



2016 End of Year Message.

2016 was a year filled with both happiness and sadness for our Art League family. In February, we lost our great friend and supporter John Melecsinsky. His passing left a profound void in our community. John gave so much to the League during his colorful life, and he continues to give with his generosity to the League through his estate. We are also the proud caretaker of his art, which is well cared for in climate controlled storage.

2016 proved to be a great year for showing art at the League. We were honored to have the Connecticut Women Artists select the League for it's annual juried show. They will be returning this coming April! Thanks, Nancy Witcher, President of CWA. We also had a first time exhibit of artists who draw during Monday's Creative Looks Figure Session. The following annual shows also took place: Photo Juried Show, Figurative Show, Carriage House Show, and the Annual Spring Juried Show. A Small Works Show had its debut this December and was very successful. We continued our partnering with CCSU by hosting exhibits of their graduate art students. The open shows have been drawing record number of artists from all over the state. All the openings in 2016 drew great crowds who enjoyed our delicious appetizers and beverages.

2016 brought an increase of attendance for our clay sessions and figurative sessions.. The Creative Looks sessions, which are held on Monday evenings, involve a creatively dressed model in various thematic costumes such as an authentic geisha, a French General, and the Black Dahlia, where a crime scene was reconstructed. Tuesday evenings feature a nude model in one long pose continued to the following week. Attendees get a chance to complete a detailed drawing or painting. Our clay sessions meets Wednesdays and offers clay hand building and wheel throwing. Thursday's nude drawing session have continued to grow in attendance as well. Models challenge artists with poses from two minutes to one hour. Saturdays have a clothed model in one pose. GoFigures have also become very popular. These Saturday mini-marathons occur throughout the year, with a nude model holding a long pose.

2016 saw the average monthly income rise by 25% over last year. Achieving this level of growth required additional spending for classes, maintenance and heating. However, the Board maintained a conservative position on spending which allowed us to control expenses so that we realized an average increase of 10% over 2015. As a result, ALNB expects to end our fiscal year in the black.

2016 was also notable for our successful collaborations with other community organizations. We had our second partnership with New Britain Youth Museum and the Summer Solstice Sculpture Walk at Hungerford Nature Center. Our second Paint Your Own Masterpiece for the YWCA summer camp took place. The MILE program from Middlesex Community College had their first visit to the League where they viewed art and had demos on printmaking and clay-building. The Greater Hartford Arts Council connected us with a corporate volunteer who is helping us with marketing.

2016 was a great year for the Carriage House building. With donation from many of you and support from the City of New Britain, we are painting the exterior of the Carriage House. Even though we got a late start, we are able to refurbish and paint the windows by pulling each and working on them indoors. Spring will see the completion of the entire building. After much research and deliberation, Connecticut Painting, LLC. was selected to do the work.

A historic architect is now working on completing a survey and planning grant we won through the state historic commission. This grant will open the way for more matching grants in the future. Plans for the future include fire and theft security, renovating the kitchen, stables and clay studio, and installing AC in the Low and Lacy Galleries.

2017 looks to be a great year! The galleries will host the usual shows along with shows by individual artists. We will keep our drawing and clay sessions going. A salon series is also in the works, which will feature lectures, presentations, music, and discussion panels. We hope to grow membership and attract interest from around the region.

All of this isn't possible without the efforts of all our volunteers. We are a totally volunteer organization. Our board of directors, our session monitors, our gallery hangers and sitters are all volunteers. I would like to give a shout out to Margaret Renzella for the work she has done with the gardens. Where once there were weeds and bare ground, there is now Rose of Sharon, hostas, and numerous other plants. A hummingbird was once sighted.

2028, the one hundredth anniversary will hopefully see the Art League of New Britain still serving artists and the community in more extensive and creative ways!.

Best wishes for 2017 from the Board of Directors of the Art League of New Britain.