

The first three months of this year have whizzed past and by the end of last week I was downright tired. It didn't help that during that week we did our first year performance review, a monthly board meeting and my graduation from the 2009 Putnam Leadership class. I closed my office door and even dared to leave a greeting on my phone saying I would return messages but not until next Wednesday.

I hope you don't mind indulging me briefly so I can say thank you to my awesome classmates who made the leadership class a very meaningful personal experience. Twenty-four of us, over 10 weeks, pushed our limits, examined ourselves, prodded each other, had provocative conversations, cried, laughed and, ultimately, made a determined commitment to use what we learned to make our community better. Not only did I make some wonderful new friends, I learned a great deal about how things work around here and it made me realize how important it is for The Plaza Arts Center to succeed. Thank you to the girls at the Chamber of Commerce who did an amazing job and to my classmates for helping me to see things through your eyes. Each of you made a difference in my life and I look forward to working together on some of the initiatives and ideas we discussed. You guys rock!

Our annual review ended with a lengthy list of measurable goals for the coming year and, as I have taken some time to reflect on the process, I've concluded that to meet those goals we simply must have your help. Two of the most significant items have to do with increasing membership and building a corps of volunteers.

We took our time in creating membership levels because, quite frankly, we needed to have something substantive to offer. And yet, we still find ourselves refining the details. If you are 65 or older, for as little as \$50 a year, you can be a member of the Eatonton-Putnam Arts Foundation, the governing entity for The Plaza Arts Center, the Old School Museum, PAPA, PutnamArts and the Meet Me at the Plaza summer concerts. If you're not 65 yet, you can join for a mere \$75. There are levels that cost more but also offer more perks and I encourage you to go to our website to get more details and become members. It takes a lot of money to bring our shows and concerts, and ticket sales alone won't cover our costs. If a lot of people give just a little, we can bring more shows with high caliber talent, offer more classes, improve our facility and, generally, be a great resource for Eatonton and the surrounding communities. People tell me all the time how happy they are that they can get quality entertainment without going to Atlanta. I'd like to build on that reputation.

Developing a group of dependable, reliable volunteers is also critical. Jobs can be as simple as helping to direct traffic during events, putting out orange cones, setting up tables and chairs, ushering, taking or selling tickets, making punch, and picking up items at the grocery store, to more complex tasks like inputting names for our database, getting posters distributed around the area, building sets, helping with registration for classes and designing posters and programs. We also need a volunteer coordinator and a head usher. If you have a little time or a talent that you can share, please let us know. You can go online for more information and to sign up. We really can't do it without you. In fact, we wouldn't have survived this first year were it not for the Events Team, a dynamic group of women (and unwitting husbands) who have done a phenomenal amount of work over the past several years when fund-raising was critical to getting the building open. They need a break too.

I hate that it's happened again, but we have all the reservations we can take for the Edible Opera on April 18. This Friday is a wonderful family-friendly show with Drew the Dramatic Fool, who has been visiting and working with our students this week. If the response to his presentation to the elementary school children is any indication, it will be an evening full of laughs for all ages. After that is PAPA's talented production of 'Dearly Beloved', a comedy about a wedding set in a good-ol-boy Southern Texas town on May 15, 16 and 17. If you're still sorry you missed 'Second Samuel' last year, then be sure not to miss 'Dearly Beloved'. It's a guaranteed good time.

Suddenly I feel the urge to sing “I get by with a little help from my friends.....gonna try with a little help from my friends”. I even have a bounce in my step again.

See you at The Plaza!