From the NAIA Board Chair

I'm sitting in my studio thinking about my career as an artist and I have to smile at where it has taken me. My life was supposed to be completely different. My family were all lawyers and my mothers side were mostly teachers except for my mother who was a writer. I went to high school in Canada where there was an extra year if you wanted to go to university. I graduated from Grade 13 when I was 17, full of energy and ego, had already established my self as an artist and was extremely stubborn. I calmly handed the keys back to Grandmother, asked Kenny to take me back to York, and the rest is, as they say, history.

I think about that day every now and then and it makes me laugh. I remember my family being horrorified and shocked by my decision, and I remember the excitement I felt at starting my life and being very proud. Well it's 42 years later and I'm still happy with my decision. I wouldn't change a thing.

I started doing shows in 1969 when art shows were new and everyone was excited about seeing original art on the street. It was a simpler time, there were very few rules, there were no paid show directors or committees, reproductions didn't exist and everyone made everything in their booth, including the booth. It wasn't a business, it was more of a lifestyle choice. There wasn't any competition because there weren't enough of us out there so every show had enough money to go around. Living was inexpensive, so you didn't have to make as much money each week. In fact you couldn't do a show each week because they didn't exist. Life was amazing.

A lot has changed since those days but a lot has stayed the same. Art shows are big business now, we sometimes don't feel like we count and life is too expensive but the heart of the business is still the same. It's still all about the art. Without the art, there are no art shows. I have always felt that the independent artist who toils in their studio to create original art is special, unique and unusual and should be protected, nurtured and supported as treasures. Artists are thinkers and dreamers and our work enriches the lives of everyone who comes in contact with us. We are important and we need to remember that.

I try to do my part as an artist and as the Chair of the NAIA by sharing my beliefs about art with as many people as I can each day and work hard to keep art alive everywhere I can. I still feel lucky every morning when I step into my studio to paint and I feel especially lucky to be a part of this amazing group of human beings that we call "Artists".

Carroll Swayze
Printmaker, Chair, NAIA

About Canopy Weights

The following is intended to assist the professional outdoor exhibitor in the selection of canopy weights for their display.

I have been involved in the design, development, and use of canopy weights for over 30 years. My interest began shortly after I started exhibiting my work outdoors under a canopy and it didn't take long to realize that the wind was my enemy. It quickly became apparent that an unsecured canopy can be extremely vulnerable to a sudden gust of wind. It can take flight and cause a lot of damage to both work and anyone or anything unfortunate enough to be in its path.

Holding a canopy down with stakes and ropes is an obvious way to deal with wind if you are on a soft surface like a grassy field. Unfortunately, many exhibit spaces are on hard surfaces like streets or parking lots and using stakes and ropes are neither feasible nor permitted. Under these circumstances about the only option is to use weight to hold things in place.

Figuring out how to hold everything in place with weights is not simple and usually involves tradeoffs. For instance if you are out in a serious wind (30mph plus) probably no amount of weight would seem to be too much. However when packing, setting up and/or transporting weight every extra pound adds difficulties. In other words, having 100 pound weights would be great until you have to pick them up, get them to your van and transport them to the next show.

Another aspect that is important for most of us is keeping costs down, and space in our vans or displays comes at a premium. As far as selecting the best material to use as an economical weight, water and sand are nearly free - the only real cost is what to put them in. By comparison, iron and steel are quite expensive, costing upwards of $3 plus per pound. However when packing, setting up and/or transporting weight every extra pound adds difficulty. It comes efficient use of space, water requires almost 7 times as much space in a van or display as iron or steel. So the main trade off here essentially comes down to out of pocket cost versus efficient use of available space.

If you walk a typical show you will likely see a variety of ways exhibitors have gone about adding weight to their canopies. One of the most common is the use of PVC pipes filled with concrete. Free weights, dumbbells and tractor weights are frequently repurposed to hold canopies down. In fact, virtually anything that can be tied to a canopy frame that adds weight can be seen. These will range from concrete blocks to gal-lon containers filled with water to sand bags to car batteries. There are also commercial products specifically designed for their display.

The following is intended to assist the professional outdoor exhibitor in the selection of canopy weights for their display.

I have been involved in the design, development, and use of canopy weights for over 30 years. My interest began shortly after I started exhibiting my work outdoors under a canopy and it didn't take long to realize that the wind was my enemy. It quickly became apparent that an unsecured canopy can be extremely vulnerable to a sudden gust of wind. It can take flight and cause a lot of damage to both work and anyone or anything unfortunate enough to be in its path.

Holding a canopy down with stakes and ropes is an obvious way to deal with wind if you are on a soft surface like a grassy field. Unfortunately, many exhibit spaces are on hard surfaces like streets or parking lots and using stakes and ropes are neither feasible nor permitted. Under these circumstances about the only option is to use weight to hold things in place.

Figuring out how to hold everything in place with weights is not simple and usually involves tradeoffs. For instance if you are out in a serious wind (30mph plus) probably no amount of weight would seem to be too much. However when packing, setting up and/or transporting weight every extra pound adds difficulties. In other words, having 100 pound weights would be great until you have to pick them up, get them to your van and transport them to the next show.

Another aspect that is important for most of us is keeping costs down, and space in our vans or displays comes at a premium. As far as selecting the best material to use as an economical weight, water and sand are nearly free - the only real cost is what to put them in. By comparison, iron and steel are quite expensive, costing upwards of $3 plus per pound. However when packing, setting up and/or transporting weight every extra pound adds difficulty. It comes efficient use of space, water requires almost 7 times as much space in a van or display as iron or steel. So the main trade off here essentially comes down to out of pocket cost versus efficient use of available space.

If you walk a typical show you will likely see a variety of ways exhibitors have gone about adding weight to their canopies. One of the most common is the use of PVC pipes filled with concrete. Free weights, dumbbells and tractor weights are frequently repurposed to hold canopies down. In fact, virtually anything that can be tied to a canopy frame that adds weight can be seen. These will range from concrete blocks to gallon containers filled with water to sand bags to car batteries. There are also commercial products specifically designed for their display.

This should be continued on page 5.
The Independent Artist is a publication of the National Association of Independent Artists (NAIA).

NAIA formed following dialogue that began in June of 1995. The group’s purpose is to enhance the economic well-being of people who exhibit their work at quality outdoor and indoor art and/or fine craft shows, encourage creative expression and artistic excellence, and expand public awareness, appreciation and acquisition of fine art and fine craft.

The NAIA actively works to be a valuable resource for not only artists, but also the organizers and directors of art shows.

To learn more about NAIA, visit the website:

www.naia-artists.org

Many thanks to the artists, collectors, merchants, service providers, and other professionals who generously took time to write articles for inclusion in this publication.

The Independent Artist is edited by Carroll Swayze, NAIA Communications Chair.

To advertise in future issues of the IA, or to submit articles, letters to the editor, or ideas for inclusion in this publication.

The Independent Artist is edited by Carroll Swayze, NAIA Communications Chair.

To advertise in future issues of The Independent Artist, email Carroll Swayze:
carrollswayze@naia-artists.org.

NAIA Board of Directors

Terry Corcoran
Vice-Chair, Artist
Atlanta, GA

Benjamin Frey
Secretary, Chair, Emerging Artist Committee, Artist
Buena Vista, VA

Lisanne Robinson
Treasurer, Artist
Sebastian, FL

Sara Shambaugh
Chair, Advisory Committee, Director, KRAAL Art Fair, St. Joseph, MI

Carroll Swayze
Chair, Communications Committee, Artist
Englewood, FL

NAIA Advisory Committee

Stephen King
Des Moines, IA

Bill Kruser
Arlington Heights, IL

Richard Lobenthal
West Bloomfield, MI

Mary Strope
Belleville, MI

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Facebook.com/NAIA

From Groupie to Guru in 19 Years: Reflections on Guiding an Art Fair

BY SARA SHAMBERGER
NAIA BOARD MEMBER, ART FAIR CONSULTANT

Love.

If you’re directing an art fair, it’s love – of the artists, the volunteers, the visitors – and how you show them this love that will go a great way toward turning a merely good event into a superlative one.

Make it a big lovefest, before, during and after the show: Woof, Woof, Woof even the general public. Feed artists and volunteers. Make sure all the details are lovingly conceived and executed, from providing special T-shirts to volunteers, to providing a lounge for artists, to sending personalized thank-you cards when it’s all over. All these little and big details, if you do them in a way that shows real appreciation, will add up to a statement to each group that says: “We only value you and want you to enjoy this show. And we want you to come back next year!”

And they will come back.

But remember this: You can’t fake the love. It has to be real and natural, or the formula won’t work.

I didn’t know all these “secrets” in 1985, when my family relocated to the small city of Benton Harbor in Southwest Michigan. My only experience until then with art fairs had come a decade earlier, in 1975, when I attended the Ann Arbor (Mich.) Street Art Fair. “The Original,” a highly regarded event. That visit had whetted my appetite.

As a Clinical Social Worker I soon found a position in the Benton Harbor area as a therapist with the local mental health center. The following summer, in adjacent St. Joseph, Michigan, I attended the Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff, a fundraiser for the Krasl Art Center. The annual event takes place on a weekend in the heart of summer on a beautifully situated stretch of city-owned lawn looking out over Lake Michigan.

You might say that my first Krasl Art Fair visit confirmed my love affair with art fairs. Each summer I would look forward to the second weekend in July with an eagerness approaching that of a child anticipating the circus coming to town.

Several years later my husband became a member of the art center’s Board of Directors, and I asked him to find out how I could be involved with the fair. In January 1995 I began a three-year commitment to serve in three positions of leadership in consecutive years: Assistant Chairperson, Chairperson, and Registration Chairperson. As the end of the third year I was asked to serve as the event’s first paid registrar. Over time the position’s responsibilities expanded, and I became the first full-time director of the Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff, a position I was to hold for 19 years.

It is a wonderful thing to do what you love. And so, directing the KFAW was, in a literal sense, a labor of love. For me it came naturally. Ronald Reagan once said: “How can a president not be an actor?” I would ask: “How can an art show director not love art, artists and art fairs?” I now realize that from the very beginning I was an “art fair groupie.” I love art! I love to buy art and do all I can to support and advocate for art fair artists.

There’s another thing that may sound obvious at first about art fairs, but it is worth stating, because it’s surprising how often this truth is ignored. It’s this: The experts on art fairs – not surprisingly – are the artists. I learned this early in my tenure with the KAF. I listened intently to artists’ suggestions and observations. My skills as a clinical therapist were helpful as I sought to hear what artists said, understand what they meant, and sometimes, to validate their feelings, whether I was being praised or criticized.

One early suggestion from an artist was to “treat artists like kings and queens.” This became my cornerstone for building and managing an art fair. Another was that we have a mission statement and set goals for the growth and development of our show. We adopted a mission statement that is brief but clear: “Bringing People and Art Together.” At times we developed this motto: “You talk, we listen.”

Each year we gathered feedback through surveys and wisely created “safe” climates for artists to share their concerns without fear of repercussion. While we established particular goals for each year, our actions through the years were guided by four overarching aims:

To provide high-quality art to the Midwest
To provide a nurturing environment to artists
To be considered one of the best fine art fine craft fairs in the country
To provide Jurying by judges who are experts in their fields

In 1999 I was privileged to attend the very first conference for Art Fair Directors and artists for the National Association of Independent Artists (NAIA). That one-day event changed forever how I looked at art fairs and the artists in them. It was my first experience with other show directors and artists. The interactions between the two groups and input from both greatly influenced my direction as an art fair director.

NAIA’s publications, surveys and newsletters became the foundation for the work I did as show director. I believe that many of the suggestions and ideas from artists and other show directors sprang to life at the Krasl Art Fair: To me, the conferences were the equivalent of graduate school for art fair directors. I will forever be grateful to Larry Oli- verson, NAIA’s first president, for inviting me to learn as a member of the organization.

Building on excellence
Becoming the director of the Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff in its 38th year, I inherited what was already an excellent, volunteer-driven event.

9 RULES TO LIVE BY IF YOU WANT A GREAT ART FAIR

1. Assume the best in artists and provide amenities that make their visit as pleasurable as possible.

2. Only make rules that make sense and then enforce them. (Admittedly, this can be hard!)

3. As an on your volunteer coordinator positions, create Quality Control Coordinator. (We were fortunate to have the Krasl Art Center’s curator in this position This person reviews all artists booths and determines if the artists are following the rules. This person must be capable, tough-skinned, qualified, thorough, effective and fair.

4. Put a system in place to handle artist complaints and problems. Artists feel respected when this system is provided.

5. The Art Fair Director must be caring, always accessible, compassionate, sensitive, perceptive, reasonable, and willing to do whatever it takes in any given situation to have the best possible outcome.


7. Keep a sense of humor and laugh when the occasion arises.

8. Visit each artist booth.

9. Trust your coordinators and volunteers.

naia-artists.org

www.naia-artists.org

continued on page 7
Gasparilla & the Great Weather Debacle

BY CARROLL SWAYZE
PRINTMAKER & NAIA BOARD MEMBER

I have been doing shows for over 40 years and when you think of certain shows you think of certain things. Coconut Grove makes me think multicultural festi-
val with great art, Cedar Key reminds me of simple good times. Virginia Beach Boardwalk reminds me of summers with my boys. Ann Arbor brings thoughts of incredible uniqueness, lots of money and parking mad-
ness and when you think of Gasparilla, I’m sorry to say but you immediately think “Bad Weather.” I’d like to tell you that this years show was the exception but I was there and I cannot tell a lie. The 2015 Raymond James Gasparilla Festival of the Arts was a horrendous disaster! We had monsoon rains for over a day, the entire park flooded and every grass aisle filled with thick, deep, stinking MUD!

A few years ago I presented “The Cost of Doing Shows” at our NAIA Artists & Directors Conference in Indianapolis and adopted the “Less Shows, More Money” theory. Since that time I have been trying to do only shows where I had a “real” chance of making a profit. Even though Tampa is fairly close to my home, Gasparilla is still a fairly expensive show to do. With a total cost of around $1,150.00, I can do a smaller less expensive show close to home and make equal or more sales with a greater profit margin so I hadn’t applied to Gasparilla for a while. Add to that the well known “Gasparilla Weather Issue” and it just hadn’t fit into my business plan until this year when the other show changed their date and I decided to take a chance. I have a very large following in the Tampa/ St. Petersburg area and since I haven’t been up that way in a few years I decided to brave the weather. I also decided to be positive and think good thoughts so that perhaps the weather gods might be kind to us this year. I worked hard for two months to fill my van with a great selection of original acrylic paintings and headed to Tampa with a positive outlook. I had peeked at the weather and it looked like it might just rain on Friday for set up so the only extra precaution I took before my trip to Gasparilla was to buy a large tarp to cover my artwork as I rolled it into setup.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Raymond James Gasparilla Festival of the Arts I will de-
scribe the show. This year marked Gasparilla’s 45th year as a large 2 day Juried Outdoor fine art and fine craft festival featuring national and international award winning artists. The show is always at the end of February/beginning of March in Tampa, Florida and is well sponsored by Raymond James Financial and the City of Tampa among others. This years show offered $74,500 in cash awards as well as $20,000 in purchase awards so as you would imagine, top caliber artists from all over the country flocked to Tampa to par-
ticipate. The festival features local and regional enter-
tainment through out the weekend and a Childrens Art Program where festival artists donate small pieces for the “kids only” shopping zone where the money raised is donated to the Childrens Cancer Center.

The show is now located at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park & Kiley Gardens in downtown Tampa right along the river but the show has been in many different loca-
tions in the area over the years, including the famous dark, dank parking garage, under the bridge and along the city streets. When the weather is good, Gasparilla is a real winner financially for the artists who partici-
pate because the show attracts a wonderful, educated, affluent, art buying crowd.

In the world of outdoor art festivals weather is always an issue that we have to contend with. Everyone has their bad weather stories for art shows all over the country but some of the Gasparilla stories top them all. For this reason artists have a love/hate relationship with Gasparilla. They love to come for the awards and the large Tampa/St. Petersburg customers who flock to the show but it’s always a serious gamble because Florida weather on this weekend is notoriously BAD! It’s so bad that the show actually has an inclement weather clause in their show information packet and a list of Mandatory & Suggested Tools to bring in case the Weather Gods are not smiling. Over the years Gasparilla has been plagued by high winds, almost to the tornado and hurricane stage, and torrential rains. Artists booths have blown over and smashed apart and their artwork has been destroyed by the rain and blowing debris. I live in Florida and spend a lot of time outdoors and weather is always an issue, especially in the beginning of March. So an even bigger question in my mind has always been: Why doesn’t Gasparilla change their dates?

Gasparilla is the one show that artists make special preparations for. It’s the only show in the country where artists build weights that they can barely lift or carry because there’s a good chance that they’ll need to tie their booths down against the hurricane winds. Gasparilla is a great place to test your full body foul weather gear. With everyone’s rain boots this year the artists looked much like the Bering Sea crab fisherman on “Deadliest Catch”. Instead of sunscreen add two heavy duty cables and bungies and thick ropes and extra tarps. This years show would have been a perfect venue for a large mud-wrestling championship and the judge literally could have used a paddle board to go through the aisles on Saturday while judging the show because the water was flowing deep in every booth. You know the weather is bad when the food booths close. Gasparilla is the only show I know that you can be serenaded by opera singers while you stand in ankle deep mud. I guess I could go on and on but it really wasn’t amusing, it was a nightmare.

All kidding aside, The 2015 Gasparilla Festival of the Arts was a huge disaster. The torrential rains started before the opening of the show on Saturday morn-
ing and continued on into the night flowing the site watching the radar and the storm was not going away. There were hazards everywhere from slippery side-
walks and muddy grass to electrical lines and connec-
tors running under water. It was getting dangerous for everyone and as the Chairman of the NAIA I felt that I needed to do something so at around 12:30 pm I braved the weather and went to the commit-
tee tent for the 3rd time and asked to speak to the show director. Of course I was told that the three co-chairs weren’t available but someone would come to my booth as soon as possible. I had already spoken with the parks manager and called a couple of home improvement stores and was formulating a plan of ac-
tion to help with the festival. It wasn’t until after 2pm that one of the co-chairs arrived at my booth. It was obvious that he was not happy about being there and the conversation went blankly back at me and said that they were going to have a meeting. I suggested four things to him im-
mediately which I have listed here with his response:

Carroll: Have that meeting NOW!
Show Chair: He said they would get to it.

Carroll: Be responsible, close the show! I explained that flowing water, torrential rains, leaking sewage,
slippery mud and live electrical wires under water are not conducive to safety for either the artists or the public and for safety reasons the show should be closed. The artists could then close, fortify their booths to keep their artwork safe and get to safety and the public would not be in any more danger.

Show Chair: He told me that I was being overly cautious and that he thought most of the electrical cords and plugs have "those things in them that automatically shut them off if there is a shock in the line."

Carroll: Postpone the judging to Sunday. No judge could be expected to properly evaluate artwork and fairly give away $70,000 in a monsoon.

Show Chair: He told me that the judge wasn't "very sensitive" and that he was sure she could do the job in the rain.

Carroll: You could solve the problems of tomorrow if you would order a couple of truckloads of sand or water absorbing clay for early Sunday morning. I had spoken to the parks manager right after he threatened an artist with the police for throwing mulch in his booth. After he calmed down a bit he told me that mulch couldn't be used in the park. I then asked him what could be used to sop up the mud and he told me we could use sand or absorbent clay.

Show Chair: He told me that they had used up all their resources and didn't have any money for clay or sand and didn't plan to do anything.

Carroll: I will take up a collection from artists to buy it and have it hauled away.

Show Chair: That's when he told me no and walked away.

Without any contingency plan and without any communications between the Festival and the artists, the show remained open in the pouring rain, the mud and water rose in the park to dangerous levels, the artists hid for the most part in their booths trying to stay dry. The judge scurried away around quickly through the rain not able to even walk.

The mud was 6" deep in every row that had grass and the few people that tried to come out would look down at us from the sidewalk and pass.

I don't blame them, it was unhealthy to be in that mud. The booths that flanked the side-walks had a chance for sales on Sunday but nobody walked down the muddy aisles. It was dangerous and slippery and smelled bad. People used anything and everything they had to try to give themselves a chance to sell.

Visqueen, plywood, mulch, cardboard, anything they could scramble together, just to have a chance to recoup some of their losses but the show committee and their chairmen were not visible to us. Unfortunately the volunteers got most of the complaints from the artists because they were the only show communication that we had access to. I felt sorry for them because they took the brunt of the anger and disappointment that the artists were feeling.

The show closed and the tear down began. Everyone had an allotted time when they were supposed to bring their vehicles into the park to load. Of course the load out schedule really didn't pan out because you couldn't drive anywhere on the grass so artists had to be patient and respectful and wait their turn to at least try to help us, instead of ignoring us. It would have been a good publicity move for Gasparilla to offer us something, but instead they sent us this after the show:

"First and foremost, thank you for your continued participation in the Gasparilla Festival of the Arts. You are the reason why everyone involved in this 100% volunteer and non-profit organization puts so much time and effort into putting on our festival. That being said, we understand that the weather conditions made things very difficult for a number of artists, patrons, and volunteers alike. We appreciate all of your feedback so that we can strive to continue to improve our festival year in and year out.

Carroll: We all realize that it would have been a monumental job but I had suggested that very fix to the Show Co-chair early on Saturday. When you have 20 artists singing "Don't Stop Believing" together in the middle of the pouring rain, almost anything could have been accomplished had we been allowed to try. I had offered to find the money for hose and would have done it if he had allowed it. If nothing else it would have been a good faith move for Gasparilla to offer us something, but instead they sent us this after the show:

GASPARILLA, continued from p.4
WEIGHTS, continued from p.1

cally designed for this purpose: instance 35 pound fabricated steel plumb balls can be attached to canopy legs, 15 pound modular cast iron weights that can be stacked on to canopy legs, fabric bags and molded plastic containers for water or sand designed to attach to canopy legs, and some newer manufactured canopy weights typically having a molded outer shells pre-filled with concrete like materials. Given the range of available options, it can be difficult to determine what is the best approach to take if you need canopy weights.

The following are what I believe to be key things to consider that may make your decision easier.

How much weight is needed? This is the first thing to determine. Unfortunately, there are so many variables involved that it is almost impossible to arrive at definitive answers to this question. Based on experience and as a practical rule of thumb, the minimum amount of weight to have is around 30 pounds per leg, which will probably handle gusts of up to around 20-25 mph. Less than this amount, (say around 15 pounds or less), will only be acceptable for light breezes not exceeding 8-12 mph. Many exhibitors have found through trial and error that 40-50 pounds a leg is optimal for most of the conditions they are likely to encounter. To prevent your canopy from being pulled through with winds gusting up to around 30-40 plus mph. I have seen engineering studies that suggest 100 pounds per leg is ideal. I suspect that any canopy frames that are not structurally sound enough to handle this much weight without twisting out of shape under high winds (in excess of 30-40 mph) - also there is some point where it really is prudent to tear down.

Appearance: Will the weight system you choose detract from your display? Your display has several functions. You want it to make your work attractive and be inviting to the public, and you need it to protect your work. Ideally your weights and tie-downs (if any) hang your weights low so that they touch the ground to provide desired wind protection, performance characteristics, aesthetics or durability.

The available options actually break down to two main ones: Do you want to make your own weights or buy them?

Making your own weights

At one time the do-it-yourself option was the only one available. Even though there are currently several commercial products available, many exhibitors still choose to make their own. The primary perceived advantage of this approach is usually to keep costs down and most common approach is to use PVC plastic pipes filled with concrete that can be hung from the canopy or canopy frame. There are several web sites and videos that do a good job of outlining ways to make PVC pipe weights. If you choose this direction I strongly recommend that you hang your weights low so that they touch the ground or nearly touch and that they be securely attached to your canopy legs so that they cannot swing around. This is also happens to be the most effective and safe way to use this type weight.

Some of the drawbacks are that they can take up space. For instance, to achieve a target of about 45 pounds per leg you would need something like a 40” long piece of 4” PVC pipe (which is actually 4-1/2” in diameter), filled with concrete. Another factor to keep in mind is that individual weights weighing 45 pounds or more are heavy to lift and tote around. Cylindrical weights also tend to roll away or distort. Concrete filled sections of PVC pipe are not particularly attractive. For improved aesthetics some exhibitors have resorted to painting their pipes or they use fabric covers. Also, if you are buying the required compo-

nents at retail, say 15” of 4” PVC pipe, 180 pounds of concrete, end caps to contain the concrete, eyebolts for attaching ropes andropes or adjustable tie-offs, plus straps or bungee cords to tie the weights to your canopy legs, your actual out of pocket cost can actu-
ally end up being much higher than you might have initially expected.

Buying Weights

Today there are many manufactured products on the market that have been specifically designed to hold canopies down. They too can be broken down into two categories: Ready To Use and Require Filling.

Ready To Use products are typically made of steel, iron, rubber, or are manufactured composites—generally having molded plastic outer shells that have been factory filled with concrete-like materials. In general these ready to use products are compact and durable. They can also be quite expensive.

Require Filling products are usually either fabric bags or molded plastic containers designed to hold sand and/or in some cases water with provisions for attaching to canopies. They are often bulkier (note the earlier volume comparisons of water or sand versus steel), generally not as durable, but they are relatively inexpensive. Fabric bags wear out, seams split, fabrics tear, zippers, and other closures can malfunction. Molded plastic containers are probably more durable than fabric but are generally a little more expensive and have been known to malfunction leaking their contents wherever. From what I have seen of the products in this category you can usually expect to get what you pay for.

Ready To Use versus Require Filling

If your intent is to have a professional looking, safe, secure display, and you plan on exhibiting your work at multiple shows over a period of years (and are not interested in making your own weights) your best option will probably be a higher end product from the Ready To Use category.

Products from the Require Filling category are great if you are primarily using your canopy recreationally, or you really need to keep short term expenses down.

Just released: America’s Best Fine Art & Craft Shows 2014 Report

ArtFairCalendar.com surveyed 50,000 subscribers, asking “what is America’s Best Art Fair?”

This report gives you the answers. Show organizers, being informed and learning the best practices of successful events is your job. In this 60 page report you’ll find:

• what the best shows are and what the buyers say about them
• why they attend art fairs and how you can get them to attend yours
• why people stop attending a formerly favorite event
• an extensive list of what shows are no longer attended and why
• valuable suggestions on how to improve events from the customer’s perspective
• amazingly candid demographic information (including income levels!)

Visit ArtFairCalendar.com and click on the “report icon” to learn more and purchase this startling report directly from what the buyers say they want when they attend art fairs.
We can assure you that leading up to and throughout the weekend of the festival, the festival’s leadership were planning and meeting with the City representatives and other interested parties in order to work out a solution. Unfortunately, due to a number of limiting factors, none of the vetted options were possible. I hope you understand that the park in which we operate the festival is city property and that the festival committee has no control over the park’s management. We researched and requested numerous alternatives that may have mitigated the muddy conditions on Sunday, but due to park regulations or other limitations, the alternative options were not viable.

For example:
1. Plywood – We calculated the need and it would have been hundreds of 4’ x 8’ sheets. We, as a festival, didn’t have nearly enough manpower to make this option feasible. Furthermore, laying plywood on already uneven surfaces would have created a manmade tripping hazard unacceptable to us and the City.
2. Tarps/Visqueen – Upon getting wet, this surface would be far too slippery and unsafe.
3. Artificial turf – We shopped a number of home improvement stores and found that there wasn’t nearly enough in stock to combat our issues. Delivery and setup on short notice also presented an issue.
4. Mulch/Hay – Park regulations prevented us from laying down any loose material in the park. In fact, we were notified by park officials that they were unhappy that people were using mulch from the flower beds.

Outdoor events in Florida certainly come with inherent risks, most profoundly the weather. Our festival is a rain or shine event and poor weather conditions are a reality for outdoor festivals. At the end of the day, we want our artists to know they are appreciated and supported. Our festival is a rain or shine event and our overriding goal is for each artist to have a successful show. That is why the festival leadership and all our other volunteers do what we do. Our payment is the Festival’s lack of a contingency plan for the artists was an unfortunate mistake. He explained that collectively the artists had suffered thousands of dollars worth of losses (show fees, expenses, damaged and destroyed work) at Gasparilla but that at no time has the festival offered anything to help the artists who support their show. He explained that he was aware the show suffered losses as well but that they destroyed work) at Gasparilla but that at no time has the festival offered anything to help the artists who support their show. He explained that he was aware the show suffered losses as well but that they

Nothing has come back to us from anyone associated with the Raymond James Gasparilla Festival of the Arts. Enough time has passed for them to have had their meetings and to try to figure out what they are going to do to move forward after The Great Weather Debacle of 2015. I had hoped to include their responses in this article so they could at least show the artists that they were making some sort of an attempt at communication or that at least they had heard us but sadly all I hear are crickets.

One of the things I realized clearly when I was working on our new book: How To Run A Great Art Show, was that one of the biggest problems for artists in the art show industry, in my opinion, is the changing volunteer show director. As artists we all have years of experience that we can pull from when confronted with problems and issues at shows but the novice, inexperienced show director who has kindly and willingly offered to volunteer their time to chair an art show doesn’t always have any background in our industry. If everything goes smoothly, it can work just fine but if there is an issue that they have never dealt with, such as a huge mud bog situation, they may not know what to do or have the resources to deal with a solution. For that reason I have packed up one of my books and sent it to the Gasparilla Committee so hopefully they will read it and get some ideas to help them cope with their issues in the future.

Gasparilla can be such a great show and has had such a great reputation in the past. I sincerely hope they haven’t lost their passion for the artists who are the true heart of their event. After all, without the “Art”, all you have is a “Festival”

The NAIA Action Line is available to NAIA Artist Members to assist in resolving specific issues or problems that the artist member may be experiencing with an art show related to the NAIA’s official list of advocacies.

The focus of this Action Line is to address matters that run at cross currents to the NAIA’s advocacies. In warranted cases, the NAIA may also assist artists with matters outside the advocacies. However, this is not a place where vague and non-specific accusations about shows or a show director are appropriate. For example, general complaints about rising booth fees, application fees, etc., can be addressed on the NAIA Member Forum. To learn more about the NAIA and Action Line, visit the organizations website - www.naia-artists.org.

Membership Type
____ ARTIST $65
____ SUPPORTER $65
____ CONTRIBUTOR $95
____ BOOTH BACKER $____

FIRST NAME ___________________________________________
LAST NAME ___________________________________________

ORGANIZATION NAME ___________________________________________
ADDRESS ___________________________________________
CITY ___________ STATE ___________ ZIP ___________
PHONE ___________________________ PHONE ___________________________
EMAIL ___________________________________________
URL ___________________________________________

BILLING INFORMATION (Credit or Check)
If paying by Check - Make Check Payable to: NAIA
Mail to: Lisanne Robinson, NAIA Treasurer
I 125 US Hwy I
Sebastian, FL 32958

If paying by CC - Name as it appears on Card
Amount to be Charged
Exp Date
SSI
Signature

ACTION LINE
JOIN US TODAY!
By Credit Card through our web site www.naia-artists/memberhp

6 | THE INDEPENDENT ARTIST

www.naia-artists.org
The art fair began growing in rankings in listed publications. The show had a loyal following of patrons and artists. In 2014, nearly two decades after I began working with the KAF, it was my great pleasure to share with our volunteers, staff and community the recognition of our show as one of the “Top Ten” in the United States, according to Sunshine Artist Magazine. Not only had our show become a favorite of the artists, with respectable waiting lists each year, but it had also become one of the “places to be” the second weekend in July. Some patrons make annual pilgrimages from hundreds of miles away.

As I’ve said, an art fair reaches its highest potential only when its leaders pay great attention to detail and great respect to all parties involved. One of the first things I did, as director, was to create two basic committees of volunteers: the Core Committee and the Coordinators Committee. The Core Committee makes decisions and sets policy that reflects the KAC’s philosophy. The 35 coordinators are responsible for their specific areas and for all of the volunteers assigned to them.

When it comes to showing respect, I determined early on that I would follow a rule of giving tender loving care to the three groups that make up any art fair; and that I’d do so in this order of priority: 1. artists; 2. attendees; and 3. volunteers. As you will see in a moment, this “ranking” does not in any way imply that volunteers got shortchanged. But reality dictates that an art fair director choose where to put the most energy. In truth, all three groups are vital, since you can’t satisfy one without the other.

Another motto that I have stressed is this: “It’s all about the art.” I was always conscious to keep our mission statement, goals, motto and tenets at the forefront of our vision, creation and planning.

Working with – and wooing – volunteers.

Each year I asked any new volunteer coordinators to agree to a three-year commitment. That has been a hard sell. The coordinators love doing their tasks so much that several have remained in their positions for many years.

The coordinators meet several times a year including at a “coordinators’ kick-off meeting” that includes dinner. It is important that the meetings are brief, informative and fun. This is a wonderful and valuable time for the coordinators to network and form strong bonds. I often served snacks at meetings, following another important motto: “If you feed them, they will come!” It was important to me that above all, our volunteers should have fun and enjoy a quality experience. The Krasl Art Center is fortunate to have a paid Volunteer Coordinator who recruits and retains all of the art fair’s volunteers.

I conducted training for the coordinators two weeks before the KAF, and the following week the coordinators trained their volunteers by reviewing assigned duties. During training the volunteers received free T-shirts and a comprehensive information booklet.

All volunteers wear the official volunteer T-shirt while on their specific assignments. Besides identifying the volunteers to artists and visitors who may need some guidance, the T-shirts distinguish the volunteers and generate camaraderie among them. They look forward each year to a new design and a different color. The T-shirts have the current year’s Krasl Art Fair poster image on the front, the Krasl Art Center logo on the sleeve and the sponsor logos on the back.

To engage the volunteers even deeper, I initiated a Volunteer T-shirt “Reconstruction Contest.” They could use scissors to cut apart their T-shirts and then sew them into new creations, as long as the art and all the logos were still intact. The reconstructions were usually T-shirts, but sometimes they were art fair-branded things like skirts and aprons. This is a really popular activity that has helped generate a fun and festive atmosphere during the art fair weekend.

Wherever I was or whatever I was doing during the art fair, it was vital to me (and the volunteer coordinators) to take any opportunity to verbally thank volunteers throughout the day. In addition, I also didn’t forget the artists and our visiting patrons. We thanked them, too.

And what about the general public, including children? How did we approach them? How did we entice them to come to the art fair?

Living in a smaller community, we are fortunate to have a number of major supporters. The local newspaper, radio stations and the city of St. Joseph give the Krasl Art Fair much-needed opportunities to connect with the public, not only through publicizing the event itself, but by offering an extended dialogue with the public. For example, part of the run-up to the event itself is a poster unveiling of the featured poster artist. Many local organizations, our newspaper and our food sponsors help to host this annual event.

For the public at large, staff, key volunteers and I took every opportunity to encourage attendance. We did so through interviews on radio, TV, print, social media and through various contacts in the community. I asked my dental hygienist, for instance, if she had ever been to the art fair, and when she said she hadn’t, we discussed the reason. Such conversations were educational and usually led in a positive direction.

Also, I worked hard to debunk the damaging myth that says: “Art is too expensive. I can’t afford anything.” We used many tactics to communicate the varied price levels artists set for their creations, including noting “bread & butter items” they were offering for sale. Most artists are willing to offer other options as monthly payments. I have done this myself on several occasions. The most expensive painting I purchased was over $3,000. I too thought, “I can’t afford this,” but breaking it down to monthly payments was doable. After my final payment, the artist shipped the painting to me. This can be a “win-win” for both parties.

I encouraged people to attend the Krasl Art Fair to look at and be with art even if they didn’t buy anything. Part of the looking is for people to discover what types of art they like, which is important – and, which, of course, can ultimately lead them to become patrons and return to the fair.

To encourage making a connection and dialogue between the public and artist, we started a Children’s Art Purchase Program or CAPP. Participating artists must have available at their booth original art items selling for $10 or less. We conceived of CAPP as a way to motivate children and their parents to visit the art fair, encouraging them to introduce themselves to the artists, ask questions, be curious and learn. It has always been my intent to be an advocate for the artists and help create a new generation of art fair visitors – ones who both enjoy looking and are motivated to buy the fabulous artwork created by our artists.

So there you have them: my secrets to running an art fair. It takes tremendous planning and a lot of hard work by many people. It takes great attention to details and always keeping the artists’ needs primary. But the greatest ingredient is the artists who create and guides all the rest, is the love you have for all the parties to this big party.

Sara Shambarger
NAIA Board Member
Art Fair Consultant

Sara wishes to acknowledge and thank George Barfield, Dar Davis and Ted Hartzell for their contributions to this article.
Weights, continued from p.5

Disadvantages
Cost. A set of four 32 pound weights costs $444 plus $55 for shipping. 16 pound add on weights cost $55 each plus shipping. If the goal is to have between 45-50 pounds of weight on each leg, one set of Hippi Feet weights set plus 4 add on weights will be required. This will provide 48 pounds of weight per leg and will probably cost a little over $700 with shipping.

32 pound weights might be a bit heavy for some exhibitors to lift and carry. Flat plates without levelers can move laterally.

Impact Canopy Weights
Molded rubber weights approximately 17-1/2” square by 2” thick weighing 23 pounds each. They have a slot so the weights will fit around a canopy leg.

(www.impactcanopy.com)

Advantages
Cost. A set of four weights will cost around $100. Two sets will provide 44 pounds per leg at an estimated cost of around $200 without shipping included.

(‘It is currently possible to purchase this product via Amazon with free shipping.’

Easy to install with no ropes or tie-downs required.

Very resistant to lateral or sideward movement.

Disadvantages
Not a good product for the professional exhibitor - meets few if any requirements;

They are not compact and take up a lot of space.

They are a tripping hazard.

They have a strong, long lasting, rubber odor

They will not fit all canopies

Advantages
Very quick to install and tear down.

No ropes or tie-downs to install or trip over.

Molded with rounded edges and at 15 pounds each they are easy for almost anyone to pick up, carry, and transport.

Very compact, require a minimal amount of space in a display or van.

Weights can be added or moved around as needed depending upon conditions, wind direction etc.

Virtually indestructible.

Can be used with almost any canopy

Proven performance

Hippi Feet Weights
Hippi Feet weights (www.hippifeet.com) are fabricated corrosion resistant rectangular steel plates with multiple attachment points for canopy legs. They weigh 32 pounds each and have built in handles. They were designed by artist Cindy Gordon in collaboration with an engineer friend. Sixteen pound add on weights are also available plus accessories for leveling the plates. In essence they function like a screw on foundation for canopies and should work with any canopy having feet with holes in them.

Advantages
An excellent product meeting most all, if not all professional requirements;

Puts the weight exactly where it is needed

Low profile will not interfere with stabilizer bars

Best weight to volume ratio of all available products

Clean, professional appearance

No ropes or tie-downs required

Installation is reasonably straightforward

Nothing to wear-out should last forever

Work with virtually any canopy

Proven performance

Relative volumes of 15 pounds by material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cast iron</td>
<td>3x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>4x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand*</td>
<td>7x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ingot USWeights
US Weights (www.canopyweights.com) has recently released this product, which was inspired by the filled PVC weights. (I have been involved in designing this product for US Weights). It is a slim, rectangular, 15 pound weight measuring 2-7/8” x 3-1/4” wide x 26-3/8” long. It features a molded high-density polyethylene outer shell pre-filled with a proprietary, high strength ferro cement material that is heavier per cubic inch than concrete. The weights attach with velcro straps that are included. They can be used on nearly any size or shape canopy leg. They can be stacked, up to three high, vertically from the top down or horizontally from a leg or hung from the top down. They can also be stacked or stacked horizontally on horizontal structural components.

Advantages
This product has been specifically designed for the professional outdoor exhibitor;

Quick to install and tear down - no ropes or tie-downs required

Installation, flexible - adaptable to almost any display

At 15 pounds, nearly anyone can pick them up, they can be carried singly or in multiples

The molded shape has rounded edges with no pinch points

Compact relative to sand, water, or concrete weights.

See below.

Will not roll around in transport.

Versatile, weather resistant, nothing to rust, color molded in.

Attractive cost relative to high-end iron or steel products.

The list price is $399/4 sets of four (60 pounds) plus shipping. Three sets will provide 45 pounds per leg and cost about $270 plus shipping.

(Usually the Ingot weight is available through Amazon at $99.99/set with free shipping)

Disadvantages
Not as compact as fabricated steel or cast iron products. They will require about 2.6 times as much space.

Other Milled/Filled Products
There are at least three similar products available that are round or round disclike shapes with slots designed to fit around a canopy leg. They are all around 9” in diameter and about 2” thick.

Quick Shade: a 5 pound weight sized to fit the Quick Shade canopy but should fit any canopy with a 1” leg.

Caravan: a 6.3 pound weight sized to fit a Caravan canopy.

USWeight Tailgater: a 7.5 pound weight that will fit legs up to 1-1/4” round or square.

Advantages
On a cost-per-pound basis all three are relatively inexpensive from $1-$1.60.

No ropes or tie-downs are required

They can be stacked the US Weight product will interlock.

The outer cases appear to be reasonably durable and they are clean looking.

Easy to carry

Disadvantages
Generally will not meet professional needs with respect to compactness and compatibility with display requirements;

Six to eight sets will be required depending on which product is used upwards of 32 weights – to achieve between 40-50 pounds per leg.

Stacked this high (upwards of 16”) the weights will interfere with side curtains and stabilizer bars and may pose a tripping hazard.

Conclusions
1. There is no ‘one size fits all’ answer. There are necessary tradeoffs.

2. Making your own weights is a valid approach assuming you have the time and willingness. Other exhibitors have come up with good solutions, just look around.

3. The best products for the professional exhibitor are ones that have been specifically designed for this purpose.

4. There are many products that are really not good choices for the serious professional exhibitor. Even though they are sometimes used for this purpose, they are usually intended for the recreational user or when there are not a lot of other display, transport, and durability conditions to be met.

About Jim Eaton:
30 years art and craft show experience - full time as a professional exhibitor; has come up with good solutions, just look around.

3. The best products for the professional exhibitor are ones that have been specifically designed for this purpose.

4. There are many products that are really not good choices for the serious professional exhibitor. Even though they are sometimes used for this purpose, they are usually intended for the recreational user or when there are not a lot of other display, transport, and durability conditions to be met.

About Jim Eaton:
30 years art and craft show experience - full time as a professional exhibitor; has come up with good solutions, just look around.

3. The best products for the professional exhibitor are ones that have been specifically designed for this purpose.

4. There are many products that are really not good choices for the serious professional exhibitor. Even though they are sometimes used for this purpose, they are usually intended for the recreational user or when there are not a lot of other display, transport, and durability conditions to be met.