

September 2008:



The September AANC Meeting guest speakers were Joe M. Ruiz, Executive Director and Cindy Farley, Assistant Director of the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation (OCAF).

The OCAF Mission Statement from their website is:

“The organization was formed in March 1994 as an all-volunteer and not-for-profit arts center in Oconee County. OCAF develops programs and classes in the performing, visual and literary arts. Annual cultural arts festivals, ongoing art exhibits, classes for children and adults, and musical and theatrical performances highlight OCAF's schedule of events. OCAF supports artists and crafts persons in the region by providing a venue for exhibits and sales of artwork and craftwork and by educating the community to increase the interest in the arts.”

OCAF is supported almost entirely by volunteers including the Board Members which Joe and Cindy report to. Joe is a working artist and moved his family here to live in a delightful environment. Cindy had her own business prior to moving here. They are the only two paid positions.

There are two fund raisers held annually, the Holiday Market and the Fall Wine Fest. In addition, OCAF holds the Southworks Art Exhibit and the Pottery Invitational, as well as providing training classes and other individual artist showings. This Fall, 34 classes are slated to provide training to beginners through advanced members of the community.

The buildings that OCAF resides in were donated to them and were once the original Watkinsville school buildings. When donated, they were in disrepair due to many years of neglect. The volunteers have restored these buildings with many hours of sweat equity and continue to improve on them.

Joe and Cindy provided handouts on the Fall Class Schedule, handouts on the Fall Wine Fest, the Donald A. Smith art exhibit, a Q&A sheet, and information on becoming a member of OCAF.

Thank you Joe and Cindy for a very informative presentation. For more information on OCAF, their web URL is: <http://www.myocaf.com/>