



September 21, 2007

Step Up To the Plate / Volunteer Your Time / Great Learning Experience

Another summer is just about over which means returning to school for some, back to work for most and for those of us who have extra time are returning to or thinking of joining clubs and / or guilds to volunteer some time in making plans for Christmas shows and Craft sales etc. Which ever type of club you join, they are great places to learn new things, share ideas, promote and improve your skills, sell your wares, meet new friends; all good for the soul but there are two sides to being a member of a club. For any club to succeed, members must be willing to step up to the plate by volunteering to take on a positions and / or helping in areas needed and give back to the club not just take from the club while everyone else does the work.

To keep a club active and going as it should the members involved should not be shy when it comes to offering their help. It seems it is always the same few members that step up to the plate when it comes to doing the phoning, setting up displays, attending the fair to sit at booths, taking on any positions in club; such as president, secretary, treasurer, etc. All too often most of us are uncertain when it comes to volunteering. I am sure there are a lot of members who want to volunteer but don't know what is expected of them should he or she take it on. Or perhaps they are concerned about what would happen if a mistake is made and someone complains it is not as it should be.

Let's face it; you cannot please everyone and we all make mistakes. All you can do is your best that is all that is expected of you. When the club is looking for volunteers do not just sit there like a bump on a log (and a lot of members do.) Ask questions if you are not certain as to what the position entails. When you volunteer you not only gain knowledge from everything you do but you show other members that the club is important to you want to do what you can to keep the club active. When members of a club do not volunteer their help and it is the same faces that do all the work then that club will fold as the interest to keep it going is not there.

Way back in the 80's I was part of the Kirkland Lake Art Club and it was a very active and a wonderful club to be a member of. (By the way they are looking for new members to join.) I learned a lot as an active member but I wanted to get a club going closer to Englehart area due to winter traveling. I kept trying to find people that had the same interests and motivations but no one wanted to take positions to get the club going. I would get the; been there done that attitude but I persisted. Finally someone came up to me and said that if I was serious about getting an art club going then I should take

Artistmom * Alice Y. Seguin Sawicki
Website: www.Artistmom.net E-mail: paint@ntl.sympatico.ca
Address: P.O. Box 338 Englehart ON. Phone: (705) 544-2860



on the President position for the club. My first reaction was; are they serious. I have never done that, didn't have a clue as to what would be expected of me but I wanted to get an art club going and if that is what it would take, then by gosh... To make a long story short I took on that position. I was one of the founding members of the Englehart Area Artists in April of 1989 and proud of it too as it was a very busy and active club and it is still going today. I have learned so much from being involved with various clubs. Stepping up to the plate has helped me with my shyness, to speak out more and it has helped me grow, come out of myself, get out there and promote my work. There were some un-perfect moments but we worked through them. It is part of life, without these un-perfect moments, life would be boring. I am still learning / growing today as it is a non stop learning experience and I still come across some ups and downs but that too is part of the learning when you step up to the plate by volunteering. Attending workshops has also been a good move for me to improve my skills as today; I too hold workshops of my own and teach at Jsano School of Arts each August. I never dreamed that someday I would be one of the instructors at Jsano and all this has happened because I volunteered my time by taking on a position as President of club. I was also Vice President, Acting President, Club Rep, Program Convener, doing advertising for club; help hang exhibitions. All of which I had no knowledge of but with the help of those that had been there, done that, and the desire to make the club succeed we made it happen. We, the club members, pulled together by stepping up to the plate, by volunteered to help out where ever needed and whenever. You may still feel a little shy but I promise it will help you grow in more ways then you can ever imagine. I never thought I would be writing a column for a local paper but here I am learning as I go and again all due to stepping up to the plate, taking a chance. Till next time.

Alice Y. Seguin Sawicki signing off

Website: <http://www.ArtistMom.net>

E-mail: paint@ntl.sympatico.ca