

Seeking Common Ground Survey Responses

ACBC's Summer 2008 Survey: 46 takers, 57 wishes, and many results

Q1. Roles & Artforms: theater artists 9.5% / visual artists 85.7% / musicians 11.9% / dancers 2.4% / writers 21.4% / member or supporter of an arts organization 52.4% / staff or boardmember of an arts organization 21.4% / art appreciators 40.5% / gallerists 11.9% / muses 7.1% / as well as : Fiber and multi media maker; Art Teacher, Bluffton High School; boat design/ builder; mostly visual artist, instructor, & and gallery owner; teaching artist; Production Company (Stage Front) ; marketing/public relations often for promotional local events that include art; Chamber of Commerce/VCB.

These people found the survey through ACBC communications, Bluffton Today, Lowcountry Weekly, word of mouth, Hilton Head Monthly, Beaufort Art Association news, and the Lady's Island Weekly.

Q3. How do you partner with other artists or arts organizations?

Artist-artist collaborations 58.3%
Artist-organization collaborations 52.8%
Organization-organization partnerships 25.0%
Group buying 8.3%
Collectives 11.1%
Sharing space & studios 11.1%
Critique sessions, writing workshops
I stay out of the way and let them do their jobs. 8.3%
I cheer them on 30.6%

Q5. Think of the business elements of your art or arts organization. In what areas in the business of art do you need help?

finding a place in Beaufort County's creative economy 53.5%
using accounting best practices 11.6%
embracing ethics 7.0%
changes to copyright protections 11.6%
forming LLCs, corporations, 501(c)(3)s 20.9%
understanding local resources 37.2%
successful grant-writing 32.6%
effective media relations and marketing 44.2%
nurturing high quality arts journalism 16.3%
advocating the arts to the government and voters 27.9%
broadening audiences 55.8%
drawing more visitors 44.2%
raising quality of programming 23.3%
achieving diversity 11.6%
finding facilities and studio space 41.9%
advancing arts in education 32.6%
obtaining professional development 39.5%
understanding beauty-- who's this visually-impaired 'Beholder' person anyway? 11.6%

Q6. What's your guiding philosophy on delivering arts products effectively?

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. 23.3%
My talent as an artist is my guide, it's the only sherpa I can count on here on Mt. Creativerest. 16.3%
Make more of what people are buying. 7.0%
Make more of what's in the successful galleries 4.7%
Always seek out change and betterment. 58.1%

"Move your brush not to make a picture, but make a picture in order to move your brush." (Or some variation of this quote by Lynda Barry.) 9.3%

Find the right combo of practical considerations, the free market, & my artform 46.5

Observe what everyone else is doing, and do the opposite. 4.7%

Ignore the world and do my own thing. 9.3%

Good customer service. 53.5%

Caveat Emptor 0.0%

Innovate! 53.5%

Q8. What media outlets (newspaper, website, radio, etc.) do a great job of covering the arts? This question was answered with the names of specific publications doing a good job (listed below) and comments about a huge need for improvement, like these two:

- "I have found the media coverage of the arts to be poor in this area. Where is the section covering local artists doing work or gallery openings and shows - I mean we have religion, the military and sports covered constantly but no local arts!"
- "I would really like to see "art criticism" appearing in our publications, reviews of openings and artists exhibits, performances, plays."
- Publications doing a good job covering the arts, counted by number of mentions per name: Hilton Head Monthly- 2; Island Packet 3; Lowcountry Weekly- 17; Arts Council publications- 5; Beaufort Gazette- 1; Bluffton Today- 3; BAA member communications- 2; Beaufort Today- 1; Gullah Sentinel- 1; Lady's Island News- 1; Posh Island Rail- 1.

The following article, written by PR Consultant Lisa Rentz to be published in the upcoming *Lowcountry Weekly*, addresses the open ended comments from the following questions:

Q4. About your arts partnership experience in Question 3: - What elements in the arts partnership were most helpful? What elements in the arts partnership were least helpful?

Q7. Have you noticed if arts organizations in Beaufort County work together? Are resources in Beaufort County used optimally? If yes, please comment why, how. If no, what important resources are being unused? what partnerships have been overlooked?

Q9. If you had three wishes for Beaufort County's creative economy, what would they be?

46 survey-takers, 57 wishes for the arts, and 7 immediate results (+ Lowcountry Boil in Port Royal!)

Lisa Annelouise Rentz

This summer, the Arts Council of Beaufort County conducted survey #4, about the creative economy. ACBC has lots of practice responding to the arts community's need for nurturing, as evidenced by the continuation of the free Street Music on Paris Avenue series. Sponsored by the Town of Port Royal, ACBC works hard to present this performance series to the community—and next up is Lowcountry Boil, on Saturday, August 30th, at 5:30. Bring your chairs!

Survey #4 asked people about their arts partnerships in preparation for the Seeking Common Ground Arts Summit. 46 people responded with plenty of feedback, as well as some questions, demands and wishes of their own. Luckily for all of us, ACBC has already taken care of some of those wishes and wonderings. Here are a seven examples, along with some excerpts from the responses. The full report will be available at www.beaufortcountyarts.com.

- Quite a few people (85.7% of takers were visual artists) wished for a local art supply store. Jennifer Kassing-Bradley is opening Coastal Art Supply this month, within ArtWorks, ACBC's new expansive space at Beaufort Town Center.

- Many people expressed a need for space, for browsing, working, and classes: "We need an arts center that has room for shows (both local and other), and classroom space that can offer a

variety of classes that benefit the student as well as the instructor." That's what ArtWorks is all about— plus performance space. Please stop by ACBC's new space in September to see for yourself— 2127 Boundary Street in Beaufort, between Beaufort Books and Brewer's Brewery.

- Quite a few people had some searching, big-picture suggestions that ACBC has already put into action (though thank you very much for the validation!) Perhaps these people were the 7.1% of takers who consider themselves a "muse," or the 52.4% of takers who are a member of an arts organization: "A lot more could be done to share resources, ideas, cooperation, and interaction between the various arts organizations;" " I'm still feeling my way into the arts community. What about partnering with library for community involvement? (also scouts, schools, local businesses.)" ACBC just this month held the Seeking Common Ground arts summit in Hilton Head, bringing together artists and arts organizations to talk about actionable ideas and the creative people who can make them happen. ACBC is also a Kennedy Center Partners in Education, with the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina and the Beaufort County School District; the organizer of the Teaching Artist Institute, which trains local artists to share their creative process in the schools; and the facilitator of the Beaufort High School Arts Apprenticeship program. There's more too— please contact executive director JW Rone at 379-2787 to learn more about partnerships and arts in education.

- Unification and completeness of information was a theme throughout the survey response: "can't you all coordinate along with whoever else is not sending me info and not re-invent the wheel in each org?" ACBC has tools for county-wide communication. For example, the Ever Expanding Arts Calendar, to which everyone is welcome to submit their arts announcements and events, in the format presented there (at beaufortcountyarts.com). Simply email pr@beaufortcountyarts.com early and often. Additionally, ACBC's e-newsletter list opportunities for artists of all forms, and organizations are welcome to submit their opportunities for artists as well. One wise person summarized the benefits of smoothly-linked arts info like this: "I'm able to get word out about my art." Getting the word out is a big part of ACBC's mission.

- 55.8% of takers are interested in broadening audiences, 44.2% in drawing more visitors, and 23.3% in raising quality of programming: "We need a BIG music/arts festival!!!!!" "More music! A music/arts fest! A powerful and dangerous theatre troupe!" They'll be glad to know that the 2nd Beaufort International Chalk Festival is November 1. Don't miss it, chalk artist applications are being taking now, and all the details are at posted at www.beaufortcountyarts.com. As for theatre, stay tuned....

- 40.5% of takers describe themselves as "art appreciators" and 11.6% are trying to understanding beauty— "who's this visually-impaired 'Beholder' person anyway?" Some expressed a need for "More edgy, more diverse/urban" art, and "Other art besides lowcountry watercolor. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy the watercolors and there are talented artists but where is progressive, creative art?" Check out some of the upcoming shows and workshops at ArtWorks, including the Pottery and Prose series from September 6 through the 27th, presented by Vivian Bikulege and Trevor Foster; the Poetry Society of South Carolina's seminar with Ed Madden on September 13th, and Iodine Literary Project's Literary-Visual Art Show with Issues, when everyone's invited to the reception with the artists on Friday, October 17th, 6-8pm, The Issues show runs through November 5, and it is definitely purposefully timed to coincide with the election.

- One person requested a "Countywide artsguide featuring individual artists, galleries and studios." ACBC publishes a magazine dedicated to the arts in Beaufort County, and it even won an award for it last year too. All ACBC supporters automatically receive a copy of ArtNews in the mail three times a year. ArtNews is also distributed for free, though supplies are definitely limited. Call Colleen at 379-2787 to be an Arts Council of Beaufort County supporter.

And finally, here's a lovely summary and forward-looking question from one survey taker, who turned out to be (based on an educated guess) Deanna Bowdish, artist, gallery owner, and

president of the board of the Arts Council of Beaufort County: "There are many organizations that are working together, but I think we need to see more of this...a critical mass of some sorts. There are many out there that are just doing their thing. How can we bring us all together in a unified voice? We know that the arts are thriving in this region, how can we make an even larger impact in this community and beyond? I really believe that we could all benefit from a national arts campaign that highlights the amazing arts community throughout the county. We have two recognized communities under the "100 best small art towns" in this county, and there are none others recognized in the region and beyond. Can we pool our marketing resource dollars to create this national marketing campaign and then leverage those dollars with the Chambers of Commerce?"

Please visit www.beaufortcountyarts.com to learn more about Beaufort County's creative economy, free Saturday Street Music on Paris Avenue, and ArtWorks, the home of the Arts Council of Beaufort County.



ACBC's executive director JW Rone speaks with Weston Newton, chairman of Beaufort County Council, at the SC Center for the Book's award ceremony last week in Hilton Head. ACBC received the award for Literary Arts Advocacy. In the foreground author Mary Alice Monroe, who also received an award, signs her books.