

Austin Friends of Folk Art Annual Report 2003

A Glance at the Rearview Mirror

We're a culturally curious bunch

Since Austin Friends of Folk Art was established in July 1987, dedicated volunteers have arranged an average of 10 to 12 programs a year and periodic trips, all to promote and expand knowledge of folk art and world cultures and help ensure their preservation.

After 16 years, AFFA counts nearly 200 members—individuals and businesses, including some of the finest import shops, galleries and cultural centers in Central Texas. We're a diverse group and our definition of folk art embraces a wide variety of media—from food to music, from prehistoric petroglyphs to contemporary urban mural art.

Our programming in 2003

- Alma del Barro/Soul of the Clay: a talk on the art of Talavera tile by passionate collector Susan Toomey Frost
- Supper at Wildwood Cafe and talk by owner, Joan Griffith, on Oaxacan wood carvings she has imported for over 30 years
- Membership party at Trevor's Morgan and Dana Shelton's, with music by Poor Man's Fortune
- Visit to Bob Coffee's studio, where he was at work on almost life-size sculpture of Majan to benefit Kabul Zoo in Afghanistan
- Tour of Austin artist Candy Becker's studio, newly created from a garage, with a mural in progress on the side
- Dig with Llano Uplift Archaeological Society at sites of 1000-year-old Indian camps, then picnic by the river
- Gathered around a Huichol Indian artist from Jalisco as he created a traditional painting with yarn pressed into beeswax, at Priscilla Murr's "house"
- Summer movie nights: Black Orpheus at Monica Shomo's & Pow Wow Highway at Terry Tannert's
- Two presentations by Gloria Giffords, author of Mexican Folk

Retablos: Masterpieces on Tin: (1) a talk about retablos with a potluck dinner at Priscilla Murr's, and (2) a luncheon at Caswell House, where we hosted the SAMA group that has made us repeatedly welcome in San Antonio and enjoyed Ms. Gifford's slides as she talked about her new book, Sanctuaries of Earth, Stone and Light: the Religious Structures of Northern New Spain, 1530-1821

- Postcards from Afar: a gallery talk by Dr. Jean Andrews (the Pepper Lady) about the clothing and folk art she collected along the Silk Road
- Talk by Linda Robinson, Ph.D. in Egyptian archaeology and murder mystery writer, with potluck dinner at Barbara Jackson's home
- Day of the Dead altar-making and potluck dinner at Pat Tyler's, hosting members of Mexican Folk Art Society of Houston and California's Los Amigos del Arte Popular, followed by Mexic-Arte's annual Day of the Dead parade
- Images in Central Texas Graveyards, an illustrated talk by Marian Haigh on customs and traditions associated with cemeteries of Mexicans, Germans and other groups in Texas, with potluck dinner at Terry Grieder's studio
- Holiday party and silent auction fundraiser at Joe & Carolyn Osborn's home, with the rousing gospel group, The Bells of Joy

What's new?

- The Board started the last two years with a day-long retreat to focus on AFFA's future. As a result AFFA now boasts:
 - a beautiful color brochure designed by Jean Andrews
 - www.austinfriendsoffolk.org designed and maintained by Sage McKenzie
 - a draft history of AFFA's first 16 years, researched and written by Holly Hollingsworth
 - a renewed commitment to recruit and support business members
 - formalized procedures for paying honoraria and making other larger expenditures

- an application form and a formal process for making grants or donations that support folk art in this community, and
- this, AFF's first official written annual report to members.

A few words about finances

A not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, AFFA derives its income from membership dues, event fees, the annual silent auction, and out-of-town trips. Although AFFA has struggled financially over the years, as of December 31, 2003, its assets totalled \$25,634, accumulated primarily from trips, increases in dues-paying members and the silent auction. This means AFFA now enjoys financial stability and the opportunity to go beyond routine programming and plan for special activities that will benefit members and the greater community.

For routine programming, the Board set a standard honorarium for presenters of \$100. The Board also voted to allocate \$2,000 per year—the amount our assets on average have been increasing annually—to support folk art within the larger community, and it formalized a brief grant application and award process for individuals and organizations. Recent gifts of this type include \$500 to Mexic-Arte to mat artworks for the exhibit of pieces from its permanent collection and \$500 to one of the Benson Latin American Library's endowment funds.

That still leaves AFFA with "visionary" funds for new, unusual and significant undertakings. These assets could be used to bring well-known artists or experts to Austin, to sponsor seminars, to partner with other organizations in underwriting special exhibits, or even to make contributions to institutions that will become permanent additions to the preservation of a culture. Being mindful that these funds are not being replaced like those allocated for philanthropy, the Board wants to move carefully in this regard and it welcomes your suggestions for programming—routine or special.