

## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

# LET'S GET PERSONAL!

### Who are we?

### Why do we devote our time and talent to Arts Advocates?

### What do we get out of it?

In this and upcoming issues of our newsletter, we are going to introduce our Officers, Board of Directors and the rest of our leadership team to find out their answers to these questions.

In addition to describing our involvement with Arts Advocates, it will be interesting to hear from each of us what our greatest arts passion is. Mine is theater.

My husband and I moved to Sarasota from Summit NJ five years ago, but I see myself as a New Yorker since I worked in NYC for over 30 years. When I wasn't traveling, I went to shows after work – sometimes twice a week. I had subscriptions to five theater groups. I saw

dramas, comedies and musicals and loved them all. When the curtain rose, I always felt that the actors were there to tell me a story in real time. It was fascinating to see a show a second time and notice how different it felt, as it is unique every time it is performed. I get sucked into the world of the play and I don't leave that world until the house lights come back up.

One component of Arts Advocates is to raise awareness of our local arts organizations through our programming and exhibitions. I already see my appreciation of the visual arts growing through our gallery. I hope, in turn, I can pass along my love of the theatre to others.

Volunteering at Arts Advocates has introduced me to a wide variety of people with a wide variety of interests. Volunteering brings people together. If you would like to discuss a role for you, please email me at [president@artsadvocates.org](mailto:president@artsadvocates.org).



Carole Schwartz, President

# Meet Your Leadership Team

## First in a Series

This series will introduce you to the Arts Advocates Leadership Team – a group of dedicated volunteers who give their time and talents to foster the growth and vitality of our nonprofit organization. This will be a 5-part series, running through the December issue. Each subject was asked to state their current role in the organization, reveal their personal passion in the arts, and describe how they've benefited from their involvement in Arts Advocates. Enjoy getting to know your fellow members! As you will see, their love of the arts is heartfelt and their special interests span across all the arts.



### Waddy Thompson

Since 2019 I have been a team leader for fundraising, drawing on my more than 40-year career raising funds for various arts organizations in New York City, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Authors Guild, and InterSchool Orchestras of New York. I came to fundraising by accident, when an administrative job became available in music, my real passion. I have a doctorate in music composition from Florida State University, and my works have been performed at Encompass New Music Theater, Brevard Music Center, Florida Festival of New Music, St. Louis Spring Festival and Chicago Festival of New Music, among others. I enjoy working with the people associated with Arts Advocates and helping make its work possible. Being part of the Scholarship Committee this year was a particular privilege.



### Elisabeth (Liz) Trostli Rusling

As co-director of the Arts Advocates Gallery at the Crossings at Siesta Key, I help recruit local artists to exhibit their work in our Gallery. We organize the exhibit and arrange for an opening reception for our artists. My main artistic passion is as a visual artist and teacher, having enjoyed a long career as a free-lance commercial artist. My expertise is in the field of digital design, product design and surface design. I am currently a member of the Art Uptown Gallery. I was part of the Galleria show at Ringling College during an Arts Advocates (then Fine Arts Society) Creators and Collectors tour, and subsequently became a member. I worked with Donna Maytham to create Salons, Educational Tours and Workshops for our members. Through Arts Advocates I have met many very interested and interesting fellow members and gained an appreciation for other arts organizations in our community.





## Donna Maytham

I currently focus on fundraising and the Gallery. While I am passionate about ballet, I joined Arts Advocates because it covers all art forms. I have been on the Board of Directors for over 10 years. It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve as President and Vice President. Over the years, I have been Team Leader for Strategic Planning and Co-Team Leader for Fundraising as well as Team Leader for Member Tours and Programs. I'm looking forward to an exciting 2023-2024 Season.



## Stephenie Frasher

My new title is Chair of the Arts Engagement Committee. This incorporates Arts Advocates Outreach through talks about our collection to community groups, Public Art Walking Tours, Van Wezel Art and Backstage Tours, Docent Training and Scheduling, and Art Talks. Edgar Degas said, "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see." Art education has been my greatest passion. I am not an artist, but I love learning about all art and sharing my discoveries with others. Arts Advocates has so many opportunities to share, and I have loved making new friends by collaborating with them on different projects. My Art Talks have been my greatest joy. Interviewing requires a great deal of research to understand my speaker's background. This insight helps me to be a better interviewer, and I feel that these guests are now my friends. A win for me and Arts Advocates.



## Tonya Eubank

I co-chair the Scholarship Committee with Deb Altshul-Stark, an exhausting but fulfilling and joyous job. I love all of the arts, but dance is my passion. I majored in Humanities in college and developed a magnet program in the arts for middle school students. I love everything about Arts Advocates: the people, programs, art collection and scholarship program.

# Behind the Curtain:

## EXPLORING THE VAN WEZEL FROM THE ART TO THE STAGE

JULY 17 | 1:30-3PM  
AUGUST 21 | 1:30-3PM

Step onto the stage where a Van Wezel guide will give you a peek behind the curtain to learn about the many hands that create the Van Wezel's shows. You will see the ropes and pulleys that "fly" the scenery on and off the stage, the movable orchestra pit, dressing room, and loading dock where traveling shows back up their 18-wheelers to move their shows onto the stage. All the while you'll be dazzled by stories and anecdotes about the colorful world of show business!

Tours begin in the main lobby and cost \$15 per person. Tickets can be purchased at the Van Wezel box office or by calling **(941) 263-6799**. Private group tours can be arranged by calling **(941) 955-7676**. Proceeds benefit Arts Advocates and the Van Wezel's education/outreach programs.



**Dates:** July 17 and August 21, 1:30-3pm

**Place:** Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

**Cost:** \$15



# Art Talk: INTRODUCING THE CITY OF SARASOTA'S PUBLIC ART PLAN

JULY 21, 2023 | 4-6 PM

Sarasota is known for its beautiful beaches and the Arts! The City's Public Art program has over 100 works strategically placed to enhance the beauty of the city. Considering Sarasota's urban growth, learn from Mary Davis Wallace, the City's Senior Planner and Public Art Administrator, how the city's 10-year plan will continue to promote our city as a "go to" destination.

Mary Davis grew up in Asheville, North Carolina, where she developed a lifelong appreciation for the arts, architecture, and design. She received a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and holds a master's degree in urban planning from the University of Southern California's Price School of Public Policy. She has worked as a landscape designer and urban planner in North Carolina, Florida, and overseas. Her design and planning experience compelled her towards a deeper commitment to public art which led to her role as Executive Director of Cary Visual Art, a public art nonprofit in Cary, North Carolina. She went on to serve as donor relations coordinator at Duke University School of Medicine before moving back to Sarasota in 2017.

Mary Davis comes to the City from Sarasota County Government where she was a park planner and construction project manager. She specializes in arts program development and



**Mary Davis Wallace**  
Senior Planner and Public Art Administrator  
for the City of Sarasota

fundraising, public engagement, arts education and master planning. She serves on the national Arts and Planning Division Executive Committee for The American Planning Association (APA) and is an active member of The Florida Association of Public Art Professionals and Americans for the Arts. She has owned a home in Sarasota since 2005 and is a devoted gardener and animal lover.

**Date:** Friday, July 21, 2023, 4-6pm

**Place:** Arts Advocates Gallery,  
The Crossings at Siesta Key

**Cost:** \$20 members/\$25 non-members

**REGISTER HERE.**



# Arts Advocates Summer Activity: BOOK DISCUSSION!

AUGUST 9, 2023 | 1:30 PM

Join in a book discussion this August! The book is *Monsters: A Fan's Dilemma* by Claire Dederer.

The #MeToo and Hate movements have brought to light a serious dilemma. Can we love the works of Ernest Hemingway, Woody Allen, Pablo Picasso, Michael Jackson, and Carl Jennewein, just to name a few, knowing of their creators' unsavory backgrounds? What do we do with the art of monstrous men?

Join us for what is sure to be a passionate discussion of a provocative book!

**Date:** Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at 1:30pm

**Place:** Stephenie Frasher's home.

**To register for this activity, email Stephenie Frasher at [stephfrash@comcast.net](mailto:stephfrash@comcast.net). The discussion will be limited to 10 participants. You must have read the book to attend.**

## MONSTERS

A Fan's Dilemma



# Art Talk: DRAWING WITH AN X-ACTO KNIFE

AUGUST 11, 2023 | 4-6 PM

Can you remember as a child the concentration needed to color inside the lines? Imagine using an X-ACTO knife to shape a Ferris wheel or a roller coaster!

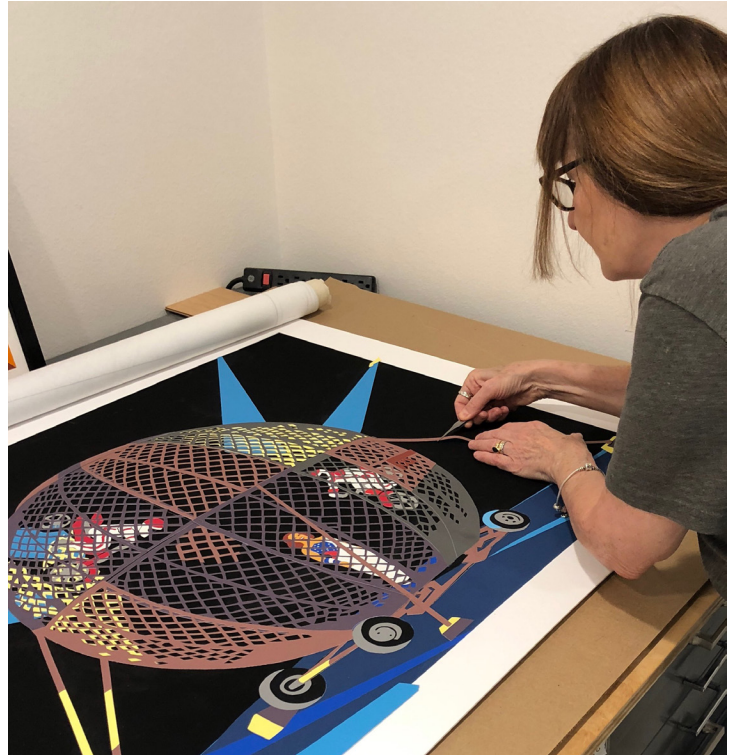
Join Philomena Marano as she shares her techniques, and see her one-of-a-kind creations! Philomena holds a B.F.A. from Pratt Institute, is an intimate of the visual poetry of Coney Island, created the winning poster for the first Spirit of Brooklyn poster competition, and is a master of papier collé, the elegant cut paper technique she learned as a studio assistant to preeminent artist Robert Indiana.

**Date:** Friday, August 11th, 4-6pm

**Place:** Arts Advocates Gallery,  
The Crossings at Siesta Key

**Cost:** \$20 members/\$25 non-members

REGISTER HERE.



Artist Philomena Marano



# Mark Your Calendar!

## Lunch and Tour of the Sarasota Art Museum (SAM)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 | 11:00 AM

Savor one of Sarasota Art Museum's delightful "pub" lunches from the Bistro while hearing all about this wonderful museum from its executive director, Virginia Shearer. As the region's first museum dedicated to contemporary art, SAM features an endless rotation of transformative, pioneering exhibitions. After lunch, enjoy a complimentary docent-led tour of the museum's current exhibits.



Registration will be open soon!  
Watch your inbox for an email announcement!

Virginia Shearer  
(Photo: CatMax Photography)





# Art Talk: TRAGEDY TO GIFT

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 | 4-6 PM

The story of **Diana de Avila** and her Acquired Savant Syndrome is an honest and compelling one. The discovery of her artistic gift came after a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and the delayed diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis (MS). She is one of very few people worldwide to have what is known as Acquired Savant Syndrome. Diana was not born with her talent as a digital artist; she arrived at it, literally, by accident. Overcoming life-threatening odds, she has produced over one thousand pieces of extraordinary digital art.

Diana and **Wilma Davidson**, her friend and the author of her inspirational story, ***Soldier, Sister, Savant***, will share Diana's journey as well as examples of her art.



**Date:** Friday, September 29, 2023, 4:00-6:00pm

**Place:** Arts Advocates Gallery, The Crossings at Siesta Key

**Cost:** \$20 members/\$25 non-members

REGISTER HERE.



# ART TALK: KINSEY ROBB

Kinsey Robb, Executive Director of Art Center Sarasota, was the speaker at a recent Art Talk to discuss the art scene in Sarasota. She also described her earlier experience planning exhibitions at major New York Galleries (see photo of boats). She was interviewed by Stephenie Frasher (right), Arts Advocates Member Engagement Chair.

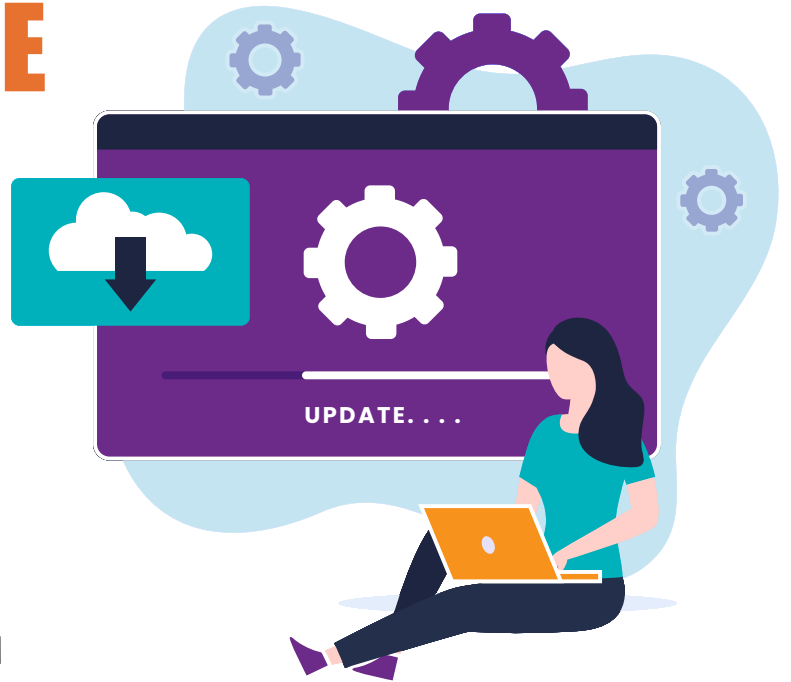




# ARTS ADVOCATES WEBSITE UPDATE

Have you visited the Arts Advocates website recently? We've just completed an update to the newest version of our website content management system. All should go very smoothly when you want to browse through the images of artworks in our celebrated collection, make a donation, or change your personal information.

[Click here](#) to register for our summer and fall events already posted on the site.



This issue of the Arts Advocates newsletter is the Summer (July/August) issue. Our next issue will arrive in your inbox in September.

In the meantime, check out our upcoming summer events and click to register! Have a great summer!