

Charitably



Speaking

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President's Message

As this year ebbs ever so steadily toward 2024, It is always a time to remember and reflect on all the great things that happened and all those promises, plans, and goals that somehow managed to get left behind this past year. It also seems appropriate to add those remaining items and new ones we want to accomplish to the brand-new list for the coming year, especially since the best part of any "list" is crossing off the completed ones.

Linda and I do this review process as well as our annual "Goals for This Year" list over morning coffee every New Year's Day. I can assure you, for anyone interested, she has the lists to prove just how many years we have had the desire and goal to remodel the kitchen, or remodel our bathroom, or take a memorable trip; it is all there for our review. It is eye-opening to see how close we came to accomplishing those "dreams" last year; on occasion, it is also frustrating to realize that as much as we wanted it, we never really had the strong enough desire to make it happen.

Over the past two years, one of my personal MCMA goals has been to reactivate more of our members who seem to have dropped by the wayside. Whether it be by attending meetings, being involved on committees, or simply having members speak up about what they might like to see us do that would be of interest to them, after all, it is *YOUR* organization. This year, we had several members contribute to our fund-raising effort, and as grateful as I am, I would also very much like to see everyone come back to our meetings in person. I can assure you of one thing: not only have we tried to bring in some exciting speakers, but we miss seeing and talking with you.

So, my New Year challenge to you is this: *PLEASE*, make a concerted effort to attend at least one Quarterly luncheon meeting this year. Or let me know what we can do that might inspire you and others to get back involved; we might just do it. I know many of you had the best intentions of getting back involved. *THIS IS THE YEAR TO DO IT.* See you there – **Chuck**

Helping Others

While MCMA supported many "old friends" this year, we were pleased to meet a few new ones, and one of the most interesting of those is Artists for Humanity (AFH) in South Boston. Since 1991 this organization has worked to provide under-resourced teens with the keys to self-sufficiency through art and design. It saw a lack of arts and entrepreneurial experiences for Boston teens and offered an ambitious and unconventional idea – enable young people to provide, through their innate talent, contemporary creative services to the business community. To accomplish that goal AFH annually employs more than 370 Boston teens (ages 14-18) in paid apprenticeships in the visual arts and creative industries. The teens must attend from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. three days per week during the school year, and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the summer, so it requires a serious commitment.

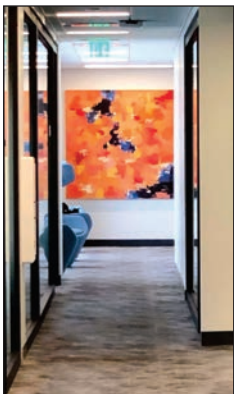
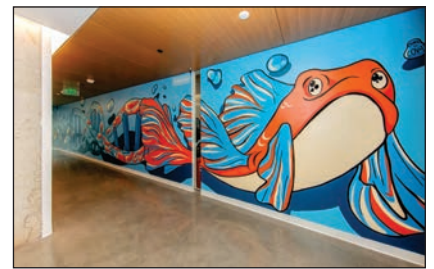
These youth are given the opportunity to work in one of six creative studios [Painting, 3D Design, Graphic Design,

**artists for.
humanity**
CREATIVE JOBS FOR CREATIVE TEENS

Creative Technology (animation and coding), Video Production, and Photography], and work collaboratively with professional artists and designers to earn and learn new skills — all while providing creative services for AFH clients. Engaged mentorship is a key to the program’s success. More than half of the studio mentors employed by AFH are alumni. They connect with teens as peers from similar backgrounds who have navigated the same roadblocks, and as mentors they challenge teens to trust their abilities and expand their perception of what is possible. Also key is the fact these young people get to collaborate on innovative art and design projects commissioned by clients, and AFH promotes their creativity and talent by training them to create, exhibit, market, and sell their art and design services. Examples of that creativity can be seen all around Boston, both indoors and out. Murals and community-themed bike racks may be the most visible, but others include company logos and websites, commissioned paintings and photography, custom furniture, sculpture, and even an Explainer Animation for the Mass General Cancer Center.



AFH offers teens a safe place to go after school, a culture of respect and responsibility, engaged mentorship, and an opportunity to learn and develop the skills needed for careers and entrepreneurship. Beyond the job, AFH offers academic support, including after-work tutoring and comprehensive college readiness. (The graduation rate of teens participating in their senior year of high school is 99%, and AFH currently has nearly 400 alumni in college.) Our grant to AFH was used to purchase a cordless track saw and a vacuum press kit for their 3D Design Studio to help improve safety and expand capabilities. It was our first grant to AFH, but we do not think it will be our last.



MCMA History

We are all now familiar with the saga of *The Wounded Indian* sculpture. After a seven year effort, MCMA has succeeded in winning back this magnificent piece of work that was somehow stolen from us in 1958. But you may not be aware of the entire story ... so we'll fill in some gaps.

Created in Boston in 1850 by Peter Stephenson from a single block of Vermont marble, this beautiful, life-sized sculpture became one of the best examples of American Neo-Classical sculpture. It was shown at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition in London, and it helped change Europe's view of the capabilities of American sculptors. Despite its beauty and technical brilliance, though, Stephenson was not able to sell it for what he thought it was worth, as wealthy art buyers were not yet ready to invest in American artists. *The Wounded Indian* ended up owned and displayed by the Boston Mercantile Library Association, which by 1876 was closing down. In 1877 it announced that the sculpture had been sold to William Emerson Baker for his estate, Ridge Hill Farms, in what is now Needham and Wellesley.

After Baker's death in 1888, his widow sold the property and *The Wounded Indian* ended up in the possession of James A. Bartlett of Boston. A few years later, MCMA board member Augustus Lothrop was inspecting the basement of Mechanics Hall and found in storage a large wooden box for which no storage fees had been paid. Within the box was *The Wounded Indian* marble sculpture. Lothrop found that the owner of the box was James A. Bartlett and he wrote to him asking for payment to MCMA for storage. Bartlett wrote back saying the sculpture was his and that he would donate it to MCMA if MCMA would waive storage fees, fully restore the sculpture, and put it on public display. MCMA's board agreed to the terms and the sculpture was gifted to MCMA. After restoration, the sculpture was displayed in Mechanics Hall from 1893 until 1958 when the building was sold to the Prudential Insurance company. It was during the clean out of Mechanics Hall that *The Wounded Indian* disappeared. MCMA leadership was told that during the move out the sculpture had been accidentally



“damaged beyond repair and disposed of.” This oral report is all we have of the sculpture's loss.

In 1999, a researcher was in our Quincy office with past Executive Director Ray Purdy and saw a picture of *The Wounded Indian* in our *Annals*. The researcher said he had recently seen the sculpture at the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia. Ray Purdy later visited the museum and believed what he saw was the sculpture MCMA had lost. He wrote to the museum director and in return correspondence was told that MCMA must have had a copy and should do more research. We tried, but ultimately it was decided there was not much we could do, and the disappointing loss of *The Wounded Indian* remained part of MCMA's oral history.

In 2016, when this oral history was recounted at a Board of Government meeting, then-VP Peter Lemonias asked for and was granted permission to look more deeply into the loss of *The Wounded Indian*. Peter asked an acquaintance at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for her thoughts, and she recommended contacting Attorney Tom Kline, a leading expert on art theft and recovery. Tom Kline expressed interest in the case, helped us find a doctoral student in art history to do research, and counseled us to get all the information we could. MIT doctoral student Elizabeth Browne was hired for a summer to research *The Wounded Indian* provenance, and she was able to identify much of the statue's 19th century history.

Peter concurrently contacted numerous experts and individuals who might contribute information on where *The Wounded Indian* was between 1958 and 1987 when the Chrysler Museum acquired the sculpture. The only known possessor of *The Wounded Indian* in that time frame was James Ricau. Ricau had amassed the largest collection of American Neo-Classical sculpture in the country, and *The Wounded Indian* was displayed in his

Pierpont, New York home along with the rest of his collection. Ricau was well known to be a lover of art, but cared little about provenance. (He reportedly advised art forgers on how to increase their business.) We do not know if Ricau personally obtained *The Wounded Indian* from Mechanics Hall or purchased it later from someone else, but he had possession soon after its disappearance. In 1987, Walter Chrysler, benefactor of the Chrysler Museum, acquired Ricau's collection for the Chrysler Museum, including *The Wounded Indian*.

By 2019, MCMA felt it had learned as much as it could about *The Wounded Indian* and needed to confront the Chrysler Museum. A *Wounded Indian* Task Force was assembled that included Peter, Chuck Sulkala, Marty Joyce, Rick Ryan, Paul Lohnes, and Paul Revere, III. We decided that MCMA wanted three things:

- Acknowledgment that MCMA owns *The Wounded Indian*.
- A temporary display of *The Wounded Indian* in Boston.
- Payment of \$200,000 to MCMA for our expenses and for our agreement to leave *The Wounded Indian* at the Chrysler Museum on long term loan.

Following protracted and frustrating negotiations the museum eventually acknowledged that the statue in their possession was indeed the same statue once owned by MCMA, and said they were open to a display in Boston, but they insisted title belonged to them, refused to offer MCMA any compensation, and accused us of trying to essentially shake them down.

After years of efforts that had come to an impasse, and concluding that Chrysler was not negotiating in good faith, MCMA and its attorneys decided to change tactics. First, we decided we wanted *The Wounded Indian* back. Second, we decided to go public, with news articles about *The Wounded Indian* and by contacting the FBI. On May 21, 2023, an article by Greg Schneider of the *Washington Post* was published on the front page of the paper entitled "Mystery of 'The Wounded Indian': Who owns a statue once thought destroyed?" This article was followed by others in art-focused publications and interviews on National Public Radio. The article also seemed to increase the FBI's interest.



In July the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Richmond, Va. met with the Chrysler Museum's leadership. They apparently made it clear that MCMA's claim for the statue was very strong and the museum should consider what they need to do to resolve the issue. Soon after this, we were contacted by the museum's attorney offering to return *The Wounded Indian* to MCMA if we would drop our financial demands. The MCMA team did not want to drop the financial demands, but our outstanding legal team advised that our main objective, to restore ownership of the sculpture to MCMA, would be met, and pursuing the financial demand would incur even more legal costs with no guarantee of success. So we agreed.

On September 12, Crozier Fine Arts crated up *The Wounded Indian* at the Chrysler Museum. It arrived in Boston on September 19 and is now at Crozier's storage facility in Wilmington while we work to find a new home for it. It was an expensive process, but we needed to get back what is ours in deference to James Bartlett who gifted the statue to us, to our 1893 Board who agreed to care for it, and to the generations of MCMA members who preceded us and those who will follow. MCMA is indebted to and offers its gratitude to our *Wounded Indian* Task Force and our attorneys, Tom Kline, Greg Werkheiser, and Jennifer Morris, as well as to our Board of Government and our membership for their solid support through this long process. The experience gives credence to our long-standing motto: ***Be Just and Fear Not.***

