



(860) 434-7802 90 Lyme Street, Old Lyme CT 06371 LymeArtAssociation.org

September 15, 2026

Greetings,

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Lyme Art Association is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 21st at 5:30 pm**. I hope that you can attend. Refreshments will be served at 5:00 pm. We will be reviewing the past year's activities here at the Lyme Art Association and will also be voting on the Board of Directors slate.

The following items are attached:

- 2026 Annual Membership Meeting Agenda.
- Board of Directors Slate
- Proxy Authorization form. If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting, Lyme Art Association Bylaws allows you to authorize another eligible voting member (Elected Artist, current Board member, or Life Member) to cast your votes. **Please be sure to gain the agreement of your proxy holder** to cast your votes. This is very important – an eligible voting member may hold no more than two proxy votes, and proxy holders must be aware of whose proxies they hold. Return your completed Proxy Authorization form to Lyme Art Association, preferably by Monday, October 19, but by no later than 5:00 pm on October 21.

Only voting members whose dues are current are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. If you have any questions about your dues, please contact the office. You may renew at the gallery, call us at (860) 434-7802, or renew online at <https://lymeartassociation.org/membership/>.

Please note a change this year – the Elected Artists' final chance to vote on the new candidates for Elected Artist status is October 7th, which is two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

I look forward to seeing you on October 21st.

Sincerely,

Michael Centrella
President



LYME ART ASSOCIATION

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AGENDA
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Wednesday, October 21, 2026, 5:30 pm

Light refreshments will be served at 5:00 pm, prior to the meeting.

The mission of the Lyme Art Association is to promote and cultivate an appreciation for representational fine arts by holding art exhibitions, conducting educational programs for the benefit of its members and the greater community and by owning, maintaining, and preserving an historic building and galleries in Old Lyme, Connecticut.

1. **Call to Order, President's Remarks** – Michael Centrella, President
2. **2025 Annual Meeting Minutes Review & Approval** - Michael Centrella, President
3. **Executive Director's Remarks** - Elsbeth Dowd, Executive Director
4. **Strategic Planning Report** – Maura Cochran, Committee Member
5. **Treasurer's Report** – John Beatty, Assistant Treasurer
6. **Investment Committee Report** - Steven Ross, Committee Chair
7. **Audit Committee Report** – John Beatty, Committee Chair
8. **Election of Directors** - Katherine Simmons, Nominating Committee Chair
9. **Artistic Policy & Exhibition Committee Report** - Beverly Schirmeier, Committee Chair
10. **Gallery Sales Report** - Paul Michael, Gallery Director
11. **Education and Activities Report** - Lorraine Yurkewicz, Committee Member
12. **Buildings and Grounds Report** – Paul Michael, Gallery Director
13. **Development Report** – Elsbeth Dowd, Executive Director
14. **Newsletter Report** - Katherine Simmons, Editor
15. **Other Business**
16. **Final Remarks, Thank You** - Elsbeth Dowd, Executive Director
17. **Adjournment of Meeting** – Michael Centrella, President



LYME ART ASSOCIATION

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Annual Meeting Minutes DRAFT

October 8, 2025, 5:30pm at LAA Gallery

The mission of the Lyme Art Association is to promote and cultivate an appreciation for representational fine arts by holding art exhibitions, conducting educational programs for the benefit of its members and the greater community and by owning, maintaining, and preserving an historic building and galleries in Old Lyme, Connecticut.

Voting Members Present: Del-Bourree Bach, John Beatty, Michael Centrella, Sara Drought Nebel, Faripour Forouhar, Donna Gilberto, Debbi Goodman, Sunil Howlader, Randie Kahrl, Paul Loescher, Barbara Maiser, Lisa Miceli, Richard Nazzaro, Jeanne O'Brien, Howard Park, Judy Perry, Liane Philpotts, Anne Bingham Pierson, Steven Ross, Beverly Schirmeier, Matthew Schwager, Paul Sellier, Lorraine Yurkewicz, David Zuckerbraun

Other members present: Diana Rogers, C.R. Hong

Members voting by proxy: Serena Bates, Angie Falstrom, Lois Lawrence, Kim Sapia, Katherine Simmons,

Staff Present: Elsbeth Dowd, Paul Michael, Sara Drought Nebel, Jolie Collins, Julia Braatz, and Franceska Nebel.

Call to Order: Michael Centrella, Board President, called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

2024 Annual Meeting Minutes Review and Approval: Michael asked everyone to review last year's minutes. One correction under election of directors: Paul Sellier finished his turn on the board last year. Steven Ross made a correction to the investment committee report: The advisory fee is 0.80%, not 0.85%. Howard Park made a motion to approve 2024's minutes with these corrections, Beverly Schirmeier seconded. All voted in favor, unanimous approval.

Michael wanted everyone to acknowledge our board, staff, committee members, volunteers, members, as well as our founders. He gave a brief summary on what we will be discussing today.

Executive Director's Report: Elsbeth Dowd thanked everyone for our amazing donors, artists, art lovers, volunteers, committee members, staff, etc. LAA has had a great year, despite challenges. It was a very good year for art sales, which Paul Michael will reiterate later in the Gallery Report. We had an amazing year for volunteers and events. We brought in a lot of new faces; donors, members, buyers, and supporters in general. In times of division, art brings us together. She talked about an organization called 4A arts, which advocates at the state level for art funding and sounds like a good connection to keep an eye on. We hope to build on our successes in the coming year.

Strategic Planning Report: Maura Cochran could not be here so Beverly Schirmeier, past president, presented the report. This year our goal is to continue to expand our base, including our donor base. Nine percent of our money comes from membership, 16 percent from the donor base. We hope to continue to improve membership benefits to our artists. She mentioned our incredible sales and that a big part of this is due to our professional staff members, which makes us different from other arts organizations. A major goal going forward and something we've been successful with this year is outreach and strengthening our relationships with other organizations, which has brought us new members, buyers, and donors. Another big factor is our promotion through social media. In the last year, we have been very active.

Howard asked if someone goes out to local businesses and individuals, if they ask directly to promote their business through us. Beverly said we have different groups that do. Elsbeth mentioned that since we do not have a dedicated development manager, we rely on a small number of people that go out to businesses for sponsorships, especially for special events. We have had a hard time getting exhibition sponsors this way. She made a call to everyone asking for help and connections.

Treasurer's Report: John Beatty reviewed the treasurer's report in Kathy Simmons' stead. He said we had a good year, although not a great one. He reviewed the year's financial report. We had a phenomenal summer. Gallery sales for the first nine months of the year were the best on record. Revenue was up and expenses were not up as much. Fundraising, commissions, and donations add up to about 48% of our income, while membership is about 9%. Education is a large income item but also a large expense. He pointed out that sales aren't as good at associations that don't keep staff, so our staff expenses are worth the investment. Most of the major expenses this year were out of our control; for example, insurance has gone up massively in the last few years.

Howard Park mentioned it may be worth it to push our current members and committee members to ask their friends, family, etc to become members here. John agreed that this would be helpful. Howard wondered if this could be a campaign we pushed in the future.

Investment Committee Report: Steven Ross reviewed the investment committee report. Our investment portfolio has three accounts: 1) the Foster Caddell account, established by Gail Caddell and their generous donation, 2) the Cooper Ferry Account, which is a restricted account, and 3) an unrestricted account. We pay below industry average at .80%. Total value as of September 30th was about \$1,021,800. There was an increase of \$77,000. Our total return was 11.11%. vs 10.87% which is the benchmark number. Income was \$27,981 from equities and fixed income. We distribute income to operating expenses and advisory fees and leave gains in account. Our target investment allocation is 70% equities and 30% fixed income. We are in a period of time where the volatility seems to have settled down. The market is seeing record highs. This year the audit committee audited the investment portfolio and found no irregularities.

Audit Committee Report: Paul Sellier presented the audit committee report on investments. He noted that our investment holdings are second in financial value only to this building. Investments are managed by a major investment advisory firm. A review of reports showed that they are in compliance with LAA's investment policy.

Election of Directors: Michael said that most of our current board members are in the middle of their terms and so are not standing for renewal this year. Debbi Goodman and Katherine Simmons are on the ballot to begin new two-year terms this year. Three members are also on the ballot to start their first term on the board: Brian McClear, Liane Philpotts, and Diana Rogers, all of whom have bios included within the Annual Meeting packet.

Beverly made a motion to accept this ballot, Howard seconded. No Nays, Motion passed unanimously.

Michael announced that Beverly Schirmeier, past president, is ending her time on the board. Everyone present thanked her for her generous years of service to LAA.

Election of Life Members: Michael presented three members as candidates for life membership: Debbi Goodman, Paul Sellier, and Katherine Simmons, all of whom have bios and records of service included in the Annual Meeting packet.

Steven Ross made a motion to accept these new life members. Howard seconded. No nays, motion passed unanimously.

Artistic Policy & Exhibition Committee (APEC) Report: Beverly summarized the APEC report. This year, we began doing online submissions which reduced staff effort to store paintings, saved time during installation weeks, and made it possible for people further away to submit to exhibitions. We have streamlined the process and our staff has helped members during the transition. At the beginning of the year it was a little slow, but it's shown to be very successful. APEC recently looked over art themes to see if that had a correlation to sales and reviewed statements to tighten up the wording to refine the prospectuses. The 2026 exhibition descriptions have been added to the website. APEC has discussed how they can enhance exhibitions and has found success using the Mile Brook Gallery as a way to expand exhibitions. This year they were able to secure additional funding to increase select award amounts.

Gallery Sales Report: Paul Michael presented the gallery sales report. He presented detailed records, showing our highest monthly sales were in August. We had a great year for sales in 2024 but as of September 2025, we've surpassed 2024. There are many theories as to why, including an improvement in the quality of the art and the shift to online entry. In gross sales we've started to surpass year to date for 2024. Howard Park commented that Paul Michael created a seamless transition, and praised his performance as Gallery Director.

Education and Activities Report: Lorraine presented the education and activities report. It's been an incredible year for productivity and creativity. LAA hosted over a dozen workshops plus numerous classes, art talks, critiques, and demos. All our education programs are open to members and the broader community. This year we had a new series of online courses organized by Betsy Barry. All our events have been going well and the plein air group has been meeting weekly. All the work by Sara Drought Nebel, Jolie Collins, and staff as well as instructors and volunteers has made it an incredible year for us in the studio and beyond.

Buildings and Grounds: Paul Michael presented the building and grounds report. He thanked everyone who has been volunteering to keep our grounds looking beautiful. He particularly thanked Peter Lacey who has been dedicated to our hillside, fighting the knotweed, and prepping that space for more plants coming in. Bob Potter donated the proceeds from his talks to benefit the upkeep of the property. He gave a huge thank you to Debbi Goodman, for all the beautiful flowers she brings into the gallery. The Duck River Garden Club has also contributed floral arrangements. We were able to regravel the driveway, remove one tree, and trim more trees thanks to the Summer Challenge, which covered all these expenses. Pfizer volunteers have also been working to plant trees on the side of our property.

Development Report: Elsbeth Dowd presented the development report. She said it has been a decent year for contributions. We have received the usual grants but the granting climate is currently tight. We have received generous support from the Kitchings Family Foundation, the Herb Chambers Charitable Foundation, and the Cooper Family. She discussed how fostering these relationships, bringing in new faces, reaching out to local families and offering them programs to keep them coming back are all vital to LAA and our mission. Exhibition sponsorships have been difficult to acquire but Ascend Bank has generously sponsored the current show. Palate to Palette is coming up next week, in its tenth anniversary year. Sponsorships and ticket sales have been going very well. She thanked David Zuckerbraun and Sarah Stifler Lucas for organizing Sea & Sky earlier this year, which had a great second year. She discussed how our next Capital Campaign will be focused on accessibility. We are working with Point One Architects for ways we can make our building more accessible for all our members and visitors. Elsbeth thanked everyone for their time, talents, and energy they bring to the Association.

Steven Ross asked how much the Point One study will cost. Elsbeth said it will cost around \$10,000 and then there will be another \$10,000 needed for contractors to come in and assess our needs and provide a quote for the work to be done.

Newsletter Report: Michael presented the newsletter report since Katherine Simmons is absent. We will be continuing to create and print our bi-annual newsletters in 2026. Katherine's only request to everyone

is to submit articles for the newsletter, which she needs by early to mid December. The newsletter currently goes out to around 6,000 by e-mail and is mailed to our members and top donors and collectors. Liane asked if we'd considered soliciting for advertisements in the newsletter to help fund it. Michael said we've considered but we need volunteers to solicit these sponsorships.

Other Business: Richard Nazzaro spoke to how successful and important our educational programs have been and asked the board to talk more on this. Elsbeth discussed how we've instituted new payment plans with instructors and workshops so that the teachers are still being paid fairly but our students are not paying too much more. She noted that, in keeping with our mission, education is a large revenue item. Elsbeth spoke to how important education and outreach programs are here at the gallery, how this cultivates our community, and fosters support from the local community.

Final Remarks & Thank Yous: Several board members and artists discussed how we can all do our part to market LAA, both by bringing guests to the gallery and through social media marketing.

Adjournment of Meeting: Del-Bouree Bach called for a motion to adjourn. Jeanne O'Brien seconded, all voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 6:40pm.



Lyme Art Association, 90 Lyme Street, Old Lyme CT 06371

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS SLATE

Nominated for Election for a two-year term 2026-2028

Del-Bourree Bach	Del is an Elected Artist and serves as Vice President and is on APEC and the Palate to Palette Committee. He is a professional artist who lives in Mystic. (Third Term)
Betsy Barry	Betsy Barry is an Elected Artist who specializes in colored pencil drawings and fiber creations. She has been teaching for over 15 years and started the online instruction program at LAA. She lives in Old Lyme. (First Term).
Serena Bates	Serena is an Elected Artist who served on the Board of Directors from 2018 to 2022. Her sculptures are widely exhibited throughout the United States and Canada. Beyond her studio practice, Serena coordinates a scholarship program supporting young artists pursuing careers in the arts. She is a professional artist who lives in Westerly, RI. (First Term)
John Beatty	John is a Life Member of the LAA who served for many years as Treasurer and has chaired the Audit Committee. He lives in Old Lyme (Third Term)
Randie Kahrl	Randie is an Elected Artist who lives in Old Lyme. She is a licensed architect in Massachusetts who worked in residential design before retiring to Connecticut. She serves on the Education & Activities Committee. (Third term)
Lois Lawrence	Lois is an Associate Artist who serves on the Governance and Palate to Palette Committees. After many years practicing family law, she is now largely retired aside from consulting in her partner's cases. Lois lives in Stonington. (Second Term)
Paul Loescher	Paul is an Elected Artist who lives in Clinton. He is a retired architect who was Director of Facilities Planning for 25 years for Southern Connecticut State University. Paul is the chair of the Capital Projects Committee. (Third Term)
Jeanne O'Brien	Jeanne is an Associate Artist who serves on the Development Committee and special events committees. She is a retired director of nursing and facility administrator and has pursued oil painting for many years. Jeanne lives in Deep River. (Second Term)
Lynn Scully	Lynn is an artist and active member at LAA who frequently participates in classes and workshops. She is a financial adviser at Stifel in Southbury, Connecticut. She has a volunteer background in fundraising and plans to join the Capital Campaign Committee. Lynn lives in Old Lyme. (First Term)
Paul Sellier	Paul is a community member from Old Lyme who served on the Board of Directors from 2017 to 2024. He has been Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and has served on the Development, Palate to Palette, Buildings & Grounds, Capital Project, and Finance Committees. Paul was appointed in November and currently serves as Treasurer. (First Term)

Lorraine Yurkewicz	Lorraine is an Associate Artist who serves as Secretary and is on the Education and Activities Committee and special events committees at LAA. She retired from Pfizer as Director in Clinical Research and lives in Old Lyme. (Third Term)
David Zuckerbraun	David is a community member who is Vice President and Trust Officer at Essex Bank. He has also worked at the Washington Trust Company and before that was engaged in private legal practice. David serves on the Development and Investment Committees and co-chairs the Spring Soiree Committee and lives in Niantic. (Third Term)

Directors currently serving on the Board of Directors

Debbi Goodman	Debbi is an Associate Artist who lives in East Haddam. She serves on APEC and the special events and Development Committees and chairs the Education and Activities Committee. Debbi also makes our entrance look beautiful in all seasons. (Third Term)
Brian McClear	Brian is an Elected Artist who lives in West Hartford. He serves on APEC and has been an active participant in LAA's activities, giving demonstrations and public talks. He spent over 25 years in the advertising world and now paints full time. (First Term)
Liane Philpotts	Liane is an Elected Artist who lives in Madison. She serves on the Governance and the Development Committees. She is a physician. (First Term)
Diana Rogers	Diana is an Associate Artist who lives in Clinton. She serves on the Education & Activities Committee and is an instructor at LAA. She is a former clinician and healthcare industry executive. (First Term)
Katherine Simmons	Katherine is an Elected Artist and retired Human Resources executive who lives in Glastonbury. She chairs the Archive, Newsletter, and Governance/Nominating Committees and donates her graphic design services. Katherine served as President of the board from 2009 through October 2019. (Third Term)



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PROXY AUTHORIZATION

For

Annual Membership Meeting, October 21, 2026, 5:30 p.m. at Lyme Art Association

Lyme Art Association Bylaws allow a voting member of the Lyme Art Association (Elected Artist Members, Life Members, and current Lyme Art Association Board Members and Committee Chairs) to authorize another eligible voting member to cast his/her vote(s) according to this proxy authorization. Only voting members whose dues are current are eligible to vote at any Annual or Special Membership Meeting of Lyme Art Association.

Please be sure that your designated proxy holder agrees to hold your proxy and has signed this form before submitting it to the Lyme Art Association.

A voting member may not hold more than two proxies at any membership meeting.

**To be valid, this signed proxy authorization must be received
by the Lyme Art Association no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 21, 2026.**

I, _____, hereby authorize _____, a voting member of the Lyme Art Association, who has agreed to cast votes on my behalf at the Association membership meeting referenced above.

Check one:

____ This proxy authorization applies to any matter put to a vote at this meeting.

____ This proxy authorization applies only to the following matter(s) included on the agenda for the meeting.

1. Election of Directors

Signature of member granting the proxy

Print Name

Date

The Proxy Authorization must be signed by the proxy holder before the beginning of the Membership Meeting.

Signature of proxy holder

Print Name

Date