**Open Letter to New BOMH Board Members**Kim Carr, Communications Committee
Updated June 2023

Welcome to our new BOMH Board Members and returning Board Members.  I count myself very lucky to know each of you and to be familiar with your artwork.  I know you will each be an asset to the Board and to our membership.  I look forward to working with each of you as we strive to provide a welcoming and educational organization for our members in which we encourage and promote fellow Missouri artists and fine crafters.

I just wanted to provide a bit of an introduction to you before your first Best of Missouri Hands Board Meeting **on Zoom, Monday June 26, 2023 at 10:00 am** .  I learned of the organization at one of my first art shows, a little event down in Hermann.  There I met juried BOMH artist Catherine Mahoney because I was drawn to her BOMH Juried Member Banner and wanted to learn more.  I’ve been hooked ever since.

For me the organization has provided a family, a safe place to ask questions, learn from those who have been there and done that…..and it has opened doors for me because of the respect that the organization has from others in the art community.  I consider the organization a solid part of my art foundation on which I am building my art career one block at a time.  Having been involved with the Board nearly since my beginning in the art world, I have gained a deeper appreciation for all the tiny pieces that must fall into place to make an organization like the BOMH functional, vital, and of value to its members.  The countless man hours and behind the scenes work that goes on is extraordinary.  It is my pleasure to play a small role in this organization.  It takes many hands to keep us moving forward into the future.  This is why I am delighted to welcome you to the Board.  I know that you have important skills and a passion for the arts, both of which can be utilized to strengthen our organization for the betterment of all.

As with any organization there is constant change and a need to adapt.  I am very proud of our current board and have seen lots of good things come about in recent years.  With that in mind I just want to ease you into the chaotic, fast moving, sometimes slow, fun loving, yet serious nature of the Board and our meetings.  Being on a board means a little give and take….the willingness to listen and the gumption to throw your ideas out there.  Sometimes for a newbie coming onto the Board, it can be a little overwhelming as it seems we don’t take time to explain what is going on….we charge full steam ahead. Don’t be afraid to stop the meeting and ask questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to a board member for more detail.  We want you on the Board, we need you on the Board.  Sit back and take it in, then feel free to stick your toe in the water or grab the bull by the horns, whichever you feel most comfortable with.

As an organization we have over 500 members from beginners to retired professionals of all media.  Our goal is to provide a community in which our members can thrive and grow.  We want to help develop and provide recognition of the arts and artists of Missouri through education, interaction, and encouragement.  With that in mind the Board has several tasks, projects and programs at various stages at any given moment.  Most are discussed as a whole within the group and handled by committees made up of board members and sometimes, general or juried members.  We have a committee for Regional Events, through which Wanda Tyner just did a phenomenal job with a current exhibit that is on display at the Lee’s Summit City Hall.

We also have a Grants Committee which is always in need of folks well versed or willing to learn the language of grants, as we are most gracious for any that we receive.  As a board member, we ask that you make a yearly donation to the BOMH, which can be done through the website at [www.bestofmissourihands.org](http://www.bestofmissourihands.org/)  This donation is looked upon by granting agencies as evidence that our board is committed to our organization. If we show commitment, they are more likely to award us with a grant which is then utilized in a variety of ways to the benefit of our membership.

You will also find we have a Communications Committee dedicated to promotion of our members. I am heavily involved in it as well as several others.  We have the Jury Committee which is like the Holy Grail in our organization as members strive to reach juried status.  This committee has a very important job and a standard to maintain.

Another committee to which we are very proud to dedicate energy is the Visiting Artist Program.  This program allows us to put our juried artists into classrooms at schools around the state.  We want to continue to grow this program as it is an investment in the future.  Last but not least, is our Membership Committee.  Here we have the opportunity to reach out to our newest members and welcome them, providing information and a place to go with questions.

Most of our business will fall under one of these committees, but not all.  Each committee is nicely established, but we always have room to grow and improve…more hands allows us to do more.  There are always things we can implement to improve upon or enrich when we have others who take an interest and want to get involved.  I encourage you to think about where you can contribute.  We value your knowledge and skills.  You can serve on a committee or two, or contribute in general.  There are lots of opportunities for you to play a role in the organization as we move forward.

I’m sure you have heard of ArtSmart.  It is our professional development conference that we offer to our members and non-members.  Over the years it has had some changes.  In 2023 we returned to a three-day conference format. We are currently doing ArtSmart on an every other year basis.  When it is an off year we offer a series of workshops which allow us to provide outreach and educational opportunities for our members at venues around the state.  Before Covid, we did in person workshops around the state.  Since Covid, we have gone to an online Zoom format.  In the future we may once again offer one day, in person workshops.  ArtSmart is a HUGE deal for us and requires TONS of planning…..and people willing to jump in, roll their sleeves up…and get the job done.  It is a most rewarding job to see everything come together.  We have members from out of state that rave and rave about our organization and the conference.  Most states do not have what we have for artists.  If you have not attended an ArtSmart, please talk to someone who has….guaranteed fun, educational and you will no doubt go away with new friends.  The 2023 ArtSmart Conference was a success by all measures.

Please avail yourself of the Board Member area of the BOMH Web Site.  You’ll find a host of documents there that will help your understanding of BOMH, including the BOMH Board Member Handbook – essential reading.  Reviewing minutes from past meetings can introduce you to areas of business we are currently working on, as well as past concerns.

So as your first board meeting approaches, I just wanted to let you know how much we appreciate your willingness to serve on the BOMH Board of Directors.  While it may seem chaotic, we are a fun loving board who is happy to serve our membership and look forward to having you join us in doing so.  Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time.  If I do not have answers for you, I will get you to the person who can help you.  Feel free to reach me by email or phone 636-358-7042.

Thank you very much for your time and service to the BOMH Board of Directors.  **I hope to see you on Zoom, Monday June 26, 2023 at 10:00 am**.  Link info will be available on the Board Member Facebook page.  Again, Welcome to the BOMH Board.  If I can be of any service, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Kim Carr

BOMH Communications Chair

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