
- Seek concessions for our collective membership for the goods and services we use.
- Provide educational information to various media.
- Secure "pro bono" legal counsel by region for membership.
- Explore health care options for membership.
- Establish an annual convention/trade show.
- Serve as a positive, cooperative resource for directors of non-profit shows.
- Provide information and support to emerging artists.

If you have have questions or suggestions, please write them on your survey. Someone will contact you later to discuss them. This way, the meeting stays short!

The newsletter will probably address the specifics of each of the items listed above. The important things to bear in mind when discussing this association among peers, or with others, are these:

1. This isn't a union. We are not out to flex our collective muscle or take anything but a cooperative stance. Our purpose is to work with anyone interested in making our industry better. We have literally thousands of years experience among us and the capacity to find a positive resolution to any problem that arises.
2. This is an association of peers. Every effort made to furthur the goals of the association helps us all. Correspondingly, an opportunity ignored helps no one. We need and welcome the involvement of everyone.

Please plan to join us at the Lakefront Stage at 6 P.M. and please bring your completed survey as we need to collect information for our initial newsletter.
