

The History of
The James River Art League

1964 - 1966

The James River Art League began in October, 1964, with Louise Bono as Acting Chairman. The first several meetings were devoted to establishing policy and aims.

We adopted a charter, using the Petersburg Art League by-laws as a guide.

We outlined our aims, concluding that the goals of our organization would be:

- a. To stimulate and promote art interest and activities for the league members and the community.
- b. To have league exhibits, as a group in shows of our own, and in community exhibits.
- c. Members should be original in their work.
- d. To endeavor to have informative and interesting programs, with guests or league members to give lectures and demonstrations.

The process of choosing a name proved to be a rather complicated and controversial matter. At first we accepted South Bank Art League, but later conservatism overcame the bohemian in us and we settled on James River Art League.

Dues were established at \$5.00, payable Jan. 1, 1965, and we opened a checking account at the Bank of Virginia. After the incorporation of the league, we were advised to change to a business account.

The nominating committee presented the slate of officers in Jan. Which were accepted unanimously.

Director - Louise Bono
Assistant Director - Charles Larivey
Recording Secretary - Ouida Tanner
Corresponding Secretary - Helen Wolverton
Treasurer - Hope Davis
Historian - Martha Anne Hart

In February the Committee Chairmen were announced.

Program - Charles Larivey '64 - '65
 Elsie MacCord '65 - '66
 Hospitality - Nellie Trischman
 Publicity - Beth Bass
 Membership - Hope Davis
 Communications - Helen Wolverton
 Gallery - Ann Southall

Standards for prospective members were discussed. It was resolved that specific requirements should be met, such as, quality of work, and all work must be original. A committee was set up to review prospects, and a form will be made up to be filled out by the applicant. Three objects of art, paintings, and/or sculpture, etc are to be submitted, one of which must have been completed in the last 12 months.

The next problem in hand was to assure interest and attendance at our meetings. Due to the work of Charles Larivey and subsequently Elsie MacCord the following programs were presented. Here is a brief resume of our successful programs.

Jan. 1965. Charles Larivey discussed paintings some of the members had exhibited at his gallery. He then told us about his Jefferson Davis Gallery. He felt the demand seemed to be more for oils, than for water colors, and in seascapes, landscapes and still life. Best prices ranged from \$20. - \$30.

Feb. Mrs. Bono gave a talk on primitive art. Some of our members, whose forte is primitive painting loaned their work for discussion. Library prints were also used.

April. Mr. Youngblood, as Chairman, challenged the group to a letterhead contest for our league stationery. At this meeting also, three judges, Mr. Reed, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Phillips selected 40 pictures from member entries for the Thalheimer "Focus on Art".

June. Self portraits added an amusing note to stimulate interest in art activities. June Harriman was chosen best in the group and was presented with a paint box, compliments of Sherwin Williams Paint Store at Southside Plaza. Helen Hull presented to us a fascinating program of color slides

of famous art in Europe, which she had collected during a tour she had recently made.

August. Mr. Kephart of Thalhimers came to invite our group alone, to enter the American Heart Association Poster Contest. Work of the Summer Sculpture Class was exhibited.

Sept. Mr. Day, of the Art and Frame Shop met with us. A few of many facts which we gleaned from him were:

- a. The painting determines the kind of frame.
- b. The frame does not make the picture, but can help or complete it.
- c. Frames often can tie a room together.

Nov. Bernard Davis, Art Director at Manchester High School, and League Member, spoke on Pen and Ink Drawing. He used samples of his own work to illustrate his remarks. He explained different techniques, and gave suggestions about the materials needed.

It was brought to our attention that much preliminary planning is required in the composition for each pen and ink drawing. Also, much consideration of the darks and lights, and subject matter is needed. We were made well aware that there is no room for mistakes.

Jan. Mr. Davis was host at Manchester High School and introduced Mr. Ralph Gray of Eric Schindler Gallery in Richmond. Mrs. Davis served refreshments to the group, and this was a lovely surprise which pleased everyone present.

March. We had an Art Film, "Renoir to Picasso", and everyone attending expressed the hope that more such films could be used in the future.

May. We were pleased to have Helen Hull return with color slides, and this evening emphasis was given to the Impressionist Painters.

To sum up two years of programs, I believe the membership feels as I do, that Charles Larivey, and Elsie MacCord have certainly fulfilled the aims of our Charter and our wishes, to have informative and interesting programs, drawing speakers from the community, and utilizing the talents of our members to give lectures and demonstrations. The results of a job so well done, could only be accomplished by many hours of planning and concentrated effort.

According to the by-laws, an active member must pay his dues, and participate in two shows per year, whether they be League or one man shows. Otherwise, he will be dropped from membership.

The following activities offered ample opportunity to fulfill our obligations.

1. We had our public debut in the Thalhimers "Focus on Art", in May, 1965.
2. Starting August, 1965, our one man shows began at the Westover Hills Branch Library. As of May 1966, the following members had exhibited:
Bass, Bono, Boydon, Cortopassi, Cline, Coleman, Crighton, Bernard Davis, Hope Davis, Lilian Davis, Ferneyhough, Flax, Harriman, Hart, Holdren, Hubbard, Johnston, MacCord, Roberson, Trischman, Tanner.
3. Carillon Art Show - Oct. 1965
96 paintings - water color, oil, prints, etc. and 10 pieces of sculpture were shown. Five paintings were sold.
4. Sidewalk Art Sale - Southside Plaza
Over 235 works of art were displayed, including enamel on copper jewelry. \$250.00 worth were sold. Our treasury was fattened by 10% of each sale.
Hope Davis (treasurer) and Ann Southall (chairman), felt small pictures sold best and averaged around \$10.00. Still life and landscapes, along with figure studies did quite well.

Ouida Tanner did a lucrative business with her charcoal sketches (20 min.) of sidewalk customers, as did Louise Bono doing quick watercolor portraits. Avis Robertson's copper enamel jewelry sold particularly well.

Southside Merchants Association treated all participating members to free lunch (dinner?) at the S & W Cafeteria.

Sherwin Williams had a sale of art supplies 25% off.

We've been invited back next year..

5. May 1966, 40 members participated again in the Thalhimers "Focus on Art".

6. Central National Bank, Hull Street and Broad Rock Road, has invited us to exhibit every other month. It has been decided that we accept the invitation with several members exhibiting at one time.

Many groups have invited us to attend their art shows.

1. Bernard Davis at the Manchester High School invited us to view the work of the Art Dept. and see the Virginia Museum Art Mobile.
2. Westover Art Group Show, some of our members belong to the group.
3. Verdell Hubbard invited us to view the Art Show at the A.M. Davis Elementary School. Two of our members, Ann Southall, and Helen Wolverton were among the judges for the show.
4. Lee Winne, Westover Hills Branch Library, invited us to a special display of Art Books available to us, Mon. Nov.15.

We have been invited as individuals to participate and exhibit in the,

1. Jefferson Davis Gallery.
2. Virginia Biennial, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.
3. La Vogue Stores voiced an interest in displaying our work.
4. Valentine Museum, Biennial Painting in Richmond.

City High School Special Art Classes organized a sculpture(our choice) class at George Wythe High School during the summer of 1965. 15 members of our League attended.

We were invited to have a poster contest for the American Heart Association. Mary Ann Ferneylough was the winner and we are very proud of her. The poster was used throughout Virginia.

Therefore, Due to the fine leadership of our Director, Louise Bono, and the hard work of well chosen committees, we can be proud of many accomplishments, both for ourselves and our community. If success is measured by community acceptance, Beth Bass and her publicity committee have accomplished their goal. They have made the public very much aware of our presence through the media of the newspapers, radio and T.V. What more proof can we have than Thalhimers wanting us back each year for "Focus on Art". The Southside Merchants want our Sidewalk Sale again next year, and the Westover Hills Branch Library say that they are so glad we are there...

Exposure of our objets d'art in many nooks and crannies has been due to the cunning of Ann Southall and her Committee. How many sleepless nights are there Ann, that we will never know about, to say nothing of gallons of gas???

At the May meeting when Elsie MacCord expressed our debt of gratitude to the Chairmen and their committees, she also referred to the growing pains of many kinds which our organization has experienced. Now is the time for each of us to ask ourselves if we are satisfied with the returns on our investment of time, effort and money. I think the scales are more than balanced, through our many goodtimes, new friends, new knowledge, and last but not least, more incentive to greater productivity.

Recorded May, 1966

Martha Anne Hart
Historian