



2022 Annual Report of the Whitewater Arts Alliance (Report to the membership through October 2022)

The following reflects the activities and statistics of the Whitewater Arts Alliance for the calendar year 2022. These items also address the stipulations of the most recent lease for the White Memorial Building.

The WAA expanded gallery hours to pre-Covid schedules, and offered both virtual and in person programming to new audiences.

1. A minimum of 8 events to engage the community in the arts.

During 2022, there was a mix of exhibits, concerts and virtual presentations for every month that we were open. Our 2022 schedule included:

January – closed

February

- Virtual presentation on Story Mapping and Culture with Dr. Juk Bhattacharyya on February 9th, free to public

March

- WRAP exhibit March 4th - 27th
- Virtual presentation on Creative Placemaking, with Chamber Executive Director and WAA Board member Kellie Carper on March 3, free to public
- Virtual Music Business Workshop, supported by sponsors, on March 9, free to public

April

- WUSD Exhibit April 8-24
 - Included an art walk for families downtown; partnered with the Chamber and the WUSD

May

- Exhibits: “Explorations Photographs” by Jeff McDonald and “Around and Around” by Mary Nevicosi, May 5-June 26
- Story Telling video in partnership with Whitewater Public Library outreach programming
- Public Art hung downtown; the theme this year was “Favorite Literary Works”
 - Offered a workshop to create public art pieces at Public Library
- Tom Nachreiner En Plein Air Workshop at Fuzzy Pig

June

- Exhibits: “Explorations Photographs” by Jeff McDonald and “Around and Around” by Mary Nevicosi, May 5 – June 26

- Two Savory Sounds Concerts; “The Brothers Quinn” and “Brass Knuckles Brass Quintet with Percussion”
- Music and Art Wonder Club event for children and care givers, in partnership with the city; this was a free event for the community.

July

- Fran Achen Photography Exhibit and Competition July 1-31
- Three Savory Sounds Concerts; “Amanecer Y Mas”, “Ken Lonnquist and Friends Family Concert”, “Ken Kilian’s Killer and the Salty Dogs”
- Music and Art Wonder Club Event for children and care givers, in partnership with the city, this was a free event for the community.

August

- Exhibits: “Abstracts: A Series of Series” by Karolyn Alexander and “Contemplating Observations” by M Virginia Epps, August 4 – 28

September

- Exhibit: Elmwood Warren Bartlett Woodcuts, September 2-25
- Story Telling Festival with Chamber Sept 23 – 25
 - WAA sponsored a Music and Art Wonder Workshop with Book Themes for families

October

- Exhibit: Hallows Gala, October 7-30
 - Blacklight Kits for purchase to create a piece of art to be displayed at reception
 - Potential “Ghouls’ Night Out” Mask-Making Workshop

November/December

- Members’ Exhibit Nov 4 – Dec 18

2. **Work with other area groups to further develop a climate of creativity and opportunity.**

We continue to work with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater College of Arts and Communication as a collaborative partner for visual art and music exhibitions. In addition, this year the WAA worked with private and corporate sponsors to offer a free presentation on “Music Business” to the community and UW-W students.

This year we also worked with faculty from the College of Letters & Science to offer a free virtual production on Story Mapping and Culture with Dr. Juk Bhattacharyya as part of an NSF grant.

The Irvin L. Young Memorial Library assisted with this year’s Public Art Project, with a theme of “Favorite Literary Works”, by offering a workshop for artists to create their public art pieces.

The WAA also partners with the Whitewater Unified School District on a regular basis. We held our Whitewater Unified School District art exhibit in person this year, including an “Art Walk” downtown for families. The walk was a collaboration between the WAA, the WUSD and the Whitewater Chamber of Commerce. The WAA Board also made its annual award of the Diane Flood Scholarship to a promising WUSD student involved in the arts.



Savory Sounds provides an excellent opportunity for partnerships. Several individuals and local businesses sponsor the events, and



Christine Hayes promotes local restaurants by partnering with them to provide food during the concerts. There were 5 concerts in 2022, which included 24 musicians, with a total attendance of over 550 people. Styles of music included Celtic, Bluegrass, Renaissance, Hispanic, Folk, Dixieland and Jazz.



In conjunction with the Savory Sounds Concerts and the City of Whitewater, the WAA sponsored two “Music and Art Wonder Club” events that brought children and their caregivers to the Cultural Art Center for a “Instrument Petting Zoo” and activities that fostered communication, creativity and imagination-inspired music adventures, adaptive coping strategies for home and school, and an open-ended, sensory rich process art creation. Between the two events, over 80 children and caregivers were engaged.



The WAA continues a strong partnership with the Whitewater Area Chamber of Commerce, including a virtual presentation on Creative Placemaking and sponsoring an event for families at the Story Telling Festival in September. The WAA is also working with the Fort Atkinson Tourism Council on cross-promotion of events.

The WAA once again hosted its annual WRAP exhibit in March, a collaboration with the Association of Wisconsin Artists. The date was moved forward this year, and will be moving back to its regular time slot for 2023.

The WAA staff and board made outreach visits to local community groups to share ideas and gain input from the community, including the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs. Board members Jeff McDonald and Ruth Hansen were interviewed by Michael Clisch for the “What’s Up with Michael Clisch” show, produced by Fort Atkinson Online, LLC to discuss WAA programming and membership. In addition, the Library created a series of Summer Storytellers videos, one of which featured WAA Manager Ashley McDarison reading “The Museum”, by Peter H. Reynolds and Susan Verde.

3. Increase the number of visitors to the CAC annually.

We had over 6,100 visitors for our virtual exhibits, and close to 1,000 guests in the gallery. In addition to the gallery exhibits, we had over 550 people attend our Savory Sounds concerts, and 80 people participate in the Music and Art Wonder Club events.

4. Sponsor the Annual Public Art Project in downtown Whitewater.

The 2022 Public Art Project was themed “Favorite Literary Works”. Plywood scroll forms were created and distributed to all participating artists to paint and convey their favorite literary work.

5. Sponsor and stage the annual Fran Achen Photography Contest.

The Annual Fran Achen Photography Exhibition and Competition was held in both a physical and virtual format again this year and continues to be a community favorite. We

were able to hold the awards reception in-person in the gallery. The WAA also reached out to the Irvin L. Young Memorial Library for loan of some of their Fran Achen photographs to augment the exhibit, which the library was happy to supply.

6. Continue to develop and foster partnerships with local artists and regional arts groups.

The WAA sponsors a statewide award for the WRAP Exhibit, and works with the Association of Wisconsin Artists to promote it. The WRAP Exhibit is designed to support and highlight developing artists. We also distribute information about external upcoming shows and programming for our artists and other arts organizations to our 466-member Mailchimp email group.

7. Increase the revenues of the WAA each year so that the organization may become self-sustaining.

The WAA Board's general approach to programming is to generate new funding each year to support programming. This is done through memberships, entry fees and grants. This year the Arts Alliance received support from the last Wisconsin Arts Rescue Grant, to help with losses from March – December 2021. We do receive entrance fees from participating artists for a number of the exhibitions, as well as a commission for consignment work and for any pieces sold during exhibitions. Local businesses also continue to support us with sponsorships, especially for Savory Sounds and other programming. We will continue to add new programming that will increase our visibility, and this may generate new corporate sponsors.

Our consignment shop and online sales for local artists continues to promote our artists and serve as a source of revenue for the WAA.

The WAA had 120 members for 2022. Many are returning members from 2021, and we have several new members. We are grateful for the community's continued support.

8. Strategic Planning

The WAA Board completed a two-stage strategic planning process under the direction of Anne Katz of Arts Wisconsin in 2021. As a result of this, the Board hired a part time manager, Ashe McDarison. In addition, programming themes and activities are being discussed to increase outreach to new audiences; some examples are the Music and Art Wonder Club events, as well as the Fall "Hallows Gala" event in October.

The investment to hire a manager with expanded hours is intended to continue the important work that the Alliance has been doing in Whitewater and the surrounding area, as well as increasing outreach and deepening our reach into the community. We appreciate the intentionality of previous WAA leaders in creating a fund that can be used to invest in this work, and intend to build a sustainable financial model to sustain the Alliance's vision and purpose as we look to the future.