

# On 'cusp of change,' GALA hosts Spring Art Show

*Organization eyes expansion, new programs*

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GARDNER — If the weekend's Spring Art Show is any indication, the Gardner Area League of Artists is growing and evolving — and the community is taking notice.

"We are at the tipping point, we're on the cusp of change," said GALA Board of Directors chairman Kevin Bird. "We've been very successful at what we've done the past 13 years, and now we're continuing to grow. The tides are changing, the

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*'The arts are making a comeback and people are seeing the need for a creative outlet.'*

— **Kevin Bird**

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News staff photo by KERRY O'BRIEN

**Local musicians and artists shared their work throughout the weekend during the Gardner Area League of Artists' annual Spring Art Show at the Polish American Citizens Club in Gardner.**

# GALA hosts Spring Art Show

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GALA members said the Polish American Citizens Club was packed for the show's opening on Friday.

"We had a great turnout," said Steven Landry. "We were really excited."

"It was certainly among our highest (attended events)," said Anna Ruuska.

Mr. Bird attributes the growing awareness of GALA to the group's new presence on Facebook.

"It's our new marketing strategy," he said. "Between the 15th and the 21st of this month through posting, we reached 3,400 people. The show poster alone reached over 2,400. We want to be ever-growing and ever-changing. The last thing we want is to become stagnant."

Several first-time attendees at the show on Sunday said they had been unaware of GALA, and were pleasantly surprised by the work on display.

"I've never come before, but I saw an ad and thought it was something I wanted to do," said Gardner resident Cathy Harasimowicz. "It's amazing to see how many names we recognize and didn't know did this. We also want to support local events."

In the coming year, GALA will be ramping up its offerings to members and the community in several ways, according to Mr. Bird. The organization is evaluating whether to pursue use of the Gardner Heritage State Park Visitor Center as a permanent home, and is planning an open-air event in the spring. A new monthly program — an artists' circle for members to discuss their work — is also being planned.

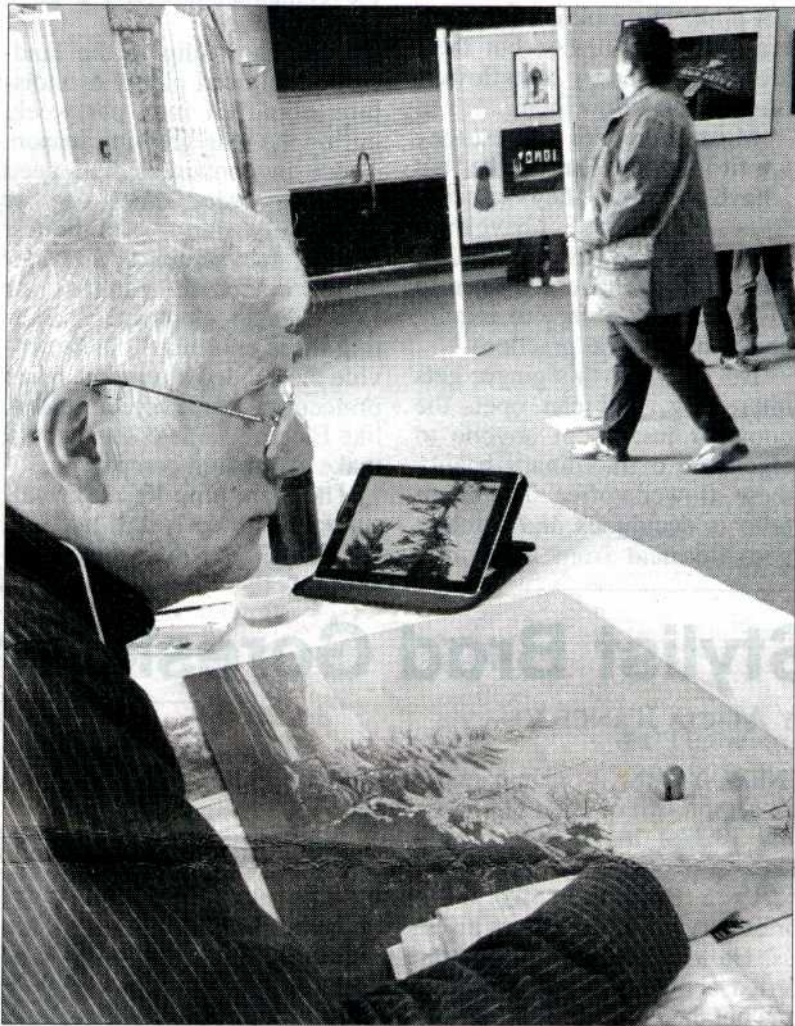
"We want to enrich the community by being an outlet for the creative spirit that lies within

this community," Mr. Bird said.

GALA has brought area artists together for the past 13 years, and now has more than 200 members and hosts two shows a year to exhibit their work.

For more information and to receive updates about upcoming events, "like" GALA on Facebook. The group can also be reached via email at [feedback@galagardner.org](mailto:feedback@galagardner.org) or by calling 978-630-2340

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News photo by LATRICE COOPER

**Joe Smith, a scratchboard artist, demonstrates his technique during GALA'S Spring Art Show.**



News photo by LATRICE COOPER

**Singer-songwriters Scott Savoy and Clayton Phelps perform during GALA's Spring Art Show, Saturday.**