

## Networking Is about Networking

By

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AGTS-DV's Networking Brunch is a special meeting. Unlike most AGTS-DV events at which the audience listens to a speaker, the networking meeting beckons the audience's participation so that the volunteer attendees are the featured speakers.

The idea for a networking meeting bloomed into fruition in the late 1980's when Jace Garreth sat with volunteers from the Colonial AGTS chapter on a Spirit of Philadelphia cruise and luncheon. The cruise followed Huey Lee-Smith's lecture about his paintings. Jace recalls the time vividly: "It turned out to be fortunate that my chapter, Council Rock, forgot to save me a seat on the ship. I had such a great time exchanging ideas and getting to know the Colonial members that I later suggested to Janice Miller the idea of establishing such a meeting for all the chapters so that they could get to meet and know each other. Janice was then president and I her vice-president. Between the two of us we came up with 'networking.' We decided to seat chapters together geographically so that they could get to know their 'neighbors.' Initially, people just came to the meeting with information on what their group did and traded ideas with their tablemates."

Bobbie Forman explains further: "When I was portfolio chair, we formalized it a bit by giving each table a reproduction to discuss and develop specific grade activities for that reproduction. Over the years, it became more and more formalized." AGTS-DV's Networking Brunch has evolved into the most popular and well attended of all the events offered to the membership.

In recent years, AGTS-DV's Networking Brunch has focused on a variety of topics: Around the World, How to Present an Un-researchable Print, Kid Friendly Vocabulary, Interactive Activities to Enhance Learning, Sculpture, Sensitive Issues in Art, Mural Arts, Art across the Curriculum, and Public Art. Some of these meetings focused totally on our volunteers. Others, because they were knowledge based, began with a speaker.

Networking meetings do present many challenges. How does a program with a 90-minute time constraint include 150 different voices? Currently, a table of ten discusses their ideas and then selects a representative to speak to the entire group of volunteers. Another challenge is how to keep Networking enjoyable and relevant, even though some members find the participant number overwhelming. If a large number of members from the same chapter attend, we encourage splitting into smaller groups and sitting at different tables.

The topic for 2015 is The Rhythm of Patterns: Connecting Art to the World Around Us. You will be our resource as we explore this topic. Please, bring your knowledge, experience, and good ideas. Meet volunteers from other chapters and exchange ideas. Then return to your chapter and share. This is what Networking is about: Networking!!



In October 1986, Huey Lee Smith, an artist popular with children and adults, poses with Council Rock chapter members, Elaine Bednarcik on left and Dianne Malley (future AGTS President) on right as they are about to board the Spirit of Philadelphia for a cruise and lunch. Mr. Lee Smith's Boy with a Tire is still popular with children today. It was this cruise that sparked Jace Garreth with the idea for networking meetings.