

THE BIG PICTURE: HOSTING "PLEIN" VANILLA PAINT OUTS VS. PAINT OUT EVENTS AND INVITATIONALS



Hey all!

While putting together our 2018 calendar I've had quite a few thoughts cross my mind that may help our members in planning and hosting future paint outs. Let me share a little something about the process of scheduling printouts on the Alabama Plein Air Artist paint calendar and the importance of limiting big events throughout the year.

We try to paint at least 10 months out of the year, offering two paint outs per month. MOST of those need to be "plein" vanilla paint outs. Just lovely places to go out, paint, and enjoy the outdoors while honing our craft.

But sometimes the delightful enthusiasm and hospitality of our member hosts, bless their hearts (as we say here in the south), they often create more of a social event rather than a painting event. This can become a scheduling and hosting nightmare and become overwhelming for both the hosts and the attending artists. So what do we do?

First of all, let me say that we NEED and WELCOME our big paint out events and invitationals. They have many benefits and push us to paint our best in a brief period of time, put us "out there" to the public for sales which helps some, but not all. pay for trip expenses. Sponsors, such as art clubs, municipalities, etc. can be quite helpful. This can be quite exciting and fun and we welcome these opportunities.

That said, we can also become overwhelmed. APAA is often invited and needed for publicity and/or profit reasons, to draw the public or attention of the public to a cause or community need. We have sometimes gotten into business licensing issues, time constraints that take us away from doing our best paintings, etc. An event can be expensive for traveling artists (hotels, meals, and transportation). And because not all of us are spring chickens any more (myself included in this category!), they can be exhausting, especially if we have to travel any distance to and from home. The effort for

traveling artists to transport painting gear, frames, framing equipment, luggage etc., for shows, quick paints, etc. is part of the exhaustion, so we must limit the number of big events on our calendar. If we didn't we could likely dilute the member participation or, worse yet, lose members. That has happened. Those new to plein air often just want to get their feet wet, and some of us just want to go paint in the company of likeminded artists in the beautiful outdoors.

So when you as a member are thinking about hosting an event for next year, give this some thought. Get your plan in to me EARLY for consideration (like now for next year!) because we review and select on a first come basis.

If you need help hosting we have a lot of experienced members who would love to help and I am always available to assist, but for your "plein" vanilla paint out there's really not a whole lot involved except preparing an email for the call-to-sign-up, perhaps including some photos for enticement, and find available restrooms nearby. Hosts and myself are always at check-in with info about where to paint and to answer questions and available by texting throughout the day.

I hope this helps! By all means, give me your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions at alabamapleinairartists@gmail.com.