



## What's Up? November 2025

Annual Holiday Party

December 7 at the Neill-Cochran House Museum

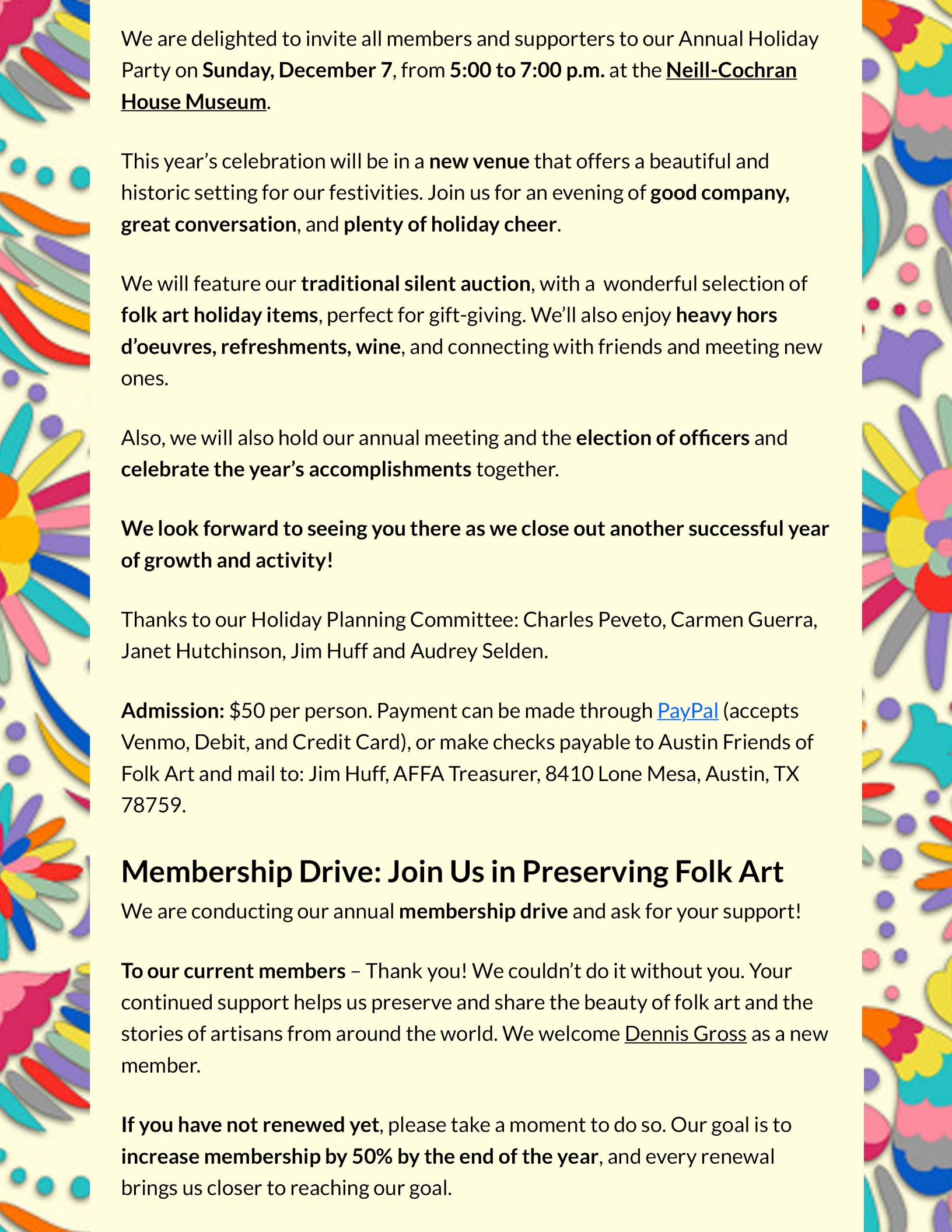
**AFFFA**  
AUSTIN FRIENDS OF FOLK ART

*2025 Holiday Party*

*Happy Holidays y'all!*

Austin Friends of Folk Art Annual Holiday Party  
December 7, 2025, 5 - 7pm  
Neill-Cochran House Museum  
2310 San Gabriel St, Austin, TX  
Admission: \$50 per person  
(heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks)





We are delighted to invite all members and supporters to our Annual Holiday Party on **Sunday, December 7**, from **5:00 to 7:00 p.m.** at the **Neill-Cochran House Museum**.

This year's celebration will be in a **new venue** that offers a beautiful and historic setting for our festivities. Join us for an evening of **good company, great conversation, and plenty of holiday cheer.**

We will feature our **traditional silent auction**, with a wonderful selection of **folk art holiday items**, perfect for gift-giving. We'll also enjoy **heavy hors d'oeuvres, refreshments, wine**, and connecting with friends and meeting new ones.

Also, we will also hold our annual meeting and the **election of officers** and **celebrate the year's accomplishments** together.

**We look forward to seeing you there as we close out another successful year of growth and activity!**

Thanks to our Holiday Planning Committee: Charles Peveto, Carmen Guerra, Janet Hutchinson, Jim Huff and Audrey Selden.

**Admission:** \$50 per person. Payment can be made through [PayPal](#) (accepts Venmo, Debit, and Credit Card), or make checks payable to Austin Friends of Folk Art and mail to: Jim Huff, AFFA Treasurer, 8410 Lone Mesa, Austin, TX 78759.

## **Membership Drive: Join Us in Preserving Folk Art**

We are conducting our annual **membership drive** and ask for your support!

**To our current members** – Thank you! We couldn't do it without you. Your continued support helps us preserve and share the beauty of folk art and the stories of artisans from around the world. We welcome Dennis Gross as a new member.

**If you have not renewed yet**, please take a moment to do so. Our goal is to **increase membership by 50% by the end of the year**, and every renewal brings us closer to reaching our goal.

## If you're new to AFFA, Welcome!

Here are just a few of the benefits of becoming a member:

- You'll help **fund exhibitions** and support the **preservation of over 1,000 folk art pieces** in our permanent collection.
- You'll be among the **first to hear about our upcoming exhibits, programs, and events.**
- You'll have the opportunity to **be ambassadors and participate in community outreach**, helping to educate the public about folk art and its traditions.

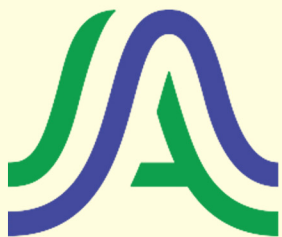
**Your membership makes a difference.**

Please [join or renew today](#) and help us continue our mission to **preserve, promote, and celebrate folk art and the artisans who create it.**



## Community and Partnership Updates

This month, we had the pleasure of meeting with **Angela Means**, Director of the **Austin Art, Cultural, Music, and Entertainment Department** ([AACME](#)). Our conversation focused on exploring new opportunities for **collaboration and community engagement.**



# Austin

## Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment

# New Exhibit: Somos Uno: Mexican and Mexican American Puppetry

We are excited to announce our participation in the upcoming exhibit [Somos Uno: Mexican and Mexican American Puppetry](#). We have signed a loan agreement for several masks from our collection that will be part of the exhibit.

This exhibition celebrates **cultural heritage and artistic storytelling through puppetry**, highlighting Mexican and Mexican American artists. We encourage you to visit and support the exhibition if you are in the area.

The Grand Opening is November 15th at the University of Connecticut, but you don't need to travel! The tour will be streamed on [Ballard Institute's Facebook Live](#) (4 PM CT).

For more insight, see the related [article](#) by **Dr. John Bell**, Director of the **Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry** at the University of Connecticut.

## ***Somos Uno Exhibition at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry will showcase Mexican and Mexican American Puppetry***

*Somos Uno: Mexican and Mexican American, on display at the University of Connecticut's Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry November 15, 2026 through March 8, 2026, will celebrate the unity of Mexican culture and art both south and north of our common border. Our exhibition seeks to understand and share the richness of Mexican and Mexican American puppetry and its fascinating differences from, and similarities with, other puppetry histories in the Americas.*



Dan Przybylski Collection, artist unknown



*We at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry are deeply grateful that the Austin Friends of Folk Art have generously lent us beautiful masks and figures from their collections to make Somos Uno possible.*

*Curated by undergraduate Puppet Arts student Sol Ramirez and Ballard Institute Director John Bell, Somos Uno will showcase puppets, masks, toy theaters, calaveras and other performing objects from pre-Columbian times to the present, to understand the roots, hardships, and power of a culture uniting to thrive as one. The exhibition will feature a wealth of Mexican masks, historical work by the Rosete Aranda Company, three generations of the Cueto Family, Alebrije creator Pedro Linares, and California's El Teatro Campesino, as well as work by Edwin Salas, Lormíga Titeres, Teatro del Gato, Alejandro Benítez, and other artists and puppeteers.*

*Puppet, mask, and object performance have long been part of Indigenous cultures in North America. Spanish conquistadors arriving in North America in the early 16th would have been familiar these practices, since similar traditions of masked dances, giant puppets, and powerful ritual objects had been part of Spanish Christian culture since the Middle Ages. Over the centuries, the overlay of Spanish ritual and performance practices on top of existing Mexica traditions helped develop a mestizaje, or mixture, of Indigenous and European cultures quite different from the exclusionary cultures that settler communities enforced in New England and the rest of North America.*

*The creation of the U.S./Mexican border in 1848 established a formal, if fluid, political boundary separating common cultural practices, and the different histories of the U.S. and Mexico since then have imposed sometimes arbitrary distinctions between Mexican and Mexican American cultural practices. Popular forms of Mexican puppetry in the 19th century reflected the influence of European practices of marionette theater, and early 20th-century Mexican puppetry adapted European hand-puppet forms. Contemporary Mexican puppetry includes an array of globally popular forms, and mestizo community rituals, and spiritual practices are still a strong and persistent presence. This exhibition reflects that richness with masks, marionettes, hand puppets, retablo alterpieces; giant Mojiganga puppets, calaveras, Judas figures and other forms of cartonería or paper-mâché sculptures, and both modern alebrijes and pre-Columbian-style Mexica figures. These puppets and performing objects show how Mexican and Mexican American puppet, mask, and performing object culture is a rich language of dynamic and functional visual art that nourishes community and identity no matter where it is performed.*



## Upcoming 2026 Exhibit in Boerne, Texas

Planning is underway for our **2026 traveling exhibit** in Boerne, Texas. We recently held our **second meeting with representatives of the Patrick Heath Public Library**, where the exhibit will be hosted.

## “Voces: Arte del Pueblo”

Our exhibit “**Voces: Arte del Pueblo**” continues at the **JGallery** through **December 17th**. If you haven’t had the opportunity to view the exhibit, there’s still time to visit!

Members are welcome to **visit and bring guests**. To **host a tour or group visit**, please contact us.

### **New Acquisitions:**

We received 15 new Oaxacan alebrijes and Salish/Squamish wood carvings from Les and Miye Cohen.

We look forward to sharing **new and exciting developments** before the end of the year, and we thank our **sponsors, supporters, artists, and families** who have joined us on this journey.



See you at the Holiday Party!

Amalia Rodriguez-Mendoza,  
President  
Austin Friends of Folk Art

### **From the Editor, Gloria Mata Pennington**

Greetings Friends, although I read somewhere that we just had the hottest October in years, I am grateful for the few cooler days that November is bringing. It makes me yearn for the days when I could take my little dog for a short walk for our enjoyment. However, my poor balance is a severe problem and walking even a short distance means using a Rollator. After a couple of falls, I have learned it is much safer. Having to cart it with me when I go out adds to the nuisance, though. I have begun to rely on my friends who are willing to take me places, and this makes me appreciate and love them more than ever.

## We Lost a Friend – Douglas Rhodenbaugh

A Couple of Memories by Frank T. Pool

If there's one thing I want people to know about Doug, it is that for 34 years he ran "The Pencil Project", a charity that gives school supplies to children in Guatemala. In that country, if kids show up on the first day of the school year with supplies, they are enrolled in school. If they don't have supplies, they go out to work in the fields with their families. The Pencil Project in recent years reached over 50,000 children a year. Douglas gave hundreds of thousands of children, or maybe a million, the chance at an education that can improve their lives.



He collected folk art. He never did anything by halves. His house is chock-full of museum-quality art – ceramics and textiles and paintings and masks, statues of saints and devils. Some people have a crucifix on the wall. Douglas had an entire wall of crucifixes, facing a wall of masks. He knew many things about many things. I once asked if one ceramic piece was pre-Columbian. He said, no, it was made in Mexico in 1940 but was nevertheless an important example of a specific movement in Mexican art.

Yes, indeed Doug was a kind man who loved folk art and shared it with many of us during his annual garage sales. Amalia and I always looked forward to going and seeking treasures, that we found often. Our visits were always made special by hearing about the art and many other tales from Doug. QEPD

## Until Next Month

It's time to start planning your Thanksgiving, I hope you get to enjoy good food with family and friends. It is also the perfect time to count your blessings and to be grateful for all the good that has come your way. Thanksgiving blessings to all of you.

We have plans for a wonderful Holiday Party, I hope you are making plans to attend. We know you will enjoy the good food, drink, company, and of course our auction. See you there!



### Board Members:

- Amalia Rodriguez Mendoza, President
- Jim Huff, Vice-President/Treasurer
- Audrey Selden, Secretary
- Carmen Guerra, Director of Membership

### Director Members:

- Carol Hayman
- Janet Hutchison
- Charles Peveto



Senior/Student  
Membership - \$25



Individual  
Membership - \$30



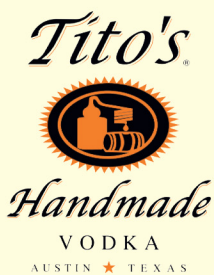
Couple/Family  
Membership - \$40



Business  
Membership - \$50

Membership Information: <https://austinfriendsoffolkart.org/join/>

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