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# The Bay Beacon

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# Arts group forms 'for those who work'



Brandon Pence, left, and Holly Bain are promoting the Northwest Florida Arts Association all over the Northwest Florida area, including at the Zarragossa Gallery in Pensacola.

By **Stacie Morgan**  
*Beacon Staff Writer*

Four arts advocates, one of whom has lived in the Niceville area since 1991, have founded the new Northwest Florida Arts Association (NWFLAA). The organization paints itself as different than other area art alliances, because it appeals to artists of all kinds and offers events and workshops after work hours.

"Most of the existing arts associations don't cater to artists who have to work during the day," said co-founder Brandon Pence, 24, of Bluewater Bay.

Co-founder Holly Bain, 44, agreed. "The other arts groups around the area really target retired artists, and that's OK. They have the time for a gallery showing at one in the afternoon, but what about those of us who have to work nine to five? We're really targeting those who work," said the owner of ASAP Graphics in Fort Walton Beach.

Most associations are "set in

their ways and don't embrace new things," Pence, an award-winning digital artist, said. "I grew up in a technological society. Art shows these days rarely recognize artists who aren't into the typical fine arts."

Both Bain and Pence feel the area can support more than one arts organization because of the "vast differences" between the traditional alliances and the more eclectic offerings of the NWFLAA. The new non-profit association welcomes not only fine artists, photographers, potters, sculptors and crafters but those in graphic arts, the performing arts, poetry and writing.

"We're not targeting any one medium," Bain, a photographer, said. "We're really exploring different avenues."

The coalition's Web site is unique, said Pence, the Web master, because it's interactive, allowing members their own individual "mini Web page" with which to

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# ARTS

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express themselves and present their art. There's a forum page for posting thoughts on books, sports, gaming, music, events and other topics, as well as an Artist Spotlight page and one for artist interviews.

The group's mission, as stated by Bain, the impetus behind NWFLAA, includes the ideas of "fresh venues for artists, networking, educating the public regarding art in all of its forms" and "encouraging the public to join us in classes, demonstrations, workshops and lectures on a variety of topics."

The group's first event begins early in the new year with a Concrete Sculpture Workshop Jan. 30-31 in Fort Walton Beach. The address will be given to those who register online.

Prior to the workshop however,

all those who fancy themselves creators of visual art, are invited to participate in the NWFLAA Spring Festival of the Arts Poster Competition. The poster content and style are up to the artist, though the poster must represent the group's upcoming spring festival at Uptown Station, tentatively set for March 6-7. Poster submission deadline is Jan. 30 and artists will be notified of the results by Feb. 5. The winning poster artist will receive \$200.

Other upcoming workshops are Underground Comix and Historic Pensacola Photography.

Membership in the association is \$25 for individual and \$35 for family. For more information on the other founding members, as well as the Concrete Sculpture workshop, other workshops, the poster contest and any other information about Northwest Florida Arts Association, visit the Web site at [nwflaa.com](http://nwflaa.com).