

# November 2021



## President's Message

### Time to “Talk Turkey”

I'll be honest, this is a tough month to write the President's message. I've put it off to try to find the right words and the right tone – diplomatic, tactful, uplifting, encouraging – but I've got to admit, this is hard. So, I am going with honesty and directness – that's how I operate and we've all been told “honesty is the best policy” since we were youngsters. So here goes.

Our studio has had quite a year – closed initially due to the pandemic, but then an amazing group of studio members came together, worked their tails off, and carefully re-opened the studio so that our members could once again emerge from the cocoons we had all retreated into during 2019 and early 2020. The joyfulness we all felt at seeing each other after our long sabbatical was balanced by the care we all took to keep our distance and be mindful of others' needs. It was truly spectacular to see it all unfold – the smiles, the virtual “hugs”, and the respect, kindness, and patience that was exhibited by all who came in.

As the weeks went by, we continually re-evaluated the local conditions and made adjustments to ease our strict requirements and allow more members to join us. The camaraderie continued as all looked out for each other. We continued to ease restrictions and allow members to make their own decisions – mask or no mask, come in or not, work together or not – as their own circumstances and comfort level dictated. We just provided a few guidelines – don't come in if you are ill, self-isolate if you have been out of town or wear a mask, and social distance while in the studio.

Then something started to change.

I began getting texts, emails or whispers of ‘less than kind’ behaviors happening in the studio. I wrote these early issues off as personality conflicts, exaggerations or misunderstandings –

but the notifications continued to come in from a variety of sources and seemed to be escalating. When discussing these “whispers” with Board members, they never seem to happen in front of our Board members so none of us had any real facts to act on. Maybe that’s why rooms get so quiet when one of the Board members walk in – that has not gone unnoticed.

I began quietly asking around – talking to members privately about what they were seeing – and I became quite alarmed at what I heard. Many of our members shared with me privately how “disgusted” they were with some of the discussions they were hearing; were “fed up” with the sniping, gossiping, bullying, and outright disrespectful behaviors they were witness to such that they choose to no longer come to the studio because of the “toxic” environment; were fearful of speaking up because they didn’t want the “nastiness and hostility” turned to them. This is no kind of environment for creativity to be enjoyed.

After the last Board meeting adjourned, the entire Board stayed to discuss this change in the studio atmosphere. If any were in doubt, a particular event was shared with the Board members that had us all shaking our heads at the appalling behaviors we heard about. So, it is time to shed light to this issue.

Our entire country has changed since COVID came into all of our lives – according to Pew Research Center, the impact on society and politics was almost entirely negative. Regardless of your personal political affiliation, I believe it is safe to say the politics has never been so publicly nasty and polarizing. Various groups take sides on the mask/no mask issue or the vaccine/no vaccine issue such that previous societal norms of personal behavior seem to have gone out the window – some believe it is okay to publicly “challenge” or “out” someone who is not vaccinated just because they believe in vaccinations. Others feel it necessary for all others to wear a mask because they would feel more comfortable in that arena, regardless of what the local rules/guidance recommends. Still others could care less what the rules are and flagrantly violate any local guidelines with the hope that someone challenges them. I am guessing many of these societal norms that have changed are a result of the uncertainty and fear that the COVID pandemic brought to all of us. *Regardless of the why, none of these behaviors have any place in an environment that is supposed to nurture creativity, discovery, and artistic endeavors.*

So, it is time to return our studio to the creative atmosphere where **ALL studio members** (masked or not, vaccinated or not, younger, older, etc..) feel comfortable and safe enough to open up and unleash their creativity. That is why the Clay Studio exists - “The GVR Clay Studio of Green Valley is focused on providing an opportunity for creative expression and a flexible work place where members can come together to enjoy our hobbies in clay and share our creative skills - a place that is both recreational and educational and will enhance the quality of our member's lives.”

So, if your “happy place” is being denied to you by negative behaviors – speak up. A nice, diplomatic “please take that discussion out of the Studio” is wholly appropriate. Any behaviors that are disruptive, demeaning, or harassing violate the Studio’s Code of Conduct and are actionable. This Studio belongs to ALL members – not just those who choose to exhibit less than kind behaviors. I challenge you all to return our Studio to the nurturing, creative, and kind environment we were just a few short months ago. I am so thankful for the majority of our membership who truly want everyone at the studio to excel, no matter what level of artistry they chose to exhibit. I look forward to seeing an “explosion” of creativity!

Now, on to other items requiring updates:

- A reminder of GVR policy on Masks and vaccines. “Across the GVR campus, members may participate at their discretion, regardless of vaccination status or mask use. This applies to all activities that occur at a GVR facility: classes, socials, club activities, game groups, HOA events, lectures, etc.” All Studio members have a right to use the Studio regardless of their vaccine status or mask preference.
- For those members who are travelling, especially in public transportation, please self-isolate or wear a mask, until you are sure you are COVID free.
- Please remember, anyone is welcome and encouraged to wear a mask – everyone’s circumstances and comfort level are different
- As our numbers are expected to increase with fall and winter folks, a reminder that all workspaces are available to other members on a first come-first served basis. No “saving” spaces.
- Please maintain social distance between members who are not frequently together – or ask before sitting down next to someone.
- The studio remains closed on Monday mornings (8-12) for Staff to complete their work.
- The Classroom Calendar is up and running and posted on the Education bulletin board. As a reminder, priority of use for the Classroom is 1) GVR Classes, 2) Studio Meetings, 3) Workshops, 4) Overflow. Shelf space is primarily for Class use, overflow when the rest of the studio is full. We anticipate a lot of workshops and classes after the first of the year, so please do NOT store your items in the classroom unless the rest of the studio is full.

Finally, I hope everyone has an opportunity to celebrate Thanksgiving this year, no matter what supply shortages they are forecasting. Remember, we don’t need any material things to celebrate being thankful – we just need to remember those items that we were blessed with for the preceding year. I, for one, am truly thankful for our Studio reopening – everyone exhibited patience, kindness, and tolerance as we navigated our way through an unknown environment. We now have an outlet for all that creativity that was cocooned away – go create!

Sincerely, Susan

# November Calendar



**Education Work Group: Every Friday at 9:45 AM**

**Education Committee: Monday Nov 1 at 9:00 AM**

**Facilities Committee: Monday Nov 1 at 9:00 AM**

**Finance Committee: Wednesday Nov 10 at 9:00 AM**

**Kiln Committee: Tuesday Nov 16 at 9:00 AM**

**Glaze Committee: Tuesday Nov 23 at 9:30 AM**

**Board Meeting: Friday Nov 19 at 9:30 AM**

**All meetings are held in the studio classroom.**



# Holiday Social

Thursday December 9th from 2-4pm  
Location: outdoor patio above the studio

Light Appetizers, Beer and Wine will be  
provided

Gift Exchange: bring unwrapped gift to  
event...pottery item or pottery related item,  
(tools, gadgets etc.)

Please RSVP by December 1st

Sign-up sheet is by the service book at the  
monitor's desk.

Teresa, social chair



1st Tuesday of each Month - Raku Firing on the Patio, times vary depending on outside temperature. Check bulletin board in studio. Next raku session will be **November 3rd at 8:30AM.**



2nd Tuesday of each Month - Horsehair Firing on the Patio, times vary depending on outside temperature. Check bulletin board in studio. Next horsehair firing will be **November 10nd at 8:30AM.**

# RoTRAUT

December 1, 2021 thru May 31, 2022

At Sculpture Tucson Park in Pima County's Brandi Fenton Memorial Park. 3482 E River Rd, Tucson, AZ

## **Premiering the artist's first comprehensive show in Arizona**

Internationally renowned contemporary artist Rotraut, creates innate, energetic work which draws on subconscious impressions of behavior and feeling. Rotraut's work has been exhibited globally since 1959 from the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris to the Pascal de Sarthe Gallery in San Francisco and Art Basel in both Switzerland and the United States. Rotraut now splits her time between Paris France and Phoenix, Arizona. She will be showing fourteen large scale sculptures in The Park.

