



ARTISTS & CRAFTSMEN OF THE FLATHEAD

PO Box 1684, Kalispell, MT 59903

www.artistsandcraftsmen.org

artistsoftheflathead@gmail.com

TO: ALL CURRENT ACF MEMBERS

NOV. 7, 2022

GREETINGS!

First, please let me apologize in advance for the length of this letter. The current Board of Directors is submitting several motions for your review and vote. The purpose of this letter is to describe these motions, their intentions, and our reasoning for presenting them to you. As you read through the letter, if you have any questions or concerns about any of the content, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can send an email to artistsoftheflathead@gmail.com or call Lindsay at 406-249-9181. If you elect to call on the phone, please leave a voicemail and I will call you when I can. I work full time 8am to 5pm on weekdays, so I will not be able to return your calls during that time of day.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all of you that attended the October 12 Special Meeting and participated in the discussions and provided your comments and feedback on the various topics presented in our motions. We took all your comments into consideration as we designed our proposals.

After your review of the proposed motions, we will ask that you please return or submit your ballots by **December 16, 2022**. You can mail them in, hand them in at the November General Meeting (Nov. 16), hand them in at any set up or event days of the Christmas Show (Nov. 22-27), or you can submit them online.

The first motion presented to you - **MOTION 1a** - pertains to a change in our Show Rules regarding food vendors. We'd like to update current rules 4(5) and 10 to more clearly state what documentation we expect to receive from our food vendor applicants, including food truck vendors. We do not intend to change the meaning of the existing rule, but rather, intend to make the language more clear. The attached packet shows the current rule as-written and identifies our proposed changes.

Next, **MOTION 1b** pertains to an addition to rules 4(5) and 10 that would address Montana statute SB199 - the Montana Local Food Choice Act (MLFCA). After careful review and research of SB199, and some conversations with staff at the Flathead County Health Department, the ACF board recommends that we do NOT accept food vendors that operate under SB199. We make this recommendation for several reasons, including but not limited to the fact that food vendors that operate under SB199 are not required to display their food-product's ingredients on the packaging and neither their recipes nor their kitchens are inspected by the Health Department.

MOTION 2 is a simple correction to one of our Bylaws - Article III, Section 3. We would like to amend this article to state that membership is delinquent after the 3rd Wednesday in February, rather than the current statement "after the February General Meeting" because we have not held a general meeting in February for a few years now. Again, this does not change the overall meaning of the rule, but just clarifies the wording.

MOTION 3 pertains to Show Rule 8 and addresses service animals. After lots of research, the board has learned that our currently-stated rule does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This proposed rule would amend the rule to comply with the ADA. Please see the attached packet to see the rule as currently-stated and the proposed amendment.

Over the past few years we have had a number of our committees that either do not have anyone volunteer for or we have not needed to utilize the tasks they would be responsible for. This brings us to MOTION 4. We have not had anyone sign up for Nominating Committee in a while. So, **MOTION 4a** proposes to remove this committee from our list and place the responsibilities of that committee into the hands of our board's Vice President. The VP would have the ability to call on assistants to help with this task if he/she feels that is necessary, but the responsibility of gathering volunteers each year to run as nominees for the various board positions would fall on the VP's prevue going forward.

Next, the Bylaw Committee again has not received many volunteers. We do feel this responsibility is very important, however. So, **MOTION 4b** is a proposal to remove this committee from the committee list and add this responsibility to the VP's list of responsibilities instead.

Committee Assistants is another committee we have not found a great need for in the past few years. So, rather than having people sign up to assist when/if needed, we'd like to also remove this committee from the list and, instead, just reach out to all members when we are in need of volunteers on an as-needed or event-related basis. That way members can consider their availability to help as things come up rather than committing to help at the beginning of the year without really knowing the timing of when/if help will be necessary. See **MOTION 4c**.

Community Outreach Committee is our fastest growing committee at this time. Not only have we received tons of great volunteers from amongst the membership, the responsibilities and tasks this committee holds has increased. This is due to our newly-found increase in the number of fundraising activities we host each year along with our ability to now offer sponsorship and donations to other organizations, elementary schools and youth art programs. So, **MOTION 4d** proposes to split the responsibilities of Outreach Committee into two committees, both with the goal of growing our "Create it Forward" scholarship and finding new ways to give those funds back to an art program in need. Therefore, we'd like to form the Scholarship Fundraising Committee.

Scholarship Fundraising Committee will be tasked with organizing and coordinating activities and events with the purpose of raising funds for the "Create it Forward" scholarship and education fund. This can include organizing events, raffle basket assembly, raffle ticket sales, collection of donations, and promotion of fundraising events. Additionally, just as Community Outreach Committee chairperson can be a full board of directors position, the Scholarship Fundraising Committee chairperson can likewise sit on the board.

This now brings us to the big-issue motions: Membership structure and Summer Show 2023.

As we discussed at the October 12 Special Meeting, ACF is growing in leaps and bounds. We feel this is partly because we have worked hard over the last 3-5 years to promote ACF and inform the community of what we represent. But the population growth of Flathead Valley is certainly a big contributing factor. We do not want to put restraints on our growth, but we do need to create some structure or criteria that Show Committee can use when reviewing vendor applications and choosing which applicants to accept into our events.

This year, Show Committee was faced with the problem of receiving more vendor applications for our Christmas Show than we've ever had before. They worked very hard to make sure that every member that submitted an application received a booth space - please give them a huge thank you for their hard work when you see them next! But, if we keep growing like we have been, they won't be able to achieve that outcome again as we simply do not have room for more booth spaces - we've maxed out at 196 single booths.

So, to manage the growth, and provide a tiered system within which Show Committee will be able to more easily give priority booth placement, or select applicants to omit from the booth layout, the Board has proposed the attached Membership Tiers. Please review them all carefully and vote to either approve or reject this plan - This is **MOTION 5**.

Here are some key things we'd like you to note in this proposed plan:

- Membership fee has not changed - it will still be \$25 for returning/renewing members such as yourselves. We do, however, propose a \$40 initial membership fee for new members for their inaugural year (Bronze Tier).
- We have laid out 4 membership tiers - Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Each tier has its own "benefits". You earn your membership tier by earning "credits". Credits are earned by attending meetings (both general or committee), volunteering, or donating.
 - Not more than half of the credits needed for each tier can be from donating. So, for example, if you'd like to achieve Platinum membership, you can attend 6 meetings, or you could attend 3 or 4 meetings and then donate items of various retail value to earn up to 6 credits (to get to 12 total). Or some other combination of participation in ACF organization activities.
- Booth fees have not changed - we have incorporated in a similar booth fee plan to the one that was implemented in 2022 - \$100 for members that attend 4 or more meetings, \$150 for members that attend 2 meetings or less.
- For those of you that are unable to attend meetings, or cannot attend enough meetings, we have provided some additional ways in which you can earn "credits". These include, but are not limited to, writing blog posts for our website, donating items for our fundraising efforts, and volunteering for various activities or events. We can add opportunities to this list as they come up. We are open to suggestions on other ways in which you think you can contribute to ACF.

- As usual, all members are eligible to apply for both ACF-hosted shows (June & November) at the members' booth rates, as applicable for the tier you have earned. However, we are proposing that you are not "guaranteed" a booth space unless you've earned enough credits for Gold or Platinum membership tier. This means that if we have more vendor applicants than we have space for, we could deny a vendor application, even if you're a member, if you've not participated within the organization enough or at all. Priority booth placement would go to higher tier members as a thank you for their participation in the organization. This does **not** mean that you definitely won't get a booth space if you're only Bronze or Silver tier. It means that you might be passed over for higher tier members if you choose not to attend meetings and/or donate your time or items. All membership tiers will still have priority over non-member vendor applicants.
- Only members that achieve Platinum tier can be "guaranteed" a 2nd booth space. This would mean that Gold or Silver tier members could request a 2nd booth, but we would only grant them a double booth after all Platinum members that want double booths are assigned them, and if space allows for additional double booths.
- Credits would be earned from January through December of the previous year. This means, for example, many of you are already eligible for Gold and Platinum Tier for 2023 because of your meeting attendance and committee participation in 2022.
 - Because 2023 would be the first year this plan is implemented, we would extend the time period in which you could earn "credits" toward the membership tier you're aiming for through April 2023. That gives you a few more months to get used to this new proposed structure. As an added bonus, any meetings you attend in January-April 2023 would still also count toward your credit earnings in 2023 toward your 2024 membership tier.
- Don't forget, we are still hoping that many of you will donate some of your handmade items for our raffle baskets that we give away every year at Christmas Show as part of the "Create it Forward" fundraising efforts. This year we will keep track of what you donate (how many, retail value, etc.) and you will earn those additional credits for 2023.

I know all this information we've thrown at you is a bit overwhelming. So, as you review, please don't hesitate to reach out with questions.

MOTION 6 is all about Summer Show 2023. During the October 12, Special Meeting it was apparent that the opinions related to the success and benefits of joining our 2022 Summer Show with Flathead Food Truck Festival were very mixed. However, we are proposing, once again, that ACF continues to join with the Food Truck Festival for the foreseeable future. Here's our arguments on why we should continue to plan the joint event:

- After discussions with the Flathead County Fairgrounds, and their new manager Sam, we were reminded that the Flathead County Fairgrounds has the right to rent out the various buildings and spaces to whoever they want to, at any time. This means that even though we have paid rent for the Trade Center Building, that does not mean there won't be other events on the fairgrounds property during or alongside any of our events.
 - So, even if we elect to not join with Food Truck Festival again, they can still plan their event on the same date/times whether we coordinate or not.
- If we choose to not join with Food Truck Festival, and don't want to try to coordinate a parking lot with them, we would need to select a different weekend in which to host our event at the fairgrounds. We cannot select any dates into July or August because none are available. Our date options would be earlier into June or May 2023.
- There are no other locations within the valley that can accommodate the number of vendors we have. Additionally, most members have expressed a dislike for outdoor events. Therefore, moving locations is not an option. However, if someone has a viable contact for a different location, we'd love to hear about it.
- During our meeting with the Fairgrounds manager, he expressed to us his plan and hope for our joint events in the future. He foresees our events growing into a large "spring carnival". As we get even bigger and continue to show our skills in event planning, the Fairgrounds would begin to participate and possibly provide/coordinate carnival rides, a large concert, or other entertainment. This means that ACF will have the potential to be a part of something huge and great in Kalispell, MT - perhaps by 2025.
 - if we elect to not join with the food truck festival, that event will carry on without us. We will lose our spot as planners and founders of the next big annual Flathead Valley event.

So, please give careful consideration to your vote on whether we join with Food Truck Festival again - **MOTION 6a**. Please also consider if just because this type of event might not be a good fit for your booth and your products, it might be great for the organization as a whole. You could simply decide to not have a booth at this event, but still support it.

If MOTION 6a passes, the second part of the question would be if we host a 2 day event (like 2022) or if we go back to hosting a 3-day event. So, please also review **MOTION 6b** and vote on your preference for number of days and times. The Food Truck Festival will be setting their event hours as 12pm to 8pm both days. For those of you that prefer shorter days for the event (i.e. closing at 5pm), please consider the volume of people that will be walking by our "closed" building between the hours of 5pm at 8pm on Friday and Saturday.

Next, **MOTION 7** is a proposal to allow ACF to create a junior membership program. We will write a final, detailed proposal for all of you to review and vote on in the spring. But, for now, we'd like you all to vote on whether or not this idea is supported and we can proceed with the work involved with drafting a proposal. As of right now, members must be 18 years or older. There are tons of highschool-age artists out there that are very talented and we'd love to find ways to support them and teach them how to be successful vendors. Additionally, this program would support even younger future artists such as those under the age of 14, that are not currently allowed to assist mom or dad in booths. Our proposal will require all junior members to have a meeting/interview with a board member before they can be accepted as a junior member. In the interview we would asses things like their maturity and their ability to adhere to our event rules, among other things. Please consider whether you'd support a junior membership program.

Finally, **MOTION 8** is a motion to add a rule to our Show Rules that would state as follows: *ACF reserves the right to ask any vendor to leave ACF-hosted events, at any time, if they are found to be in violation of any written Bylaws, rules, regulations, or code of conduct.*

Thank you all for your patience and perseverance in reading through this letter and reviewing the motions. I look forward to seeing all your votes on these various issues.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions.

Please plan to return your ballot - either by hand delivery, mail or submit online - by December 16, 2022. I will send around reminders to you all over the next month if I haven't received your returned ballot yet. All members have the right to vote on these issues, so don't forget to share you vote with us.

SINCERELY,



LINDSAY MENA

ACF President - 2019-2022

406-249-9181

artistsoftheflathead@gmail.com

PAM BONDESEN

ACF Show Committee Chair

PILAR OGIER

ACF Show Committee

STACEY JEWELL

ACF Show Committee

AMY DOYLE

ACF Show Committee

JULIE FREDERICK

ACF Vice President

SHARON ASKELSON

ACF Treasurer

GAYLE EMBERSTONE

ACF Social Media Admin

DENISE SEEHUSEN

ACF Recording Secretary

CHRISTINA SMITH

ACF Social Media Admin

LYNN KRUTZLER

ACF Membership Secretary

WENDY MAECHTLE

ACF Publicity Admin