



ALBURY - WODONGA
ARTISTS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

PAINTBOX STUDIO/GALLERY
GATEWAY ISLAND, LINCOLN CAUSEWAY,
PO BOX 1170,
WODONGA, VICTORIA 3689

www.awartsoc.org
awas@awartsoc.org

NOVEMBER 2017

Dates for your Calendar!

Regular Groups		
Sat 18 th November	Life Drawing 1 – 4pm	Co-ordinator: Olga Juskiw
Meetings		
Wed 15 th November	Committee Meeting 8.30am	Secretary: Kathy Bruce
Workshops		
Portraits: 11 th -12 Nov	Tutor: Catherine Hamilton	Co-ordinator: Elsie Reitenbach
Christmas Get Together Fri: 16th December	At the Plant Farm 5.30 – 7.30pm	

For information contact details of the committee or co-ordinators, refer to the list at the end of this newsletter.

A Word from our President

Welcome to another year in the life of AWAS. I am pleased that we can continue to make a significant contribution to and provide a meeting place for all types of artists and creative people in the local community without prejudice or judgement.

I encourage all members to make a positive contribution to AWAS to ensure our survival into the future.

My sincere thanks to our outgoing President Barb Strand and VP Heather Sparks and Committee for keeping AWAS on a steady course for the last two years. Thank you to the Saturday Workgroup, Workshop and Exhibition co-ordinators for ensuring members had a variety of activities to participate in. Welcome to the new Committee and my sincere gratitude to you for putting your hands up to keep AWAS going.

My main objectives for this year is to lighten the workload of committee members through job sharing within the committee and where possible with AWAS members, encourage more members to take on supporting roles and continue to provide an environment that nurtures person creativity without fear or favour. Growing membership will be a job for all of us. I want to ensure that AWAS continues for another 30 years.

I look forward to meeting as many members as possible throughout the year and getting your ideas and feedback.

Happy creating!!!

Cheers Jen

Membership

A reminder to those who have not paid, your membership is due now.

Membership for 2017/2018 will be \$75.00 and will expire on 30th June 2018. In future membership fees will coincide with the financial year.

So, this time we are only paying for 9 months.

Preferably pay electronically into the AWAS account.

Account name: Albury Wodonga Artist Society

BSB: 063 534

Account Number: 0090 3179

Ref: Mem

OR

Send a cheque to:

The Treasurer

Albury Wodonga Artists Society

P.O. Box 1170

Wodonga.

Victoria 3689

Please notify the Treasurer if you have any change of details – address, email, etc.

From the Treasurer

A request from the Treasurer to all those who have AWAS cheques to bank to please do so as soon as possible.

AWAS New Committee

President: Jen Wallace

Vice President: Barb Strand

Secretary: Kathy Bruce

Treasurer: Tony Smit

Committee Members - Donna Johnstone

- Janelle Hoban

- Tanya Healy

Public Officers: NSW: Noni McClelland VIC: Heather Sparks

Newsletter: Kathy Bruce - Phone: 02 6025 5913 Email: kathleenbruce@bigpond.com

In future send information for the newsletter to your new newsletter editor, Kathy.

Proudly supported by:

Wodonga City Council, Albury City Council, & Wodonga Plant Farm

AWAS 30TH BIRTHDAY: NOVEMBER 1987 TO November 2017

AWAS has been an integral part of the local Albury Wodonga Community for providing an environment that nurtures creativity and interaction for all types of artists for 30 years. It is imperative that we continue to grow and provide this vital community role for another 30 years.

It was wonderful to see so many members turn up for our 30th birthday celebration on Sunday 15 October 2017 at St Ives Restaurant on the causeway. We enjoyed a wonderful luncheon, and we all thank Meg Brown for organising such an enjoyable meal. Having the luncheon prior to the AGM certainly helped to ensure a good roll up for the meeting afterwards.

Due to popular demand, I would like to give a brief history of AWAS (as presented at the luncheon). I would like to thank John Mason for his input, also those members over the years who have been committed to keeping a written history of our Society, particularly Val Boulton. Our archives are rich with photos of members past and present, and happy gatherings over the years.

John Mason, a long-time member of AWAS since 1988, tells me that "in the beginning in 1987 there was a tight knit group of recent graduates from an Arts course, who decided to form this society. Without a home base, they painted, ran workshops outdoors, and courtesy of the Wodonga Turf Club used a room under the grandstand in inclement weather. They held their annual exhibition there, or hired rooms at the then Community Education Centre (CEC). AWAS was active in the community, running the Art section at the Albury and Wodonga shows, and judging the children's' section (usually Lorna Knox)." There was a strong community involvement, and a strong link with the community through friendships and business/working relationships. AWAS members exhibited their work regularly in the exhibitions run by local organisations.

From our records, I can see that AWAS held its inaugural meeting on Wednesday 25 November 1987. Present were Dulcie Maxwell, Gladys Park, Shirley Fitzmaurice, Merle Mason, Ruth Corbett, Phyllis Gadd, Jack and Nance Taylor, Jo Barrell, Pat Colter, Bill Hotson and Margaret Moran. According to John Mason, Gladys Park and Merle Mason, between them, know almost everyone in Wodonga, and Margaret Moran knew who to call in through her contact with the Albury City Council. It was suggested that the aims and objectives of the new society were:

1. To provide encouragement and companionship in our painting activity;
2. To conduct painting excursions to cater for all painters in the group;
3. To provide tuition in the form of workshops and tutorials by members of the group and other invited artists;
4. To provide opportunity for exhibition of works;
5. To encourage a high standard of work from all members;
6. To encourage diversity of medium and expression.

Fees were proposed at \$10 per year. At that first meeting, Margaret Moran was elected president, Joanna Barrell was Secretary, and Gladys Park was treasurer.

During that early history of AWAS, field trips and en plein air painting were the order of the day, with the group of between 12 and 15 people meeting on Wednesdays to paint at locations such as the waterworks, Albury, the hills around Chiltern, 12 Mile Reserve, Howlong, The Swamp at Walla Walla, just to name a few. Some of you may have painted at these locations yourselves. The committee met monthly, and general meetings were held every three months. A Thursday painting group was proposed.

Records show that by May 1988, just a few months, AWAS has swelled its membership to 34 financial members. The aim was to recruit up to about 50 members, in order to "have a successful society". In April 1988, there was \$201.19 on the books.

The society took up residence in the Jenny Craig building in Albury in the early 90's, as best as Val Boulton can recall, when the Albury City Council offered us nominal rent for a room upstairs. Even without running

water, it was seen as an ideal opportunity for AWAS to set up its own studio for members. Unfortunately, this move took its toll, and the en plein air sessions began to tail off, despite valiant efforts by Gordon Osmand to keep them going. The studio became the centre for all our activities. Many of our current members remember this location fondly – a great place to meet and paint together.

An article about AWAS was written for the Australian Artist magazine, and was published in their June 2008 edition. In that article, works were featured by members Kathy Bruce (President), Meg Brown (Vice President), Marilyn Byrnes/Forrest (Secretary), Ruth Gray, Val Boulton, Kathy Blakemore, Yvonne Ellwood, Pieter Mol (committee member), Steve McCall, Bea McGuffie, Cat Jardine, Heather Sparks, Doina Eitler, and Margaret Moran. A copy of the article can be found in our archives.

In that article, Kathy Bruce talked about the importance of members gathering on a two-monthly basis to “*meet and greet*” other members, and to select a work to hang in Cremers art shop window for the next two months, as an advertisement for the society. She described that “the process of selection stimulates evaluative discussion which had a real and positive influence on members’ ability to critique as well as raise the standard of artwork.” Unfortunately, this is one of the many activities that has disappeared over the years – Cremers closed, organisation of the activity became tedious, and interest waned.

In about 2009, AWAS lost its studio in the Jenny Craig building, and was required to seek out a new location. We moved to the Gateway village (our current location) where we were able to set up our new Paintbox Studio and gallery. It was felt at the time that our new studio was our “best yet” with excellent facilities for painting and drawing. There were promises from the joint councils that this would become a busy precinct, with the establishment of a joint Visitor Information Centre, and we believed that we had made a great move to the Causeway. So, history tells a different story – the new freeway was built, bypassing the Gateway Village precinct and the councils closed their joint Visitor Information office. The dreams of a busy arts precinct faded, as visitor numbers began to fall off, business closed on the causeway, and the councils did their best to attract visitors to their town centres – art spaces in both Albury and Wodonga were promoted, but the Gateway Village was left to flounder.

As part of our tenancy agreement for our studio with the Wodonga Council, we contracted to stay open between 10am and 4pm daily Tuesday thru Sunday – a tough commitment to meet as time went by. Thanks to the efforts of Heather Green, who religiously called members to seek their involvement on our roster, we were able to do so for several years. In more recent years, we have negotiated a less rigorous arrangement with Wodonga council, thank goodness.

Up until recent years, AWAS continued to flourish with large and active groups for Life Drawing, Portraits, still life, acrylics, meeting regularly to work together in companionship. Workshops continue to be held in many media on an annual basis, and we have a continuous exhibition at the Wodonga Plant Farm. The work of the AWAS committee has gradually become greater, with the increased number of groups and activities. Interests have diversified, and some of the closeness between members has unfortunately been lost. The AWAS newsletter and our website have become valuable ways to communicate with our membership. Unfortunately, numbers in our monthly life drawing, portraits and acrylic sessions have dropped off and are now in danger of folding due to lack of support from members. Our session coordinators work hard at dreaming up activities for the interest of our members, and it can be very disappointing for them to have only two or three people turning up each time.

Despite all this, the arts precinct here on the causeway has managed to continue with its arts focus. We have had decreasing numbers of visitors to our studio, and the area generally, and as a society we have moved to focussing attention of the public on our exhibitions at the Plant Farm in Wodonga. I believe that these are still warmly received by the public, and I thank the Plant Farm for their continued generosity in allowing us to use this space. There has been talk of redevelopment here on the causeway, however I am unsure whether this will be a positive for our studio arrangement.

Since our humble beginnings in 1988, AWAS has grown in numbers to a membership of about 90 at its peak in 2016, and currently stands at about 70. We are a serious sized group representing the artists of Albury Wodonga, and we have great relationships with local organisations including both councils, MAMA and Wodonga Arts Space.

I refer to AWAS first newsletter published in February 1988, in which President Margaret Moran wrote: "The potential of the society is unlimited. We live in one of the most diverse and bountiful places for artists in Australia. Through the encouragement and stimulation of the society, beginners will gain great enjoyment and show great improvement, more advanced artists will have competition and opportunity to work toward that ultimate "goal". It is important that each member respect the work of other members, we are individuals, and our work reflects that individuality. Each person perceives and expresses themselves differently. Positive encouragement rather than criticism is what we are all about."

Those words from Margaret still ring true today, and it is a tribute to those of our early establishment, and to those who have worked so hard for AWAS since then, that our Society has continued to operate effectively as a society for so many artists in our area. We celebrate their work, and we celebrate the enjoyment and friendship that our society has brought us through the years.

Barb Strand

Here is the poem John Mason recited at the 30th Anniversary Lunch

The Artist

The artist and his Luckless Wife
They lead a horrid haunted life,
Surrounded by the things he's made
That are not wanted by the trade.

The world is very fair to see;
The artist will not let it be;
He fiddles with the works of God,
And makes them look uncommon odd.

The artist is an awful man,
He does not do the things he can;
He does the things he cannot do,
And we attend the private view.

The artist uses honest paint
To represent the things as they ain't,
He then asks money for the time
It took to perpetrate the crime.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Watercolour Workshop Report



On the weekend of the 11th and 12th October a workshop was held at the studio and this was tutored by professional artist, Malcolm Beattie. Malcolm is a renowned watercolour artist from Melbourne and his work is represented in corporate and private collections both in Australia and overseas.

Jen Wallace has organised our annual watercolour workshops for many years and each time we have had a theme - this year it was urban landscapes, a subject matter Malcolm often paints as he loves to depict life and activity of the environment. His watercolours glow with pure colour or little mixing and an emphasis on the light and the tonal values. The use of a limited palette gives a balance and unity to his paintings.

We had 14 participants in the class and, judging by the written comments afterwards everyone enjoyed themselves and learnt a lot.

Comments include:

“What an adventure, stepping out of my comfort zone. Wet washes will never be the same!”

“An exciting different approach that opened the possibilities to more creative watercolour paintings.”

“Loved the encouragement to be more adventurous.”

“Challenging. Encouraging us to paint wet and loose.”

“Feeling more relaxed about watercolour and enthused.”

“Malcolm Beattie has the most engaging manner of any tutor I have been with. His easy way of describing steps to use and the final product speak for themselves. A very exhausting, but very beneficial weekend.”

And Malcolm wrote “I enjoyed myself immensely!! Thanks for all your kindness.”



The organisation of this workshop from initial information, established theme and content, and the requirements to the actual running of the workshop was smooth and flowing. This class filled many months prior to the workshop. Many, many thanks to Jen for “stepping up to the plate again” and organising a fantastic workshop – we are all very appreciative.

Studio News

In response to complaints by AWAS members and raised as an issue at the AGM, there is going to be a big clean-up of the studio - all areas. So, if you have any personal belongings please collect them promptly. Bernie and Rob have kindly offered to do a major clean-up and re-organisation of the storeroom – thank you so very much. If you have any knowledge of the records etc that are stored, please offer your assistance to sort out and tidy these things.

A big plea to please keep the studio clean and tidy.

- Members are only permitted to leave work, painting gear etc at the studio overnight if you intend to return the next day. Otherwise gear is to be taken home. On some days we have many people working in the studio.
- Take home any food that you have left over – do not assume others want your left-overs.

We all must share the space and be considerate of each other.

Studio Gallery

Paintings - many of the paintings hanging in the studio have been there for quite a while. It would be appreciated if members would please bring in fresh works (even if old “past glories” that are under the bed.) We need a fresh look for summer and especially for the Gateway Open Days as we have many, many visitors to the studio.

Plant Farm News

Our current exhibition, “Interiors” will come down on Tuesday, 5th December. We will then have “Our Art Bargain Sale”: where all exhibits must be priced at \$150.00 or less. This will be removed on Tuesday, 5th February.

Heather Sparks

Please bring your work to the Plant Farm or ask someone to bring it for you – 2.00pm. Also, ensure the proper hanging equipment is used. Put the \$2.00 entry fee in an envelope labelled with your name and attach it to the back of your painting.

Gateway Open Days

The second of four Gateway Open Days was held on Saturday, 21st October from 8.00am to 1.00pm and a few AWAS members came to the studio to paint. The whole precinct was a hive of activity with stalls selling art and craft goods, activities, games etc. (especially for children) and the buskers adding to the atmosphere.

These days coincide with the Farmers’ Market mornings and we had about 60 visitors come into the studio. GIGS, Creators and the Woodcrafters were also open to present a showcase of the Art Precinct.

Please help us promote AWAS and support the Gateway by coming along to paint or sell your paintings and cards at a stall on the “village green” (\$5.00 per stall). Maybe join with another member or small group to have a stall or just come along to paint. Contact GIGS to book a stall.

We are so lucky to have a great studio space and be part of the Gateway Art Precinct.

The dates for the other two open days (really Saturday mornings 8.00 – 1.00) are: 18th November and 16th December.

Saturday Studio Groups

Contact the co-ordinator of the group for further information – names and contact details are provided later in this newsletter.

NOTE: Next month **LIFE DRAWING** will be held on Saturday 18th November from 1 – 4 pm.

It would be appreciated if some Life Drawing members could come to the studio early (8.30 – 9.00) as this is the Gateway Open Day.

Co-ordinator is Olga Juskiw.

NOTE: **PORTRAITS** will not be held this month as we have a Portrait workshop on the 11th & 12th November.

Christmas Lunch

This is being organised and will be held at the Plant Farm – Date to be confirmed Friday, 15th December. So, jot this date in your diary.

Exhibition News

Mayday Hills Art Society – (a new art society in Beechworth) will hold an exhibition from Thursday, 23rd November to Sunday, 3rd December – open daily from 10 – 4. This will be an inaugural members' exhibition in the new Grevillea Gallery section of the art society area – Kurrajong Way, Mayday Hills Village.

Bright Summer exhibition: 19th December – 29th January at the Bright Art Gallery.

Corowa Art Exhibition: 5th – 28th January.

Kathy Bruce does a wonderful job sending out the emails that AWAS receives and so further information about the exhibitions, (usually with entry forms) that are listed above have been emailed to you.

Library News

A special thank you to Peter Drummond for the DVD he has donated to the AWAS library - "The Art of Landscape Painting with John Wilson". This DVD was filmed at MAMA recently when John gave a demonstration painting with oils.

MEETING DATES

Committee Meetings

Wednesday, 15th November

21st March

16th May

19th July

19th September

General Meetings

Wednesday, 21st February

18th April

20th June

15th August

Sunday 17th October (AGM)

Key Contacts

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