

PERSPECTIVES



**Alabama Art
Education Association**

SUMMER 2025
NEWSLETTER



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AAEA

MISSION STATEMENT

AAEA IS....

a Professional Organization dedicated to the Leadership, Advocacy, Professional Development Opportunities, and Support for all Visual Art Educators in Alabama.

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LETTER FROM THE

The time has come, my artsy ones to pack up our many things. The paints, and pens, and crayon wax. The paintbrushes and strings. And where to find the perfect spot. For all our artsy things.

Yes, for many of us, the end of the school year signifies packing up classrooms, purging supplies, and reorganizing materials that have been shuffled around from the tornado of creative chaos produced by the school year. However, before you completely hang up your art teacher apron for the summer, we encourage AAEA members to submit a proposal to present at the upcoming AAEA 2025 Fall Conference at Camp McDowell, October 15 – 18, 2025. The deadline for proposals is June 30; the submission form is located on our website www.myaaea.org. Also on the website, is a form open to members interested in serving on the AAEA Board for the 2026-2028 Term; elections will be held in the fall prior to the conference. We look forward to having new presenters at the conference and new board members joining the ranks!

With that being said, I urge everyone to take a break from work and their classrooms this summer. I must admit that I procrastinated on writing this article due to my own need for a mental break. Summer should be the time to relax, read, sleep in, stay up late, dig in the dirt, make bad art, make good art, fam jam time, vacation, staycation, build sandcastles, catch lightning bugs, bake, and do the things that spark joy outside of art teaching. I know it's difficult to take off our art teacher crowns and separate ourselves from our work. Our work is something we enjoy and fully invest in sharing that passion with our students, and bear witness to their delight as they make creative self-discoveries. So, I implore you to participate in creative adventures and playful projects this summer that spark the same delight we witness in our students.

Now if you are finding yourself too relaxed and yearning for art education companionship and professional development workshops, please note the virtual learning opportunities available at the NAEA Professional Learning Studio: <https://learning.arteducators.org/>. The NAEA Southeastern Leadership Conference registration is now open to any NAEA/AAEA member. The conference is from Thursday, June 26 – Saturday, June 28 in Jackson, Mississippi. You can register for that here: <https://my.arteducators.org/events/event-registration>. President Elect, Rebecca Wall, and I will be attending and would love to see some of our members attend as well. This is a wonderful networking opportunity to connect and forage friendships with art educators in our neighboring Southeastern Region states.

I sincerely hope that summer is a creative respite for YOU! And that you can exist freely, creatively, and playfully, that your cup is refilled, and your emotional, mental, and physical batteries are recharged.

Stay Courageously Creative and Bless Your HeART

-Amanda Youngblood



RESIDENT

TESTIMONIALS

Making Membership Meaningful

AAEA

WHY JOIN?

"I joined AAEA as a graduate student that was about to start my first teaching job. I was thrust into the organization by Sharon, who was my magical mentor! I have not looked back, and since being in the organization I have been able to hold many positions and present at conferences! This has been an invaluable resource and helped push me to be the best art teacher I can be. I will be with AAEA forever! "

-Sarah Caroline Padgett, Social Media

"I joined AAEA when I took over as the Lower School art teacher at my school. I really didn't know what to expect. It has been more than I could have imagined. I have met so many amazing art teachers, I have learned so much through the other teachers as well as conferences and workshops. "

- Amy Hodges Independant School Chair

"AAEA is where all my friends are!! My favorite people to hang out with even though I'm retired I still love learning and growing with the art folks!! They keep me in the know and keep me young...like teaching me how to use Venmo!!"

- Sharon Christman, Treasurer

If you would like to join the AAEA, click [this link](#) for the NAEA website or contact our membership chair at AAEAmembers@gmail.com!

ART EXHIBITION

AAEA DISTRICT 2 ART EDUCATORS



2025

JAN DEMPSEY COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER, AUBURN, AL

Join us for a special exhibition in Gallery II at the JDCAC from Oct 13-24, with hanging on the 12th, take down on the 25th, and reception on the 23rd. All mediums will be accepted. More details to come!

Contact Rebecca Wall at slagle.rebecca@gmail.com or Tricia Oliver at toliver.au.93@gmail.com

2025 National CONVENTION

There were 25 AAEA Art Educators who attended this year's NAEA 2025 Convention "Vibrant" in Louisville, KY. Here are some NAEA Convention takeaways from 5 of AAEA board members who attended. They were tasked with answering any of the following questions regarding their thoughts related to their national convention experiences:

- If you presented, what was your presentation title and how was your experience as a presenter?
- What workshops were your favorite of all (please include if they were ticketed workshops) and why? Did you learn any new skills?
- Did you have a favorite keynote speaker? Who and why?
- Most positive takeaways or experiences from the convention?
- What other experiences or excursions did you enjoy outside of the convention?

Tammie Clark- NAEA National Marion Quin Dix Award Winner & Scholarship Chair

I presented Saturday morning at 8am after a very late night at the Waverly Hills Sanitorium Paranormal tour with about 40 other art teachers at NAEA. I had a great experience presenting and had about 12 art teachers who joined me on the last day of NAEA convention. There were about 75 art teachers who tagged my session as an option to attend on the Convention app. My session was Building Bricks for Digital Photography. Using generic pixel bricks (small round building bricks), students will create one quadrant of a radial design on a base plate.

I really enjoyed the digital playground. I wasn't sure what it would look like but many technology-in-art-users like our own Tricia Oliver, presented round table discussions in the back of the vendor area. There were technology companies like Adobe and Wacom showing how you could use their products in your classroom. I was intrigued by Adobe Express's AI idea generator (formerly Adobe Spark). You would need to get the AI extension approved by your district. It is NOT automatically active on Adobe Express, but it is an approved site for my district. What was wonderful about Adobe AI is that it pulls images from Adobe stock photos not all internet photos. This makes it safer for kids to generate ideas in AI. The reps say this feature works best with many descriptors (can we say "language arts connection"?). AND it filters out copyright and inappropriate language/words.

I was able to attend two general sessions. First I saw Nate Powell, artist and graphic novelist from Arkansas. I enjoyed listening to his working/personal relationship/collaboration with the late John Lewis. Nate illustrated a 3 book series called March. It takes you on a Civil Rights journey from the Freedom Riders to Bloody Sunday/ the March on Montgomery from Representative Lewis' first hand point of view. It was a moving series of graphic novels that I checked out from our local library. I highly encourage anyone to read them. Secondly, I loved the Guerilla Girls (or Girl, as only one could attend). She was passionate and humble all at the same time...like just one of your girlfriends....a girlfriend who is an amazing activist! An artist herself, Frida said, "In these dark, dark days, this is the happiest place I can be."

Most positive takeaways or experiences from the convention? I went to the Cave Hill Cemetery where Mohammed Ali is buried. Why a cemetery (it's an NAEA convention theme-ask Tricia), because Artist & Craftsman Supply was closed at the time, we needed to kill 30 minutes before it opened and it was close by. Can we say gorgeous???



Betsy Logan - Parliamentarian

This was most likely my 33rd National Convention—and I still love every minute of it! These events are truly the highlight of my year. The connections you make and the friendships you build at these conventions really do last a lifetime.

This year, I had the honor of presenting alongside four other incredible retired art educators: Debi Barrett-Hayes (Florida), Debi West (South Carolina), Melody Weintraub (Tennessee), and Sally Chambliss (Alabama). Our session, “Bridging Generations Speed Dating Style: Conversations Between Early Career Educators and Retired Art Educators”, was a huge success. We even put together goodie bags for all of our participants, which included a teacher’s poem shared by Debi West. Many mentor teachers joined in to help guide the conversations, and no one wanted it to end—it was truly inspiring!

One of the most touching moments for me happened when a teacher from Georgia asked where I had taught. It turned out she had been in my 8th and 9th grade art classes—and now she’s an art teacher herself. She told me I had greatly influenced her decision to pursue art education. That moment filled my heart. It was exactly the reminder I needed of why we do what we do.

My favorite keynote speaker was Roberto Lugo, the incredibly talented artist and ceramicist. His story and message were deeply inspiring. If I had to pick one major takeaway from this convention, it would be the powerful sense of encouragement I received from reconnecting with fellow art educators and growing my network.

I did attend a ticketed workshop on making Kentucky Derby fascinators, but unfortunately, it didn’t quite meet expectations. It was a large group—around 120 art teachers—and the instructor struggled to manage it effectively. But even that experience was memorable in its own way.

One of my favorite things about attending these conventions year after year is reuniting with my art teacher friends from across the country. I even room with teachers from Delaware—one of whom I discovered is my cousin when we met in 1996 at the San Francisco convention!

As the Past-President of the Retired Art Educators Association, I also had the opportunity to attend the Delegate Assembly—something I’ve done around 15 times now. It’s always a valuable experience. I enjoyed the RAEA Silent Auction and seeing everyone at the Artisans Gallery. I also made time to connect with vendors who supported our Auburn conference to personally thank them again.

And of course, I carved out time for some local exploring. I had a great meal at The Pour on Main inside the 21c Museum Hotel—definitely an experience to remember. I also toured the Louisville Slugger Factory and Museum, where I got to hold Hank Aaron’s bat! And visiting Churchill Downs was amazing, even though we missed seeing the full facilities since the horses had just arrived for the Preakness races.

If you’ve never attended a National Convention, I highly encourage you to go—it’s an experience you’ll never regret. It fills your professional cup and connects you to a larger community that truly understands the power of art education. It makes me so happy to see more and more Alabama teachers attending now. I remember when I was one of the only ones—and it’s wonderful to see how far we’ve come!



Ashley Sams White - Northern Region Rep

My first NAEA experience was my very first year of teaching in 2015. I was so blown away by that experience in New Orleans that I've been itching to get back ever since. Well, you know the drill. It's SO expensive and there's paperwork and subs to get and things to arrange at home. It's tough. But I was finally able to swing district funding again this year. I can't tell you how many times I've been told no. It's worth being the squeaky wheel.

This year's "Vibrant" convention in Louisville was everything I hoped for and more. I was pleasantly surprised by the number of Choice-based learning sessions—so if you're also Choice-based (or even just Choice-curious), it's a goldmine of inspiration. I loved seeing a range of philosophies and setups from across the country, and I left with a notebook full of new strategies and creative sparks I can't wait to try. It's hard to put into words, but the NAEA conference fills a different kind of cup than AAEA. While AAEA feeds my soul as a teacher who creates, NAEA speaks to the part of me that creates in order to teach. Each experience is deeply valuable, but in very different, beautifully complementary ways.

More than anything, I came home feeling reenergized and connected- which is important this time of the school year! This convention reminded me how important it is to be surrounded by people who just get what it means to teach art.



Rebecca Wall - President-Elect

Attending the 2025 National Conference was such a wonderful experience. From the beautiful Omni Hotel to the Bourbon trail, Louisville was a wonderful host. I can't speak enough about the beautiful Omni Hotel. It is gorgeously designed and has a fantastic library bar where I had one of the best bourbon drinks ever. It also hosts several restaurants and behind a secret painting, down a dark hallway, is a charming speakeasy, complete with a mini bowling alley. If you are headed to Louisville, I highly recommend the Omni.

The conference was such a fun experience. Attending keynotes speeches given by inspirational speakers such as the Guerilla Girls and going to sessions and workshops is what conference is all about. I have to say that my favorite was a paid workshop called Cosplay in the Classroom. I'm not a huge cosplay girl but I do love learning new things and seeing all the amazing costume that cosplayers wear at their own conferences. It was led by PerlerTrix, a big name in the cosplay world and a high school art teacher. He taught us tips and tricks on using different types of foam and we each made a feather using EVA Foam. I'm excited to try this on some of my own projects.

But I think the best thing about 2025 National Conference was spending time with my peeps. Seeing old friends and making new ones is such a rewarding feeling. People that get you, and you get them. It's a special experience which I am very grateful for. So, if you didn't get to make it this year...I hope to see you in Chicago in 2026.

Amanda Youngblood - AAEA President

I only started attending NAEA Conventions when I was elected AAEA's President Elect - now President. And now that I've had the opportunity to experience four, I can't imagine life without attending NAEA Conventions regularly. Besides our state conference, the national convention is one of the best arts education professional development events available. This year's theme "Vibrant" was incredibly vibrant, filled with awe inspiring keynote speakers. My personal favorites from this year were the Guerilla Girls (well, in this case singular, only one of the two founding members could attend), and Roberto Lugo. The Guerilla Girls are an anonymous feminist art activist group who challenge inequalities in the art world, specifically combating sexism and racism. Robert Lugo is an American potter, social activist, spoken-word poet, and educator. These thought provoking keynote speeches and performances were some of my favorite parts of this convention and both relayed messages of hard truths, empowerment, and the importance of arts education for all.

I had the opportunity to present not one but two workshops at this convention. The first workshop was a hands-on ticketed workshop which is a unique, challenging, and just a teeny bit nerve wracking experience. The workshop was titled "Brush Up on Brush Lettering Techniques," and since it was hands-on and ticketed, I had to provide all the materials. Navigating large numbers of art making materials when traveling can be a bit overwhelming. The other workshop, "Elementary Carousel of Learning Hands-on Studio Make & Take," included multiple presenters and the NAEA Elementary Division Directors were in charge of supplying the requested materials for each presenter. It was laid back as attendees could freely move about the room, visiting each presenter, to create or obtain materials for the lessons. I truly enjoyed the ease and casual instructional environment of the 'Carousel' and I hope to present more at future NAEA Conventions.

I've thoroughly relished every NAEA Convention experience over the years, and each for its own unique set of reasons. But the common denominator from all of these experiences are the new connections and friendships I've gained within the world of art education. I glean new ideas, discuss topics of interest, and absorb from people around me, some of whom I've admired from a distance for years. I am what I would describe as an extroverted introvert. So when attending NAEA I can fully morph into this extroverted unicorn because I'm among thousands of fellow art educators who all shine brightly as they exude inclusiveness, passion, and a willingness to share their knowledge.



Tricia Oliver - Newsletter Chair

This was the second time I have had the honor of presenting at National Convention.

I presented in the Digital Playground "Carving Your Creativity" which was recreating lino cuts using Procreate. I was tickled to see so many people waiting for the presentation. The technology didn't work perfectly, but guess who understood?! Art teachers!

I think one of my favorite sessions was the last of the convention- projection mapping. It had been many years since I had looked into it and I knew technology had changed and I was looking forward to learning more!

National convention is always a homecoming of sorts. Always happy to see old friends. I have to say, while San Antonio might be my favorite convention location, the events at this year's convention, especially the Southeastern Awards recognition, will mean the world to me. I was thrilled to be named Southeastern Middle Level Art Educator of the Year. In a room full of people I respect and admire, I could feel the joy. We were genuinely happy for each other. And watching Tammie Clark win a NATIONAL award- y'all! And the cherry on top was also receiving the Art, Media, and Technology Interest Group Outstanding Educator Award and getting to talk about all the technology I use to make art and support the hands-on projects. Such an unforgettable week!

NAEA *Recognition*



AAEA absolutely shone at the NAEA Convention in Louisville! Tammie Clark, Decatur City Schools, was celebrated at the opening Keynote event with the National Marion Quin Dix Award. This award recognizes outstanding contributions and service to the profession by a current or past State officer. Tammie is pictured here with NAEA Past- President , Wanda Knight, and current President, Cindy Todd. Tricia Oliver, Auburn City Schools, was recognized as the Southeastern Middle Level Art Educator of the Year at the Divisional Awards Ceremony and awarded Outstanding Teacher of the Year by the NAEA Art, Media, and Technology Interest Group. Both Tammie and Tricia were recognized at the Southeastern Region Awards ceremony.



AAEA at



NAEA '25



Convention Vibes

CONGRATULATIONS, RETIREES!

This year, we bid a fond farewell to our esteemed friends and colleagues, Donna Russell and Andy Meadows, as they retire from their respective organizations. Both Donna and Andy have been long-standing representatives on the AAEA board, and it is only fitting that we honor their dedication and service. Their tireless efforts have strengthened our community and uplifted arts educators across Alabama. We are deeply grateful for the passion, wisdom, and advocacy they have shared over the years. Thank you, Donna and Andy, for being powerful voices for the arts and for inspiring all of us to continue making the world better through creative expression.

After 25 years of visionary leadership, Donna Russell is retiring from her role as Executive Director of the Alabama Arts Alliance. Throughout her career, Donna has been a steadfast advocate for arts education, working tirelessly to ensure that all Alabamians—students, educators, and communities alike—have meaningful access to the arts. Under her direction, the Alliance has become a cornerstone for statewide arts advocacy, teacher support, and student enrichment. Donna's impact extends far beyond administrative leadership. As a founding member of the Alabama Artistic Literacy Consortium's Executive Leadership Team, she has played a central role in shaping arts education policy across the state. Her service on key state committees, including the Arts Education Course of Study Task Force and the Arts Education Advisory Committee for the Arts License Tag Fund, reflects her unwavering dedication to integrating the arts into every level of education.



Nationally, Donna has amplified Alabama's voice as State Captain for the Americans for the Arts Advocacy Coalition, ensuring that our state remains at the forefront of national arts policy discussions.

Her legacy is one of service, advocacy, and inspiration. We thank Donna for her extraordinary contributions and for nurturing a future where the arts remain vital to every Alabama classroom and community.



After nearly 11 years of dedicated service, Andy Meadows is retiring from his role as Arts Education Specialist at the Alabama State Department of Education. A passionate advocate, visionary leader, and tireless collaborator, Andy has transformed the landscape of arts education across the state.

During his tenure, Alabama's arts education budget grew from \$500,000 to \$2 million, with nearly \$12 million in grants distributed under his guidance. He played a pivotal role in two full Arts Courses of Study revisions and led major initiatives such as the artlook®Alabama platform and the Creative Schools Indicator Spotlight Report, placing Alabama on the national map for innovative, data-driven arts education policy.

Andy doubled student representation in the State Superintendent's Visual Arts Exhibit, sustained Capitol Tunes and Capitol Moves, and significantly expanded district-level leadership—growing from just 27 to 126 LEA Arts Coordinators statewide. His leadership also led to the creation of the Arts Education Leadership Alliance, uniting Alabama's four discipline-specific associations in shared advocacy.

Nationally, Andy served as President of NASDAE and remains active in SEADAE, continuing his influence on arts education beyond state lines. His work has not only elevated the visibility of arts in education but has ensured equitable access for Alabama's students. In 2022, he received the Outstanding Arts Advocate Award from the Alabama Arts Alliance—an honor reflecting his unwavering commitment to the arts and the educators who champion them.

We thank Andy for his vision, heart, and leadership—and wish him all the best in this exciting new chapter.

SHE painted the way.....

A Legacy in Color: Celebrating Alicia Hames' 38 Years in Art Education - By Adrienne Hames

Growing up with Alicia Hames as your mother meant growing up in a world where creativity was a way of life and community was everything. For thirty-eight years, my mom has been more than just an art educator—she's been a connector, a cultivator of curiosity, and a champion of collaboration. Twenty-eight of those years were spent in Auburn City Schools, where she made history as the district's first elementary art teacher. She didn't just teach students how to make art. She taught them how to see, to wonder, and to find belonging in the creative process.

In the early days, my mom brought "art on a cart" into the classrooms of Dean Road Elementary, through funding from PTO. Central Office the following year offered all elementary schools funding for an ISS program, or an art program. Dean Road was the only elementary school to select to have an art program. The principal had seen my mother's determination and knew this was the right direction for their school. Other schools followed Dean Road's lead after seeing the incredible impact of her work, and thanks to my mom's influence, thousands of students in Auburn have grown up with a strong foundation in the arts.

What always set my mother apart wasn't just her love for art—it was her gift for connecting the elements of art, principles of design, and art history in ways that felt real and exciting to young learners. As a high school art teacher now, I still have students who can recall what they learned in her classroom nearly a decade ago. She helped them connect art to the world around them—to science, to history, and especially to the rich cultural heritage of Alabama.

While people often assumed I would follow in her footsteps, I initially resisted. I had seen how hard she worked and felt like I could never be like her. She was the Wonder Woman of the art world. She spent late nights prepping materials, attending conferences, and constantly reinventing lessons to stretch her students' imaginations. But it was my mom who eventually helped me realize where I truly belonged. Before my junior year of college, she sat me down and gently pointed out that I was pouring all my time into my art and theatre minors, while barely keeping up with my actual major. She was right, of course. I changed my major to art, and suddenly everything fell into place.

From the start of my teaching career, she made sure I was connected to our professional community. She insisted—lovingly, firmly—that I attend AAEA and NAEA conferences. It was at these gatherings that I met the educators she had always spoken of with such admiration. I got to experiment through exploration with Felicia Olds, sit in awe at the painting skills of Nan Cunningham, and learn how to ignite excitement in students just by being excited myself. She gave me the gift of connection—to ideas, to artists, and to the kind of creative community that nourishes you long after the conference ends.

Through teaching, our relationship evolved. She's still my mom, of course, but now she's also my peer. We've shared hotel rooms at conferences, staying up late in bed like two kids at summer camp, gushing over workshops, laughing about moments from our classrooms, and dreaming up what we'll try next. It's one of my favorite things; those nights talking art and education with the person who made it all feel possible.

As she steps into retirement, I'm overwhelmed with pride. For so long, it felt like she might never actually stop because there was always one more student to reach, one more project to try, one more group of kids who needed her heart. I am excited that she gets to be the student now and rediscover her own voice. I think sometimes art teachers pour so much of themselves into their students that they forget to make space for their own creativity. This is her time to rediscover that joy!

Of course, she'll never be a stranger to conference or AAEA. She'll still be there, surrounded by creatives, soaking up the energy of her people. Because more than anything, my mom believes in the power of community, and she's spent her life helping others find their place in it.

Alicia Hames leaves behind more than just lesson plans and bulletin boards—she leaves behind a legacy that shaped a district, inspired countless students, and changed my life forever. I can't wait to see what she creates next!



Still Creating, Still Contributing: Life After Retirement in Art Education

~ by Betsy Logan and Sally Chambliss

After 34 incredible years teaching art in the classroom, I officially retired in 2015—but as I like to say, I’m retired, not dead. My passion for art education didn’t end with my classroom career; if anything, it expanded. In fact, this marks my 44th year as an educator, thanks to the unexpected yet fulfilling path I found with Alabama’s ACCESS Virtual School.

Shortly after retiring, I was hired to write the Visual Art course for ACCESS, and I’ve been teaching it ever since. Working in the virtual space has allowed me to continue nurturing creativity in students statewide, proving that innovation in education doesn’t end at retirement.

The year I retired, I decided to step away from attending the Alabama Art Education Association (AAEA) Conference and the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Convention—a break after decades of involvement, having been a member of NAEA since 1981 and AAEA since 1989. It didn’t take long, however, to realize just how much I missed the camaraderie, the inspiration, and the shared commitment to art education. I returned the very next year, and I’ve been fully engaged ever since.

Since 2016, I’ve proudly served as Parliamentarian for AAEA. Having been involved for so many years, I’ve become something of a walking history book of our policies and procedures. I’ve also helped shape these documents, having written and edited the AAEA Policy Manual and contributed to the Retired Art Educators’ Alliance (RAEA) constitution and policy revisions for NAEA.

My commitment extends beyond policy. I served as President of the RAEA and have participated on several national committees, including the NAEA Constitution/By-Laws and Policy Manual Review Committee. In 2022, I attended the NAEA Leadership Conference in Park City, Utah, and in 2024, I had the joy of co-presenting at the NAEA convention alongside fellow retired educators, including Alabama’s own Sally Chambliss.

But I don’t just contribute in meetings—I stay active as an artist, too.

Retirement has given me time to rediscover my own artmaking. I take on commissions and have even learned to fuse glass, which I now sell at several art shows. Being retired doesn’t mean you stop learning or creating; if anything, it’s the perfect time to do both.

One of my most important roles now is mentoring younger teachers. I’m proud to have been part of Auburn City Schools and even prouder of the talented art educators who’ve followed in my footsteps. Supporting and guiding them keeps me grounded and hopeful for the future of our field. As for slowing down? Not likely. I remain deeply committed to AAEA, NAEA, and the mission of advocating for quality arts education. Retirement was never an end—just a new chapter in a lifelong journey of art, education, and service.- **Betsy Logan**

I never have time to do all the things I want to do! I read somewhere that retirement was a time for reinvention and purpose. I already knew my purpose. I wanted to create a space in my life to do my own art and play creatively. Staying active in AAEA has provided me with so many friends that help feed that creative space. While serving on the board of AAEA I have seen the vital importance of connections with art educators and current trends in art education. Attending our annual conferences and national conferences were a big part of staying connected and involved. True retirement didn't really start until after the crazy year of COVID. I found the space I needed to have my own list of to do's. This list consisted of commissions and experimenting with new art techniques. I seem to work better if I have a running list of projects. These pieces seem to flow from the kitchen table to the easel and back to the kitchen. Retirement is not a season. It just allows the freedom to determine a window of time to be creative. Now, I have to get that watercolor finished!-**Sally Chambliss**



Sally and Betsy presented at the NAEA Convention with Debbie West, Melody Weintraub, and Debi Barrett Hayes. Their session was titled *Bridging Generations Speed Dating Style: Conversations Between Early Career Art Educators and Retired Art Educators*

L-R: Melody Weintraub, Sally Chambliss, Debbie Barrett Haye, Debi West, and Betsy Logan

Around the State

Southern Region 1

On March 20, 2025, the Mary Elizabeth and Charles Bernard Rodning Gallery of Art at the USA Marx Library was filled with color, creativity, and community spirit as it hosted a vibrant student art reception in celebration of Youth Art Month. The event brought together students, families, and educators from 9 local schools across Mobile and Baldwin counties to celebrate the artistic achievements of young, aspiring artists. Located at 5901 USA Drive North in Mobile, Alabama, the Rodning Gallery provided a stunning and professional setting for the exhibit. The gallery's walls were adorned with a diverse array of student artwork, ranging from vivid paintings and detailed drawings to mixed media pieces, each one showcasing the imagination and talent of the area's youth. The reception welcomed a large turnout of proud parents, enthusiastic students, and supportive teachers. The atmosphere was one of excitement and pride, as many students were exhibiting their art in a formal gallery setting for the first time. The event served not only as a celebration of student talent but also as an opportunity to foster connections between local schools and the university community. The Youth Art Month student art reception at the USA Marx Library was a resounding success, highlighting the importance of the arts in education and the extraordinary creativity of local students. Events like these encourage young artists to continue exploring their passion and contribute to the rich cultural fabric of the Gulf Coast region here in Alabama.

Rikki Rhodes- aaea.vaca1@gmail.com

Eastern Region 2

Congratulations to the VACA winners from Auburn City Schools: Sarah Goodling at Ogletree, Alicia Hames at Pick, Andrea Newman at Dean Rd, and Tricia Oliver at East Samford. Tricia Oliver also had state winners in the VAAP show!

Rebecca Wall's second graders at Richland Elem in Auburn created African Djembe drums for their upcoming African Safari Art Show. They learned about these unique drums and created them with a variety of art supplies. They also learned how to string beads.

Creekside Elementary in Auburn recently had a CES Day at the Jule Collins Smith Museum. Abby Kuhn is the art teacher at CES.

Andrea Newman at Dean Road Elementary in Auburn recently received a grant from the Art Tag Grant. The grant will be used for a clay artist in residence and other clay supplies for the art room.

Christy Barlow from the Jule Collins Smith Museum recently visited the Photography Club at Dean Road Elem. Christy taught club members how to take a double exposed photograph and how to "draw with light." The students were captivated by this process!!

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Western Region 3

I am so excited to be serving West Alabama for another year as Regional Representative for AAEA. My goals for the upcoming year are to increase membership and hold monthly, or bi-monthly, social gatherings with alternating professional learning opportunities for our members. My long term goal is to have a one day mini-conference for our area. I hope everyone has a rejuvenating summer and is eager to return to their classrooms in August!

- aaea.vaca33@gmail.com

Central Region 4

The teachers of District 4a invite you join us on July 19th for a printmaking workshop with Little Red Print Studio. The workshop will take place at Cala Coffee in Homewood, AL from 5 - 7 pm. Art teachers from any area are invited to join the group! Please email aaea.vaca4a@gmail.com for sign up info!

Northern Region 5

The North AL region will soon be hosting it's 3rd annual Mini Conference at the ACA in Decatur. We will have sessions on a variety of topics including cyanotypes, Gelli prints, accordion books, and bird's eye view flowers.

Link for more info and registration details:

<https://alabamacentrforthearts.org/event/art-educator-professional-development-aaea-north-alabama-mini-conference/>





What's the **WORD** from Grade Level Chairs?

Elementary Level Division:

The Elementary Division has several upcoming opportunities for members to participate in. The next event is a Lesson Plan Share. This was where teachers are able to submit a full lesson plan including resources and images and in return receive lesson plans from other elementary art teachers who also submitted for that quarter. The Lesson Plan Share takes place quarterly. The submissions for the Summer 25 session are currently open with a deadline of June 30 for a July 15 release. The Fall session submissions will open in September, for an Oct. release. We will also be holding our second annual hybrid mini conference on July 22. This is a one day virtual conference geared towards elementary teachers. It is called hybrid because you may watch from anywhere, or find a group to collaborate with during the conference. The presenters will be Ashley White from Athens Intermediate, and Celia Castle and Angela Santiago from Edgewood Elementary. For more information on these events please email aaaelem@gmail.com.
Brooklyn Scoggins at aaaelem@gmail.com

Middle Level Division:

It's MAY! I think this is - by far - one of the quickest months to go by (at warp speed) during school, because we all know that summer is on the horizon! I don't know about you, but I'm beyond tired, slap out of patience, and just trying to make it through these last few days without a meltdown. I'm looking forward to summer, because it allows me specific (blocked off) time to work on myself. I hope you, too, will take some time for yourself. Work on that project you started but still haven't finished. Create some art. Finish reading that book you started. Get out of town for a change of scenery (even if it's just to the next town or city). Whatever you decide to do, be intentional! We all need to make time to refresh our body, our soul and our spirit! Who knows...by mid July, you may be more acclimated/inspired to figure out what new projects you'd like to try for the next school year BEFORE the new year actually starts (LOL!). However you decide to spend your summer, I hope you stay safe and enjoy your time off!
Tiffany Ala- aaeamiddleschoolrep@gmail.com

Secondary Level Division:

As I reflect on the past year, I keep hearing a line from a familiar song...." I get by with a little help from my friends". From my fellow art teachers at my school picking up or dropping off my student works at competitions or exhibitions and sharing supplies with each other when we get in a pinch, my area art teachers helping to host events for student opportunities on both sides of the bay, being asked to teach a workshop for the secondary division art teachers from Baldwin County Board of Education to my network of friends made from my membership in AAEA....I have been blessed with a safety net to catch me when I fall and the strength to lift others up when the time comes. We must stick together. In a time where arts education is being threatened from all sides, it is imperative that we advocate for our relevance and the importance of the programs that we have worked tirelessly to develop. I desire to create a line of communication to support art teachers across the state to discuss concerns including funding, professional development, National Art Honor Society, art clubs, classroom management, and information regarding local, regional, state and national art exhibitions and completions. I would also enjoy creating conversations about past events...how can we improve and enhance what we have done in the past so that we can make it better in the future. The idea of "but that is how we have always done it" simply does not sit well with me. We must make changes to grow. A lobster lives comfortably in his shell until it gets too tight and then he must leave that shell and become vulnerable with soft skin until the new shell hardens. I feel that way at times. Being comfortable is nice, don't get me wrong but sometimes that creates a sense of boredom in me. To keep myself fresh and be able to offer my students the very best art experience, I must try things that make me vulnerable, take risks that might not work and switch up my lessons. I am currently revamping ideas from the past and looking at ways to give more to my students. Hopefully we all will GROW!
Felicia Olds- aaeasecondarychair@gmail.com

Museum Division

The Museum Division had a fantastic meeting in Spring 2025 where we set our intentions for this coming year—which is focusing on accessibility. Our goal is to build upon our access programs both within the museum and in classrooms. Our roadmap to achieving these goals consists of presentations on our current offerings at our museums and building resources for both museum and art educators, such as PDs and workshops on how to integrate accessibility into programs and tours, as well as workshops for art educators on how to build access in the classrooms and lesson plans.

Of course we will continue to improve and build upon our tour and program offerings. Our ears are always open and we welcome ideas of what art educators need from Museums. Feel free to reach out to Angela May, Museum Division Chair, or your local AAEA Museum member. It is our goal and passion to enrich the lives of students and educators through art!

To round out the school year, the Birmingham Museum of Art is gearing up for the end of the year Educator Night on May 30th from 5-7pm. Join us for an evening dedicated to YOU—the incredible educators who made this school year unforgettable! Celebrate your hard work, connect with fellow teachers, and enjoy a night of art, appreciation, and fun. Let's raise a toast to the end of the year and the amazing impact you've made! This event is exclusive to educators and RSVP is required. Visit the BMA's calendar for more information or join our mailing list! We send out newsletters once a quarter—providing information about field trips, professional development opportunities, and more!

Angela May- aaea2museum@gmail.com

Supervision Division:

"As an advocate for arts education, I believe one of the most powerful ways to strengthen and sustain art programs is by building strong, effective connections between art teachers and school administrators. Too often, the value of arts education is understood in the classroom but not fully communicated to decision-makers. My goal is to help bridge that gap by equipping art educators with the tools, language, and confidence they need to showcase their program's impact and align their work with school and district priorities.

To do this, I aim to provide a practical and approachable toolkit that empowers art teachers to advocate for their programs with clarity and purpose. This toolkit includes templates for end-of-year presentations, sample data collection strategies, email scripts, and conversation starters that speak the language of administrators—focusing on student outcomes, engagement, school culture, and alignment with goals like SEL, literacy, and community involvement. I also want to offer simple methods for documenting student growth and collecting parent feedback, making it easier to tell the full story of the program's reach and relevance.

At the heart of this initiative is a mindset shift: art teachers are not just creatives—they are leaders, educators, and advocates. By helping them frame their successes in ways that administrators understand and value, we elevate both the teacher and the program. Connecting educators and administrators through mutual understanding and communication fosters respect, opens doors to additional support, and ensures that the arts remain an essential, thriving part of every student's education. This is about visibility, validation, and voice—for our teachers, our students, and our programs.

Natalie Roig-McKnight- aaeasupervision@gmail.com



Fellow arts educators,

Hello from the Alabama Arts Alliance! I am honored to partner with you to amplify the vital work you do! Thank you for using your talents, time, and passion to empower students to find their artistic voice. I spent much of my early career in classrooms across the educational spectrum: from colorfully carpeted Pre-K play spaces to mirrored rehearsal halls on college campuses. In addition to my work as a professional actor, director, and movement specialist working with theatres throughout the state, my time in education has given me a bold vision for what the arts in Alabama can be. You, our professional arts educators, are central to Alabama's success! I hope during my tenure as Executive Director, that the Arts Alliance will be just that - an Alliance - of educators, artists, students, and families working together to make sure every student in Alabama is blessed with a high-quality arts curriculum that is consistent, sequential, and integrated throughout their academic courses. I believe that all of our students deserve music, visual arts, dance, and theatre courses during their school day AND educators in the STEM and Humanity fields should be taught the value of weaving the arts into their lesson plans. I want to be your advocate in many ways: more funding for the arts and arts education, more opportunities for you to connect with other artists and to reconnect with your own artistic pursuits, a more effective presence in our legislature's hearts, minds, and budgets. And I want to hear from you! As we are improving our professional development offerings, connecting with professionals across the artistic fields to bring them to young artists, and talking with legislators in all levels of government service, it is important to me that The Arts Alliance serves as a place where you can go to find support. I know that positive, forward movement in Alabama's Arts Education space is only possible if we work together and I am excited to work with you. You Make The Arts Better! The Arts Make Alabama Better.

Your Ally in Art!

Rebecca Yeager
Executive Director
Alabama Arts Alliance



GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD



Natalie Roig-McKnight
Supervision Administration- Elected

I am an art educator, instructional leader, and passionate advocate for the arts; all while being a mother to my vivacious daughter Lucy and wife to my husband Michael. With degrees from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Montevallo University, the University of West Alabama, and the University of Alabama, I have dedicated my career to fostering creativity, excellence, and artistic expression in students. I currently serve as the Fine Arts Specialist for Montgomery Public Schools and believe that serving this district brings about a true purpose for me. As a Fine Arts Specialist and former Visual Art Instructor, I have played a key role in shaping visual arts education, mentoring young artists, and leading initiatives that support arts integration in schools.

Mollie Everitt
Central Region 4B- Appointed

Mollie Everitt currently lives and works in Birmingham, Alabama. Originally a Mississippi girl, she arrived in Birmingham as a transplant from the Metro Atlanta area in 2016. She received her BFA from the University of Georgia and MAEd from Georgia State University and taught in Georgia public schools from 2007 - 2016. Since moving to Birmingham she has been teaching at Advent Episcopal School in Downtown Birmingham. Mollie has enjoyed getting involved with AAEA and currently serves as a Co Representative for the Birmingham area. Presenting at conferences and organizing regional events are her favorite parts of being involved in the state organization. Aside from art teacher activities Mollie is a distance runner and completes a 1200 mile challenge each year with the Birmingham Track Club. A fixer upper in the historic Norwood neighborhood, a tween daughter, and a dog also keep her busy outside of the classroom.



Summer CAMP LESSON *plans*

Summer Camp Success: Tips & Tricks from an Art Camp Pro

Each summer, parents are on the lookout for camps that are both fun and enriching for their kids. If you're planning to run a summer camp—especially one focused on arts and crafts—here are some tried-and-true strategies from a seasoned art camp instructor to help make your camp a hit!

Make It Magical with a Theme

Choosing a theme that excites both you and your campers is key. Whether it's "Wizards Camp" or "Under the Sea," a strong theme helps guide your activities and keeps kids engaged. For example, during Wizards Camp this past week, students created magical self portraits, crafted Monster Books of Monsters from recycled materials, sculpted ceramic sorting hats, and even made their own wands with plaster wrap. We also dressed up each day, students were sorted into houses, and we mixed potions to make the experience even more memorable.

Pro Tip: If a theme is a big hit, repeat it in future years—you'll already have the lessons and supplies ready to go!

Keep Parents in the Loop

Parents love seeing what their kids are up to. Take photos throughout the day and send a few to parents via text. It's a simple gesture that builds trust and excitement. Many parents also appreciate the convenience of texting over email for quick communication.

Don't Go It Alone

Hire a helper! An extra set of hands can assist with everything from prepping materials and supervising playtime to cleaning up paint buckets. It makes the day run smoother and allows you to focus more on teaching.

Plan Ahead for Full Camps

Want your camps to fill up fast? Post your camp schedule early—ideally by the end of January. Many parents start planning summer activities in February, and early visibility gives you a head start.

Stay Organized

Assign seats with name tags to keep track of each camper's artwork and supplies. It's a small step that saves a lot of time and confusion.

Structure the Day

Balance is everything. Introduce a project with a short video or images, then let kids dive in. After about an hour, take a break for snacks and playtime. Creative toys like marble run, magnet tiles, and coloring books are great for downtime. Avoid relying too much on free draw—kids tend to lose interest quickly.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions. With thoughtful planning, a touch of creativity, and a few smart strategies, your summer camp can be both memorable and manageable. Happy camping!

Rebecca Wall
President Elect
aaea.pres.elect@gmail.com



Summer CAMP LESSON plans



aaea.pres.elect@gmail.com



Calendar of Events



NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



NAEA WEBINARS

FREE for NAEA members; \$49 for nonmembers

Building Drawing Skills for All: Scaffolding Techniques Inspiring K-12 Learners

Wednesday, July 9, 2025 | 7-8pm ET

Self-Care for Educators: Exploring Multimodal Artmaking for Resilience While Finding Purpose and Cultivating Well-Being

Wednesday, August 6, 2025 | 7-8pm ET

Unlocking Funding for Your Visual Arts Program: Leveraging Federal and State Resources to Enhance Arts Education

Wednesday, September 10, 2025 | 7-8pm ET

Honoring Indigenous Lands and Peoples: Addressing Myths, Stereotypes, and Misconceptions to Support Art Educators

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 | 7-8pm ET

AAEA Events

June 23 & 24- AAEA Summer Board Retreat- Birmingham -
Painting workshop with Jayne Morgan and tour,
B'Ham Museum of Art

June 25-28- NAEA Southeastern Leadership- Jackson, MS

other NEWS

Mary Morrow was selected to be an Ambassador this school year for the Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes. Here is a link to the official press release:
<https://bit.ly/ARTEFFECT-Ambassadors-2024-Press-Release>

She has been working with 33 fellow educators from across the country. The LMC for Unsung Heroes focuses on telling the stories of those heroes that many people may not know and have made an impact on others. They sponsor two contests for students: ARTEFFECT and Discovery. Students create artworks based on the lives of the LMC Unsung Heroes for the ARTEFFECT competition. The Discovery Contest is open to students who research and send suggestions to be added to the LMC list of Unsung Heroes.

Art 1 classes: Find your Art Hero- students researched the life/work of an artist they connected with through style, subject, or life experience and created a painted palette in their honor.

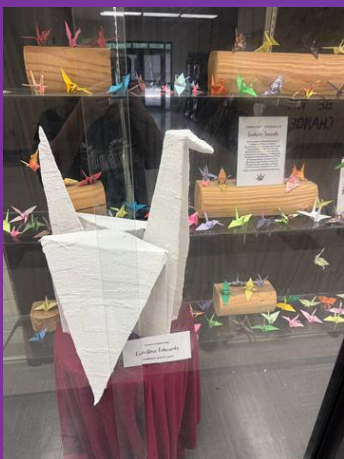
Art 2 class: Created portraits of the LMC Unsung Heroes. One student, Madison Duboise, submitted her portrait of V. Apgar to the ARTEFFECT contest.

Sculpture class: A Walk in Their Shoes- students created shoes to tell the story of an LMC Unsung Hero.

Discovery Award: Art 2 students Rose Marlow and Caeley Isbell are working on a documentary about the life of Sadako Sasaki who created origami cranes while she was in the hospital, sick with leukemia, which she caught after the nuclear bomb hit Hiroshima. Caroline Edwards also honored Sadako by creating a large crane using cardboard and plaster. Art 1 students created cranes after learning about Sadako and her cranes that symbolized love, hope, peace, and healing. These cranes were given to the teachers for Teacher Appreciation Week.

Participating in this program as an Ambassador has been a wonderful experience and I look forward to continuing to use the LMC Unsung Heroes as a resource and a part of my visual arts curriculum.

Congratulations!



other NEWS



Ashley Cullwell was the winner of the SWAG design contest this year! Her design says *Art Teacher Gang/ No clean hands!* AS the winner, she receives a t-shirt and sticker with her design. All sales from the Threadless Store benefit the Louise B Marsh Scholarship Fund!

Felicia Olds was nominated for a Nappie this year, once again! The Nappies are The Readers Choice Awards hosted by the LAGNIAPPE Newspaper in Mobile. Felicia was one of 6 Nominees in the Best Arts Educator category. She won the category in 2023! Congratulations!



Tricia Oliver was invited by Kaci Norman to participate on a panel of speakers at the Alabama Arts Summit in April. Kaci is with the Alabama State Council on the Arts and Tricia was selected as one of two Arts Education Fellow for the 2024-2025 year.

The Board

2024-2026 AAEA Board of Directors

Executive Board

	Name	AAEA Email
President	Amanda Youngblood	aaeapres@gmail.com
President-elect	Rebecca Wall	aaea.pres.elect@gmail.com
Past-President	Mary Jane Coker	aaeapastpres@gmail.com
Secretary	Jack Vest	aaeasecretary2022@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sharon Christman	aaeabusinessoffice@gmail.com

Elected Board Positions

Elementary Division	Brooklyn Scoggins	aaeaelem@gmail.com
Middle Division	Tiffany Ala	aaeamiddleschoolrep@gmail.com
Secondary Division	Felicia Olds	aaeasecondarychair@gmail.com
Retired Division	Sally Chambliss	aaearetired@gmail.com
Higher Education	Meredith Knight	highereducationchair@gmail.com
Supervision/Admin.	Natalie Roig-McKnight	aaeasupervision@gmail.com
Museum Division	Angela May	aaea2museum@gmail.com
PreService/Mentorship	Austin Smith	aaeaadvocacy@gmail.com

Appointed Board Positions

Independent School	Amy Hodges	aaea.independentschool@gmail.com
Membership	Amy Hodges	aaeamembers@gmail.com
Parliamentarian	Betsy Logan	aaeparliamentarian@gmail.com
Newsletter	Tricia Oliver	aaeanewsletter796@gmail.com
Social Media	Sarah Caroline Padgett	aaeasocialmedia23@gmail.com
Technology/Website	Ashley Culwell	aaeatech@gmail.com
Virtual Art Exhibition	Lucy Gafford	aaeavae@gmail.com
YAM Chairperson	Julie Harrison	aaeyouthartmonth@gmail.com
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	Monica Beasley	edi.aaea@gmail.com
NAHS/NJAHS		aaeanahsrep@gmail.com
Scholarship/Competition	Tammie Clark	aaeascholarships796@gmail.com
Conference Chair 2024	Rebecca Wall/Tricia Oliver	aaeafallconference@gmail.com
AL Art Alliance Rep.	Donna Russell	drussell@alartsalliance.org
ALSDE Representative	Andy Meadows	ameadows@alsde.edu
ASCA Rep	Kaci Norman	kaci.norman@arts.alabama.gov
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Central - Region 4A	Amanda Knight	aaea.vaca4a@gmail.com
Central - Region 4B	Mollie Everitt	aaea.vaca4a@gmail.com
Western - Region 3	Molly Brooke Threadgill	aaea.vaca33@gmail.com
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Eastern - Region 2B	Andrea Newman	aaea.vaca2@gmail.com
Southern - Region 1	Rikki Rhodes	aaea.vaca1@gmail.com



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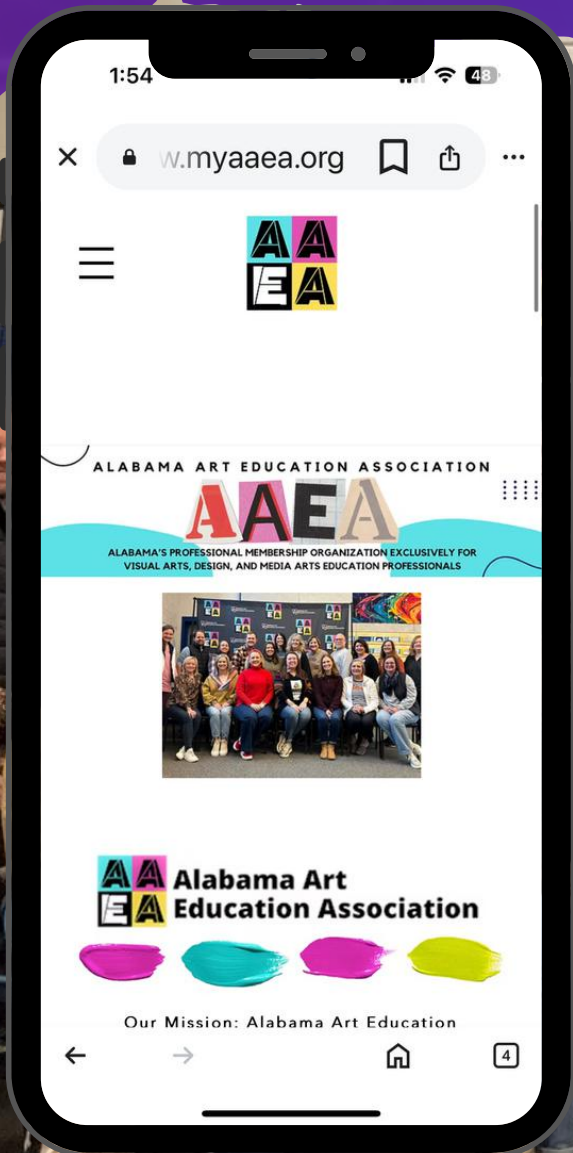


BLICK
art materials



Thanks for helping to make our conference

Amazing!



**Have an idea for an article or
a calendar event to share?**

Contact Us!