

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

You Have To Go On Record

I had one of those times when you think something good is happening and then it turns out - not so good.

About mid-month I received an e-mail requesting to be added to our master list of e-mails that we send out at the beginning of the month to announce the launch of a new issue. We don't throw a big party, we don't have a celebration - we just send an e-mail saying that another issue of the paper is ready to be downloaded.

We've been producing a paper every month for 25 years so we don't have a party to announce each issue - as it's our job. In any case I added the address to our list and replied back that they had been added.

The next day I received another e-mail from the same person telling me that because of our last issue they ended up going to a gallery and purchasing almost \$10,000 worth of art.

I replied, begging them not to leave me hanging - wanting details. And they replied with wonderful details - just the kind all our supporters need to hear and read. I asked if I could use their comments in my next commentary and waited.

The reply came, but it wasn't what I was hoping for. They said sure, if I could do it in a way that their name wasn't given. I begged again explaining that with out using the names of the buyer, the artist, and the gallery - some might think I was just making it all up. The reply to that plea was the same.

I explained that I understood their position and that I was happy just to hear that feedback myself. I was, but it's not the same as being able to give details here.

Over the years I've been told some great stories of results of people reading

our paper and from folks advertising in our paper. But, we don't get that much feedback - good or bad.

To top it off, within a day, a long time advertiser notified us that they were going to have to stop advertising - they just were not hearing much from their advertising. I get that news from time to time also.

There is no way to explain to you how important it is for you to let our supporters know you appreciate and pay attention to their advertising. Thanking me or Linda is okay and appreciated but we'd rather you thank our supporters. They're the ones who need to get that feedback.

Some people support us because they think it's the right thing to do, some do it to build name recognition, some do it to attract new artists looking for a gallery and a gallery that takes out ads for their exhibits is attractive to artists, some do it for the results they get, and a few do it because they think it's "cool". But, for whatever reason they do it - they'd like to get feedback of some sort.

The Eyes Of March Are On Us

At least I feel like something is always going on during the month of March.

During our first March after going electronic, we produced a very special issue. We don't exactly know what's so special about that issue, but each month 5,000 to 10,000 and sometimes more people download that issue to check it out again. That's every month for two years after we first launched that issue into cyber-space.

The March 2011 issue of *Carolina Arts* has come in #2 as the most downloaded issue - with one to two exceptions where it was beat out by another issue. That's what you call staying power.

In 2011 that March issue received

45,298 downloads. That was four times more than we received in our first month online when we received just over 10,000 downloads, which we felt pretty good about since we only printed 10,000 copies when the paper was printed.

By March 2012, the March issue received 82,840 downloads and was 72 pages long - packed with info about exhibits taking place in the Carolinas.

Now, in 2013, the March issue is 80 pages long and who knows how high the downloads will be. The February 2013 issue has already passed the 102,000 mark.

You might say our March issues are a spring forward for *Carolina Arts*. March marks the beginning of heavy activity before the long hot summer arrives, yet October is still the peak month for us, but something unusual always happens during March. And, so far it's been good.

The fact that the March 2013 issue is at least eight pages bigger than a year ago shows we're hearing from more areas around the Carolinas about their exhibits.

But we still have a lot of areas that we're not hearing from.

Speaking Of Good News

While working on laying out this issue I heard a report that housing starts had jumped 16% - which is really good news for the visual art community. New homes mean new walls and spaces to fill with art.

In case you didn't notice - when the housing market crashed - the art selling market kind of crashed with it.

On Our Cover

On our cover this month we're featuring some works by Peter Scala, a Charleston, SC, area artist, who is also a supporter of *Carolina Arts*. He has just pulled his works out of a few galleries in Florida and is looking for a few galleries closer to home to represent his work. See his ad on Page 8 and contact him if you're interested in having these works in your gallery.

Carolina Arts is now on Twitter!

Sign up to follow Tom's Tweets, click below!



























