




Austin Friends of Folk Art 2004—The Year in Review

"Any art by any folk." This working definition of folk art has guided Austin Friends of Folk Art since its inception in July 1987 when it was founded to promote education about folk art and world cultures and to help ensure their preservation.



Programs promote education and friendship

Education is central to this organization, and dedicated volunteers typically arrange 12 or more programs annually.

In 2004 AFFA served up 15 varied activities:

- A presentation by anthropologist Michael Hironymous on rare 16th century maps of Mexico and Guatemala, drawn by Spanish and Indigenous cartographers for King Phillip II of Spain
- Annual membership meeting with music by Rambullion
- Carpool trip to San Antonio Museum of Art, first stop of the international tour of the exhibition of Fomento Económico Mexicano, S.A.'s collection of Mexican art, plus a view of "Semana Santa: The Art of the Passion of Christ," guided by Marion Oettinger
- Tour and presentation about two local neighborhood-produced mosaic murals, which were the brainchildren of artist Jean Graham
- Lecture on Mexican curanderos and their traditions by herbalist Carlos Hernández Calderoni
- Movie night, "Life Lessons," including a discussion led by Dr. Bill Tullis on the role of psychological and emotional conflict in artistic creativity
- Movie night, "Children of Heaven," dealing with Iranian life and culture
- Private tour of "Mexican Calendar Legends," an exhibit featuring utopian scenes on nationalistic themes, printed between 1930 and 1960 by publishing house Galas de México—guided by Mexic-Arte's Executive Director Sylvia Orozco
- Bus trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to see the exhibit, "Machu Picchu: Unveiling the Mystery of the Incas," followed by a visit to the home of folk art collectors Judy Klugle and Jim Saunders

- Program on Japanese kimonos by Carola Pfau
- What Is That Thing? (See article below for more details)
- Day of the Dead altar-building and decoration, including pozole and potluck, with a slide show of altars by artist Sharon Smith
- 6-day tour of Mexico's Copper Canyon area, home of the Tarahumara people
- Annual holiday party (formerly the Christmas party) with beloved gospel group, The Bells of Joy
- Demonstration of the art of making papier-maché sculptures by David Linares, the third generation of Mexico's renowned Linares family

What Is This Thing? A new AFFA tradition!

Who doesn't have something they'd like to know more about?

In September, AFFA lined up 11 experts in textiles, ceramics, santos, retablos and other types of folk art, and invited members to bring favorite art objects for identification and evaluation.

Bring things, they did. Experts identified pre-Columbian, Latin American, Native American, African, Asian and Oceanic treasures.

There's already talk of repeating this event, which combined education, tamales and camaraderie in true AFFA spirit.

AFFA 1987-2004. Read all about it!

Want to know how AFFA got started, or what you've missed over the years? Now, thanks to retired journalist Robert Hollingsworth, you can read about AFFA's founding, its goals and programs and its struggles for solvency.

"When I agreed to write this history, I thought it would take a few weeks," says Hollingsworth. "I didn't realize that the project would require research into scattered files (and piles of papers), months of interviews with past presidents, detective work, writing, rewriting and editing—all of which took more than a year and ended up involving most of the board of directors."

The result, *Austin Friends of Folk Art 1987-2004: An Informal History*, is available for \$5 from Trevoris Morgan, new president of the board. "We

want people to get to know the organization better, so have decided to price this just to cover printing costs," she says.

A spin-off benefit is that AFFA now has, in one place, year-by-year binders containing program announcements, financial records, membership lists and the other raw material of its organizational life.

A few words about finances

AFFA exists to promote education about and appreciation of folk art, and as a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation it has a responsibility to serve the wider community—not just its members.

AFFA derives its income primarily from membership dues, the annual silent auction and out-of-town trips. (Fees for routine events seldom cover the costs of mailing and refreshments.)

While AFFA struggled financially for many years, it concluded 2004 with considerable assets. In early 2004 the board of directors made several important decisions about how these funds will be used.

- **Routine programs**—These are offered primarily, but not exclusively, for members, with a standard honorarium of \$100 for each presenter. There is a formal application form to complete and a provision for larger honorariums if approved by a majority of the board.
- **Grants and donations to support folk art within the larger community**—Grants of up to \$500 for an individual and \$1,000 for an organization may be made upon board majority approval of a brief, standardized grant application form. The target total given in grants and donations each year will be \$2,000, the average amount our assets have been increasing annually.
- **Visionary funds**—To be used for new, unusual and significant undertakings that go well beyond the scope of regular programming, such as bringing well-known artists or experts to Austin, sponsoring seminars, partnering with other organizations to underwrite special exhibits or to make contributions to institutions that would become permanent additions to the preservation of a culture.

AFFA funds at work

In addition to \$500 given in honorariums to program presenters and \$850 paid to musicians for the holiday and membership parties, AFFA gave \$1,700 in donations and grants in 2004 to support folk art indoors, outdoors, and in the ivory tower.

San Antonio Museum of Art received \$100 to advance its mission which is “to educate by collecting, presenting, and preserving the significant artistic achievements of the world’s cultures from ancient times to the present, and through aesthetic and educational experiences, to develop a deeper understanding of human cultures, values, and traditions for visitors of all ages.

While most AFFA trips to the museum have centered on Latin American art, the permanent collection also includes Oceanic, Asian, Near Eastern and Islamic art, as well as ancient art, 18th and 19th century American art, European art and modern and contemporary art.

San Fernando Cathedral, San Antonio’s oldest church received \$250 to help pay for restoration to seven statues damaged by a vandal in January 2004.

Six of the seven statues were about 100 years old and some had just been restored. Anne Zanikos, who did that restoration, said the prognosis is good for all the damaged pieces. “I’m only worried about St. Francis, because his face is so completely crushed,” she said.

Morning Star Rising, a youth empowerment program housed at Fulmore Middle School, received \$250 to defray costs of the “Uppity Women Film Festival,” a benefit featuring four films about strong women, including Brazil’s first black female senator and an Iowa housewife who discovers her Guatemalan history and her political voice.

Morning Star Rising helps ease girls’ transition from adolescence into adulthood through a four-phase program that spans 8th and 9th grades. In phase one, participants study community history, cultural traditions, folklore, folk art and family roots. In phase two, they explore personal power and discover areas of interest and individual talent. Phase three focuses on setting attainable goals and on self-determination, and in phase four, participants design and implement a community service project, thus gaining insight into the rewards of contributing to a society of which they form an integral part.

Hospice Austin a non-profit organization, received \$100 in memory of Emma Rini, mother of board member Merry Wheaton. Hospice Austin provides family-centered quality end of life care that emphasizes compassion, independence, respect and dignity. At Camp Brave Heart, its recreational summer camp for children ages 6 through 17 who have experienced the death of a loved one, campers have an opportunity to explore their loss through a variety of creative activities.

Jean Graham, artist of record, for the “Wall of Welcome” mosaic mural project, received \$500 to help cover the cost of materials. The mural—a neighborhood project—will cover a block-long wall between Woodrow Avenue and the Crestview Shopping Center.

With Jean’s guidance, Crestview neighbors have worked together to create individual tiles which will be combined with others that tell the history of the neighborhood. In appreciation for AFFA’s support, the mural will include an AFFA tile created by board members Nancy Townsend and Merry Wheaton.

“Various groups of neighbors met three times to create their tiles, which are really charming. This is truly a community-building project,” says Nancy.

In April Jean, who works for the City of Austin as program coordinator of Art in Public Places, gave AFFA members a presentation about this project and a tour of a similar project already completed in a garden setting at Brentwood Elementary School.

Benson Latin American Library Endowment Fund received \$500 after Michael Hironymous, who is in charge of the library’s Rare Books and Manuscripts Room, gave AFFA members a tour of maps which King Phillip II of Spain ordered be drawn in an effort to gain information about the New world’s population, political jurisdictions, languages, physical terrain and vegetation.

These rare maps, produced by European and Indian hands are diverse and fascinating. The Benson Latin American Library, holds one-half of all such extant maps. The library also has a wealth of information on folk art, but is no longer receiving money from the state to make purchases.

WANTED: Your ideas

Do you have a program idea or know of a worthy folk art project that needs funding? AFFA needs your ideas, so please contact one of the board members listed here.

About AFFA online & our business members

Our website is updated periodically by Sage McKenzie. Check it out often for program information and links to sites of our business members:

- Antigua
- El Interior
- The Flower Bucket
- Indigena Imports
- Interweavers
- La Loba Design
- Las Manos Magicas
- Mexic-Arte Museum
- Mexico's Lake Chapala and Ajijic
- Pieces of the Past
- Tesoros Trading Co.
- Texas Folklife Resources
- Turquoise Door
- Turquoise Trading Post
- Una Tierra Distante
- Uncommon Objects
- Wildwood Cafe & Art Gallery
- Zanzibar

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Barbara Jackson
467-2272
barbara@jaf-inc.com

President-elect

Trevoris Morgan
248-8410
trevorism@austin.rr.com

Vice president

Nancy Townsend
345-5470
nan911@Netscape.net

Secretary

Terry Tannert
477-7363
Terryfolkart2@aol.com

Treasurer

Michael Albanes
345-3258
mnalbanes@cs.com

Assistant treasurer

Dagmar Grieder
453-1025
djgrieder@sbcglobal.net

Terry Hennessey
416-8069

Robert Hollingsworth
343-7240
rhollingsworth@earthlink.net

Merry Wheaton
451-4772
mcwheaton@austin.rr.com

Changes to the Board in 2005

President

Trevoris Morgan
248-8410
trevorism@austin.rr.com

Susan Toomey Frost
477-2575
sfrost @austin.rr.com

Want to join AFFA?

Our members—numbering 192 at the end of 2004—are a diverse and culturally curious group which includes individuals of different ages and many different walks of life, as well as 18 shops, galleries and cultural organizations. We'd love to have you join us to learn about and support folk art—and to enjoy people with similar interests! Call Terry Tannert, 512-477-7363.