

working from home

We hope all of you are well and safely sheltering in place. Rest assured that the Arts Advocates Board and all of the individual teams continue to work from home. While we are not meeting face-to-face during this difficult time, everyone is being creative about exploring a variety of ways to communicate through our computers, cell phones and telephones. As a result, we are fully operational.

COMMUNICATION: If you have had experience with Webinars, "Go-To-Meeting" or any conference call platforms, please let us know. We need to find new ways to communicate without personally attending face-to-face meetings. Taking advantage of new technologies will help make this possible.

NOMINATIONS: Suzanne Weitz, Barb Sander, Ellie Stoddard, Judy Levine and Priscilla Adams formed the Nominating Committee to propose Arts Advocates 2020-2021 slate of officers. Every officer has agreed to take a second term: Donna Maytham, President, Tonya Eubank, Vice President, Sarah Skeeba, Secretary, Barb Sander, Corresponding Secretary and Cynthia Burnell, Treasurer. Since we are not likely to schedule a General Meeting for some time, please be assured that there is continuity in leadership.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Suzanne Weitz and her team did an outstanding job of launching Speaking of The Arts.... Both Marion Alsop's presentation and Lynn Ahren's conversation provided Arts Advocates a unique opportunity to collaborate with local arts groups, attract new members and elevate our organization within the art community. All of this was made possible by our generous member Maryann Armour and her Family Foundation.

SCHOLARSHIPS: The Scholarship Team members are real heroines. Jackie Salvino and Linda Milberg crafted a new organizational scheme by dividing members into Fine Art, Digital Art and Performing Arts units. They will say more about this plan but I can already see how efficiently the new process is working.

MEMBERSHIP: Betty Ferguson, Martha Ballard and Priscilla Adams are working out the details of a new "mentoring" program. They are trying to think of a name for the program that conveys warmth and inclusivity so, if you have any ideas, just let one of them know. Working out a way to include 50 new members in this individualized program is a challenge but one they are determined to meet.



MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL: We are currently using a plan called “rolling renewals” where you are invited to renew on the date you joined. Please note that you may renew your membership (Subscription) on-line or you may send Betty Ferguson a \$55 or \$125 (Sustaining) check made payable to The Fine Arts Society of Sarasota, Inc. If you are able to join at the \$125 level that will help us continue to grow.

COLLECTION: The Collection Team has identified two possible sites where we may reasonably relocate our art works. As we have said previously, the Van Wezel no longer meets our needs. Linda Bruemmer and Kristi Bundrant are leading this effort and their vision is to make the works more accessible, flexible and better situated for educational purposes.

At our March Board meeting the Collection Team set a new standard for making persuasive project proposals with Jerry Chesley's colorful and exciting power point presentation. Please note that we plan to reschedule The Blue Pagoda party where Victor Lundy's paintings will be displayed.

PROGRAMS AND MEMBER ACTIVITIES: With Kris Gardel and Rennie Carter in the lead, the 2020-2021 General Meeting Programs are all arranged. We'll say more about each one but there are some wonderful surprises in store for our members.

Tonya Eubank, Liz Trostli and Mark Muse plan to keep already announced Salons, Tours and Workshops in the pipe line and are ready to release them as soon as we get an “all clear”. If you have any questions please contact Tonya Eubank.

FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING: This team has begun to lay the ground work for drafting a 2020-2021 budget. Our new grant writing professional, Janis Wasserman, has worked with us to ensure that The Fine Arts Society of Sarasota, Inc. profile is current and meets the approval of the Community Foundation. Therefore, we will be participating in the Giving Challenge, an on-line fundraising campaign sponsored by SCF. More about this later.

Janis now has a database of information she can use when preparing specific grant applications for Arts Advocates. This database includes our first Form 990 return and an official “Financial Review” both prepared by our tax accountants.

We deeply appreciate the generosity of the following DONORS:

DIRECTOR LEVEL

Janet Hyman,

Scholarships

Karen Mathis,

Scholarships

Nancy and Wes Stukenberg, Scholarships



ENTHUSIAST LEVEL

Jean Allen, General Fund

Barbara Kerwin, Scholarships

Joy Stone, General Fund

The Fine Arts Society of Sarasota, Inc. maintains a brokerage account with Northern Trust. If you are considering a gift of stock/equity, please contact Donna Maytham.

ARTS ADVOCATES VIDEOS

Our consultant, Ken Polotan, has video recordings of both our day-long Strategy Workshop and the Lynn Ahren's Speaking of The Arts...event at the Art Ovation. In the coming weeks we'll see if there is a way to make these videos available to members possibly through our website.

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION 2020 GIVING CHALLENGE

Many of our new members may not be familiar with The Community Foundation's 24-hour on-line donation project. Every other year, qualifying non-profit organizations have an opportunity to ask their members to make an on-line tax-deductible donation within a 24-hour period. Donations begin at \$25 and, in past years, the Patterson Foundation has generously offered matching opportunities for organizations with the largest number of members donating and matching gifts up to and including \$100. We are waiting to learn more about these details and will keep you informed.

Arts Advocates is a philanthropic organization with a history of awarding scholarships to students pursuing careers in the arts and funding community outreach to help support local arts organizations either through collaboration or cash donations. Going forward, our goal is to relocate our art collection, make it more interactive and have it increasingly accessible both to students and educators. We are deeply grateful for your past support and continued generosity.

Donna C. Maytham



- **CANCELLATIONS/POSTPONMENTS:** The Thursday, April 9 Board Meeting and Thursday, April 16 General Meeting/ Luncheon are cancelled. Please continue to watch for emails regarding the Thursday, May 7 Board Meeting and the Thursday, May 14 Scholarship Awards/Luncheon. In summary, to protect our members, no Arts Advocates face-to-face meetings of any kind will be scheduled until we have approval from the appropriate authorities.
- If you have pre-paid a Member Activity (Salon, Tour, Workshop) we plan to reschedule these events as soon as we are certain there is no risk to our members. If you have any questions, please contact Tonya Eubank.
- **PAYING BY CHECK?** We would appreciate it if you could make all checks payable to The Fine Arts Society of Sarasota, Inc. Our bank does not accept checks made payable to Arts Advocates. Thank you for your cooperation.
- **SUPPORTING THE ARTS:** Our mission is to support the arts in Sarasota and our arts community has never been in greater need. By cancelling the remaining months of their seasons, the financial impact on these non-profits has been staggering.

For example, Sarasota Ballet estimates an \$800,000 loss. It is a credit to the Ballet that while legally they could have invoked the "force majeure" clause in the dancers' contracts and furloughed them without pay, the Ballet is paying all of their dancers during the coming months. The Ballet, the Opera and the Orchestra as well as all local theatres and musical groups deserve our help and support as never before.

You can help by continuing to donate and by declining ticket refunds. This is a simple and effective way to help. If each of us does our bit, then in the aggregate our community will make it through this unprecedented period.

scholarship update

The members of the Arts Advocates Scholarship Committee are enthusiastically and diligently evaluating the 31 applications received that meet our guidelines. While we are impressed with the quality of scholars applying for financial aid, it is a most difficult task to determine the award recipients. Despite meetings being canceled, members of the Committee have been hard at work.

There is still time to support these talented students! This important arm of Arts Advocates philanthropy is more important than ever. Many of our candidates have to attend specialized private institutions and that automatically increases their financial need.

Although these are not the best of times, the closing of theaters and galleries makes us realize the joy they contribute to our lives. Please consider making a contribution to support our scholars' futures. We optimistically hope that awards will be proudly presented at our May meeting.

Thank you for your support,
Linda Milberg
Jackie Salvino

In October 2019, WEDU PBS - Florida West Coast, highlighted Arts Advocates/Fine Arts Society of Sarasota. An episode was produced for "Arts Plus" focusing on "the ways in which it is presenting and preserving works by local artists as well as fostering the growth of young artists in Sarasota."



"Arts Plus" is produced locally throughout the US via local PBS stations. This Sarasota program has been one of four segments from all the national programs to be highlighted and shown on all PBS stations as a top production and interesting subject matter.

Thanks to Arts Advocates members Roberta "Bobbie" Hamilton, Vern Weitz, Cindy Woodling, Elizabeth Rose, Diana Colson and the Van Wezel's Janet Arena for their leadership and participation in the development of this program.

View here: [WEDU PBS Arts Plus video - Arts Advocates/Fine Arts Society of Sarasota](#)

speaking of the arts...

A Conversation with Lynn Ahrens
February 27, 2020



Left:
Donna Maytham, President,
welcoming Arts Advocates
members and guests.



Right: Asolo Rep's Associate Artistic Director, Celine Rosenthal, speaking with Lynn Ahrens.



Left: Booker High School
students, guests of Arts
Advocates, getting autographs
from Lynn Ahrens.

where are they now?

Interview with Past Scholar, Marcus Ratzenboeck, Concertmaster of The Venice Symphony

Past scholarship recipient Marcus Ratzenboeck is an accomplished and versatile musician with a successful career as a performing and recording artist. He has a recording studio, H&M Productions, and is currently in his 3rd season as concertmaster of The Venice Symphony.

Marcus was first introduced to playing music as a 9-year-old attending elementary school in Chicago where it was mandatory that all students play an instrument. Although he wanted to play saxophone, his hands were too small so he switched to guitar and eventually the violin. When Marcus' family moved to Sarasota a few years later he began private lessons with Miltiades Siadimas, a renowned violin soloist. Marcus credits his lessons with Mr. Siadimas as crucial to his development as a musician and notes, *"Compared to other young musicians, I was relatively late in taking up the violin at age 11. My intensive studies with Mr. Siadimas during 2-hour lessons three times a week really helped me to catch up. Miltiades Siadimas was more than a teacher; he was my mentor."*

After attending high school at Riverview and Booker VPA, our Fine Arts Society Scholarship helped support Marcus as he continued his studies at Florida State University, earning his Bachelor's of Music degree in 1996. From there he attended Indiana University and was awarded his Master's of Music degree in 1999. He was concertmaster of the IU Symphony and the Columbus, IN Philharmonic and appointed Principal Second Violin of The Louisville (KY) Orchestra. He was also an Adjunct Professor of Violin at the University of Louisville, a member of the acclaimed Louisville String Quartet and Concertmaster of The Louisville Bach Society.

As I have learned from interviewing other past scholars in the classical music field, there are many talented musicians all vying for very few positions. Marcus' advice to musicians coming out of school is to *"be diverse and try new things beyond playing classical music. Exploring new software, technology and digital music are important and the professional musicians of tomorrow will benefit by having experience composing, forming ensembles and branching out into other genres."*

Marcus has participated in numerous music festivals including Tanglewood, American Institute of Musical Studies (Graz, Austria), Sarasota Music Festival, Hirosaki Chamber Music Festival (Japan), and he served as concertmaster of Spoleto (USA) for several seasons. His professional experience also includes an impressive recording and touring career in a rock band along with work for several major and independent record labels and publishers. Marcus states, *"Playing electric violin*



in a successful touring rock band is a completely different life than performing with an orchestra. After several years, I was ready to get back to my classical music roots, so I returned to Sarasota in 2012. I had to get back to serious practicing, full 5-hour days. I was subbing for orchestras here and played with The Florida Orchestra, Sarasota Orchestra, and St. Petersburg Opera. It took several years to get back to concertmaster, but I look forward to continuing an era of fine musicianship with The Venice Symphony."

Photo Credits: Elliott Corn

Please go to www.artsadvocates.org/what-s-new to read Marcus Ratzenboeck's full story

speaking of the collection....

CABIN FEVER?

Are you looking for something to do to stimulate your brain?
Would you like to adopt a painting from our Collection?

Choose one of the art pieces in our Collection and do research about the times and lives of the artist. We are creating a catalogue to tell the story of our Collection. All the art is on our Arts Advocates web site, so look through and see what catches your eye. When you find your favorite, email krisbb22@mac.com to make sure someone hasn't beaten you to it!

**William Pachner | Syd Solomon | Ben Stal | Jon Corbino | Steve McCallum
Song of the Rain Dance | Great BlueHeron | White Dress | Dooby Bird | Our Angel**

We are waiting to hear from YOU!

Kristi Bundred
Linda Bruemmer
Collection Co-Chairs



In the interest of our members' health the Board of Directors has decided to postpone this event. It will be rescheduled when the threat of the COVID-19 has passed, hopefully in the Fall.

- We thank every member of the Scholarship team. Linda Milberg and Jackie Salvino are extraordinary leaders and Debra Altshul-Stark, Violetta Chandler, Karen Geck, Carol Hirschburg, Barbara Kerwin, Karen Mathis, Dale Sprintz, Maureen Shea, Jane Sheridan, Elizabeth Van Riper and Marcie Weisgold all did a fabulous job. This year we are awarding approximately \$25,000 to scholars but there is still time to make a donation to increase the funds available for scholarships.
- Twenty-two members and guests attended the day-long workshop conducted by Management Consultant Ken Polotan. In his comprehensive follow-up report, Ken made some powerful recommendations and we will consider and discuss each one of them.
- Our deep appreciation to Speaking of The Arts... sponsor, Maryann Armour and kudos to Suzanne Weitz, Bo Galford and Barbara Blackburn for a truly inspiring collaboration with our friends from the Asolo. Lynn Ahrens was besieged for autographs by the Booker High students who were invited to attend this event as our guests.