



A HISTORY OF THE FAIRFIELD GLADE ART GUILD

by Joyce Guitar

Back in 1978, before most of us had ever heard of a place called Fairfield Glade, Tennessee, a small group of Glade residents interest in fine art began meeting with artists from Crossville. "It was just for fun," states Carol Schwan, who should know, since she and her husband Lionel, Al Maberry, Ruthanna Moss and Ella Mae Trees, were among those original few. Their first Art Show was held on the Court House lawn in Crossville, where our members did well. Druid Hills Country Club was the next site for a show, while the rest have been in the Arts and Crafts building.

Because of the distance to Crossville--Peavine Road was winding and treacherous--they decided to start their own art guild here at the Glade. Meetings of this yet to be named group were held in the Security building.

The Fairfield Glade Fine Arts Guild was officially born and named October 12, 1978 at its first organizational meeting. Elected to the presidency was Ed Mc Comb and Vice President and Program Chairman was Art Bouhall. Carol Schwan was Secretary-Treasurer. Officers were elected in November, with succeeding officers to assume office in January. Bonnie Vance was in charge of trips.

The first actual meeting of the group was on November 7, 1978. All 12 members paid the \$5.00 dues (still the same). Lionel Schwan took charge of publicity, while Bill Ludwig did displays. Meetings were on Mondays.

In the '70s, the group enjoyed a lot of potluck lunches. Nowadays, we savor just one at Christmastime, but many bring a snack lunch while working "upstairs at the Arts and Crafts" under the able tutelage of Elizabeth Hill. Whether pastels, watercolor, oil or scratch-board, she can help. The camaraderie is delightful. These Tuesday sessions are open to all-residents and visitors alike.

The Fine Arts Guild moved into its "new building" on Wilshire Heights in September of 1982--and promptly held its first Art Show. The Community Club holds the lease on the building and is the sponsor. Back then, how sweet it must have been for Art Guild members to "have their very own place."

At that time there were dinner theatre productions held in Druid Hills Country Club, with costumes made and kept in what is now the office and lunchroom of the Arts and Crafts building. Ceramics were created and fired upstairs, while many a lovely painting hung from the walls much as they do today.

The Spring Open House and Fall Art Shows were scenes of activity. --If only those walls could talk, they would tell of the fun and work that is part of our rich history.

On July 20, 1982 the Guild, as a result of a motion by Lionel Schwan, became the Fairfield Glade Art Guild. Naomi Conley was named building manager.

Other changes began as members worked to transform the house into an art gallery. A drinking fountain was installed, members painted, carpeted, installed new lights, built a ramp and railings for the front porch and created a beautiful sign. Our numbers remained small. Transformation preceded growth. Later, carpet covered plywood walls were installed, creating a new gallery look and a practical answer to constantly patching nail holes. Then, in 1991, track lighting in the gallery replaced the florescent lights in order to spotlight and enhance artwork displayed on the gallery walls.



Al Mayberry suggested we have an art library. It was started with a subscription to “Portfolio” magazine. It grew by leaps and bounds. Robert Usher, Robert Harrigan, Reeve Loomis and Thelma Whitford donated many books, as well as those given anonymously. The well over 300-book library today was lovingly catalogued by Sally and John Price in 1993.

If you would complain about today’s weather, consider this back in December, January and February of 1982 there were no meetings due to snow and ice!

On March 15, 1988, Tuesdays, became the working day, with the 3rd Tuesday of each month reserved for business meetings. The Art Guild also became an official non-profit organization.

Lionel Schwann was the very first “Artist of the Month”. Over the years, many outstanding artists have displayed their works, attracting members and patrons in the enjoyment of each artist’s unique talent. at Lionel’s death in 1989, Mary Bodman suggest the Guild’s Scholarship Fund (presented annually to a Cumberland County High School senior), be called the “Lionel Schwan Scholarship” in his honor. A commemorative plaque and an example of his line drawing technique can be seen hanging at the base of the stairway to upstairs.

It was deemed necessary to have hosts at the center in May 1984. Ella Mae Trees composed waivers for insurance purposes. In March 1985, Al Mayberry asked each artist to draw a black and white picture for a calendar. The profits were to go to worthy high school students interested in an art career. This was at the suggestion of Mary Bodman, Treasurer.

Presidents of the Guild have been: Ed McComb (three terms), Bonnie Vance, Al Maberry (two terms), Lionel Schwan, Don Good, Lu Teal, Sylvia Morrill, Dian Rentschler (two terms) and Bob Hoover, the current president.

Honorary members include Ed Nelson, Phyllis Lansinger and Emily Fath. Each has a long history of contributions to the Guild.

Now in 1994 with our membership over 80, the Art Guild has all but outgrown its facility. At our March meeting we voted to hold further meetings at the Multi-Purpose Building.

The Guild has had may outstanding artists who would shine in any community. We enjoy them because they share their talents freely. However, the intent of the Guild is not to have just outstanding artists, but to be a place where artists of all degree of talent and those residents just interested in art can get together to share and enjoy common interests.

It seems that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Back in 1978, members met, painted and drew, traded ideas and “tricks of the trace”, enjoyed each other, fed their faces, watched art videos, went to museums and art galleries, took educational trips, contributed to worthy art causes, welcomed new members, competed against each other and made the Fairfield Glade Art Guild what it is today a meeting place for extremely gifted and talented people who thoroughly enjoy helping out those less gifted. Fairfield Glade Art Guild continues on its original mission. It is a place to go to practice your art, feed your soul and have your spirits lifted.

