

In regard to my Guest Editorial in *The Blade* on March 18, 2023 titled *Toledo Museum of Art has lost direction*, the museum asked for several corrections. *The Blade* asked me to address each one. None could be made, because everything I wrote was either factual or my opinion based on facts.

1. The Libbey Trusts are managed by third party boards, not by the Toledo Museum of Art. The Trusts contribute less than 10% of the Museum's operating budget. The draw from the Trusts has not decreased and remains at 5% of a rolling 12-quarter average. The Museum has decreased its draw on the endowment it manages.

This is what the museum said in *The Blade* on March 8, 2021 -- "The plan calls for financial changes that include increasing the museum budget from about \$18 million to \$20 million, and **decreasing the percentage the museum draws annually from an endowment fund that Edward Drummond Libbey** established upon his death in 1925."

Randy Oostra added: "TMA's ambitious new strategic plan will allow programmatically in dynamic and significant new directions, while ensuring a healthy and sustainable future for the institution."

I wrote this:

In 2021, Adam Levine, the new director of the Toledo Museum of Art, announced that he was increasing the museum's annual budget by \$2 million while at the same time reducing the amount of money taken from the Libbey Endowment. The rules of the Libbey Endowment are such that the money must be used in whole or in part for the exhibition of art, with at least 50% of every dollar spent on the purchase of works of art for the purpose of public exhibition. To reduce the draw from the Libbey Endowment means they can buy less art and put up less shows. Their plan warned us of a break from the founding principles. Two years later, there is no doubt they are completely unplugged.

They are trying to confuse the Libbey trust being managed by a third party. They say, "**The Museum has decreased its draw on the endowment it manages.**" There is only one Edward Drummond Libbey Endowment. They are obfuscating and conflating it with the Museum's endowment. They plainly stated that they were reducing the draw of the Libbey endowment in their 2021 statement. My point is, they stated that they were going to reduce the draw, and the result of that after two years has been less art shown.

Documenting that the museum did not tell the truth either in the original Blade article or in this requested correction, the IRS 990s for the Libbey Funds (Edward plus Florence's) show that the draw they were taking was much more than the 5% they stated, each year a larger percentage to a nearly 8% draw, dangerously depleting the Libbey endowments, perhaps in an effort to unhinge from Libbey's intentions for the museum, which is also a point I was making in the editorial.

I predicted a break from the founding principles with the greatly increased management and the reduced program services to the people of Toledo.

2. The Art Institute of Chicago chose to cancel their loan request for the Cezanne painting, *Avenue at Chantilly*. It is normal for museums to eliminate single loans from single venues to manage exhibition expenses.

If the Art Institute of Chicago cancelled the painting from the show, and this is an issue I brought up with the Toledo Museum of Art Board of Directors in an email on August 16, 2022, why didn't they tell me then, that Chicago cancelled it? Here's what I wrote, with details on my blog;

Dear Board Members,

What was so urgent with the timing of the deaccession of our three French Impressionist paintings that made you pull our Cezanne *Avenue at Chantilly* that was promised to the Art Institute of Chicago's Cezanne retrospective and is included in their catalog?

The Cezanne show opened two days before the May 17 auction, and closes on September 5. For a museum that strives to be a good example for all museums in the country, I wonder how breaking a commitment to this show is justified. What was the hurry?

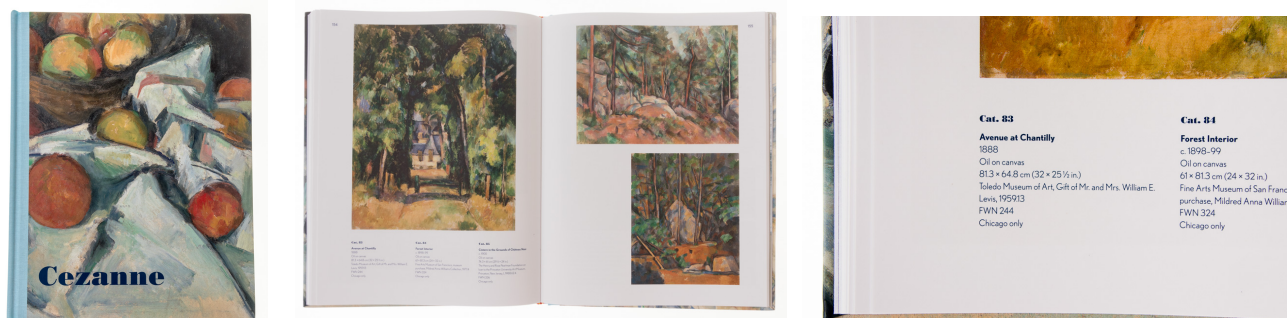
Please see my new blog post: [Toledo's broken promise to the Cezanne Exhibition in Chicago](#)

Sincerely,
Penny Gentieu

Nobody corrected me then, and I sent it to 24 board members, the mayor, Bob Savage, and *The Blade*. It was actually the third or fourth letter I sent to the board of directors since April about a lot of things, with no response to my concerns. I wonder why they didn't respond to me. The museum has known my blog for over ten years, ever since the former director publicly complemented me in his eulogy to Edith Franklin at her memorial service in 2012.

Why does it take a guest editorial in *The Blade* to get their attention? You'd think they would have told me that last summer. I'd like to see the emails where Chicago cancelled it. Perhaps it was the Toledo Museum asking to Chicago to cancel it because they needed to keep one on display in Toledo since they were selling their only other one in a hurry-up. I'd like to see the email exchange between the two museums about the cancellation. I have the catalog, and the painting is shown full page, stating that it is in Chicago show only (not going to London). The book was published after one of the curators of the show died, Achim Borchardt-Hume, <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/achim-borchardt-hume-tate-modern-dead-1234609207/> who died in November 2021, because a dedication is printed in the book for him, with his dates 1965 - 2021. It is a big, important book on Cezanne, and it is showing our painting as being in the show that was not in the show.

Before I saw the catalog, which I bought on Amazon, I emailed the Chicago curator, see attached. Her answer was a politically correct non-answer to my very specific question, which was, did they try to borrow our painting(s) for the show. She answered very politely, as if to intentionally misunderstand my blunt question. She answered as if I was asking them to put our painting in the show (in August, at the end off the show, which of course would have been ridiculous) and she was saying they are not able to accept additional works because of shipping and catalog considerations. Why would she say catalog considerations if the painting was in the catalog? She also mentioned that she wished she knew who bought the Cezanne—email attached.



Photos of the book — book cover, book page and close up, dedication page detail.

3. The Toledo Museum of Art continues to offer robust arts education year-round to a variety of ages and skill levels, every day of the week, including Saturday. Children's classes include five-week sessions as well as week-long camps in the spring and summer. Scholarship opportunities are available for all students. From July 2022 to February 2023 1,440 students were enrolled in 180 classes with 421 scholarships awarded. When compared to fiscal year 2018 2,040 students were enrolled in 206 classes with 623 scholarships awarded, the museum is on pace to match pre-COVID enrollment with five months remaining in fiscal year 2023.

This is not the robust Saturday program of the past century, when the Toledo Public Schools were involved with the museum in art education and sent talented children to classes to the museum that went for the entire school year, it was virtually free (they may have charged \$25, then bumped it up to \$50 at some point). The classes now are short-term classes that run for only a few weeks. It is odd that they no longer do the school-year classes, especially since they have Dr. Durant on the museum's board, who is the head of the Toledo Public School system. But he seems to want to concentrate the museum's educational efforts into the 2-mile radius rather than spread it out to all the children that he oversees in the Toledo Public School system.

Once you've tasted fine wine, you are not going to be satisfied with Boone's Farm. But if you have never tasted the fine wine, you don't know what you are missing and the Boone's Farm will

do fine. I have grown up on the fine wine of the Toledo Museum of Art education. It's Boone's Farm now and younger people don't know the difference.

Besides greatly reducing the session length of the classes, the classes are quite expensive and scholarships are only given to about 1/5 of the number of students the program had once served for many years in the twentieth century. The museum has very little educational opportunities to offer adults, whereas it used to be great. Adults could take the university classes, and there were other classes as well for adults. That's all over. They have a couple adult classes. They eliminated their pottery classes for adults, a real disservice since not everyone owns a kiln. They don't have much at all. The university runs the art department for the university now, when in the past it was the Toledo Museum of Art School of Design who taught the university classes. Adults have to pay a high tuition and other very high fees to take the art classes at the university. That's how they keep adults out.

For such a dynamic art education program as the museum had in the past, it should only have gotten better. But instead, it isn't anything like it used to be, and they are funneling their money and their interests elsewhere, forsaking the general public, to do outreach. The outreach programs should be the bonus on top of what the museum achieves after serving the general community. They should not take resources away from the general community to serve a small area. These are not even classes at the museum, but classes in classrooms that the museum has had to build, in housing projects. Which also brings up an issue of segregation, when they should be bringing people into the museum who want the classes. But instead they are going outside the museum, which is not integrating the community, as the museum had always integrated the community in the past.

What I said was this:

The museum no longer has children's Saturday classes, which brought together 2,500 children weekly in the basement museum school that also educated University of Toledo art students and other community members. Now the halls are empty. It is ironic that Adam Levine claims to have burst "outside their walls" building art making stations for housing developments within a 2-mile radius of the museum. Most teaching efforts are funneled into Lucas Metropolitan Housing, when they should be educating the entire community.

It is ironic for Adam Levine to use words describing the building of the art-making spaces in public housing projects as if the museum's education program inside the museum is so great that they need to go outside the walls of the museum to extend their educational program.

It is also notable that the director of the Lucas Metropolitan Housing is a museum board member, Joaquín Cintron Vega, at least he was a board member for the few short years he was in Toledo. In 2024 he resigned from the museum board when he moved to Denver to become the Denver Housing Authority CEO. In June, 2026, he was fired from the the Denver Housing Authority.

4. Outreach programs and classes are in collaboration with several community partners including After-School All-Stars, the Art Tatum Zone, Education+, the

Frederick Douglass Community Association, Jobs Plus, Lucas County Metropolitan Housing, Mercy Health, Toledo Lucas County Public Library (Mott and Kent branches), as well as Toledo Public Schools. A total of 6,076 residents and 12,000 students across the Toledo area have engaged with outreach programs offered by the Toledo Museum of Art from July 2022 to February 2023.

12,000 students across the area, what activity was this? Is this the class tour program that the museum has always had? Are museum tours considered outreach? Or was it something that took place outside of the museum? I'd love to know what they did in an "outreach" for 12,000 students in the Toledo area.

Their 18,000 number of people that Adam Levine has referred to multiple times in the 2-mile radius as potentially specifically benefiting the residents of the low income housing with free art classes would be equal to the about 180,000 people benefiting from free art classes across the entire city of Toledo, but the museum gave only 421 scholarships to city-wide students. I grew up in Reynolds Corners, six miles away, and if it wasn't for the free Saturday art classes I got to take every Saturday during the school year, I wouldn't have become the successful artist I am today. I have work in the Art Institute of Chicago. That's an opportunity I wish for everyone in the world, not just people in the 2-mile radius.

That area is about 1/6 of the area of Toledo or so? Less than 1/10 of the city population? It is not fair to siphon opportunities of growth and greatness from most everyone else outside of the 2-mile radius to funnel it mostly into housing projects. There is no other way to picture it.

I'd like to point out that after a few years of their outreach program, they closed the museum on a Friday in October 2021 to remove Old Master paintings from the walls of the Great Gallery, replaced by contemporary art by Black artists and put on a concert with John Legend. They said it was for the children they serve in their outreach program, but only about 40 children attended as reported in the November 4, 2021 Sojourner Truth, here:

The night offered an intimate concert in the museum's Art Gallery that sat about 400 attendees including about 40 local school aged children from the community as a part of the museum's outreach effort. The children were from Junction Coalition, Englewood neighborhood, Art Tatum Zone, the Frederick Douglass Community Association, Toledo Lucas County Public Library, Ebid Institute and YWCA. Tickets were also given to first responders.

It was mostly for a private party for adults, that they closed the museum on a Friday and risked damaging their valuable paintings in the Great Gallery by taking them off the wall. They added some first responders at the last minute, mentioning to the press that they were invited too. I'm not sure that the first responders were part of the originally announced plan.

5. The Robert C. and Susan Savage Community Gallery is dedicated to featuring the work of local and regional artists. The first exhibition by a single artist is scheduled for May 2023 with a full schedule to follow.

This is the first I've heard of it. They really messed up on this one. Two years after they announced the gallery, they never said another word about it. While they went on and on about their outreach projects, and how they wanted to bring in the community, how they hired people for community belonging and a chief people officer. Local artists are not in this community? They should not be overjoyed to send out that news? Nothing on their website, no great article about it in their meager *Art Matters*. No newsletter emails, no connections with local artists about it. No word about submitting. Is it only for insiders and their friends? No responses to my website. No answers to my emails about it. Except one reply from Bob Savage, who I contacted after a year, and he told me that the delay was because they didn't know what they wanted to do. Then they didn't know who to do it with. But that he wanted them to do it right. Still no word about it. Then they quietly opened the gallery in February for an Arts Commission high school art competition.

I said this:

When the museum talks about community, local artists are not included. In June 2021, the museum announced that a new gallery was being renovated to host solo shows for local artists. That gallery was quietly launched on February 24, 2023 with a show for high school students. Apparently the gallery is now for student and amateur art shows that used to hang in the basement corridors.

It has taken a guest editorial in *The Blade* to get the museum to even say anything about local artists. Where's the info about submitting work, and who is judging it?

6. The Toledo Museum of Art has had the same process and governance over purchases since the art committee was established in 1911. The art committee provides board oversight of acquisitions for the collection. The Museum has tripled the curatorial staff to include expanded areas of expertise and scholarship.

Yes, and.....? I did not address this, but I will add here that there have been no great acquisitions unless they think the burnt flag is a major addition.

7a. Recent exhibition history includes *Bestowing Beauty: Masterpieces from Persian Lands*, *Age of Armor: Treasures from the Higgins Armory Collection* at the Worcester Art Museum, and *Supernatural America: The Paranormal in American Art*. The Toledo Museum of Art's upcoming exhibition schedule includes a variety of artistic approaches, mediums and perspectives and includes Alexandra Daisy

Ginsberg: Machine Auguries Toledo, Black Orpheus: Jacob Lawrence and the Mbari Club, Caravaggio: Four Paintings in Focus, ReGift: Beth Lipman, and Momentum Intersection. Additional scheduled programming includes Art of the Cut, a Juneteenth celebration, the Block Party, a lecture series, an educational symposium, and the Great Art Escape.

Attached is a list of shows that the museum has had throughout its history, and what they are doing now is hardly anything of what they used to do. Five shows in 2022, when it was common for them to have 20 shows a year. And great ones, at that.

Rearranging galleries and two shows about restoring their current collection is unimpressive.

As for the Great Art Escape, the museum was closed for five straight days over Christmas this year. They closed on Friday then didn't open again until the following Wednesday. This was on a Facebook post. No reason for the closing, so I asked: They told me they were closed for the weather. I guess that was too hard for them to say in the original post. But Christmas was on Sunday, and they could have opened on Saturday, or at least on Monday to make up for it, or at least then on Tuesday. Unfortunately my daughter who came for four days over the holidays could not visit the museum because it was closed on all of those days. And think of all the other people who came home for the holidays, who would have wanted to have visited the museum.

But the museum is showing that they don't care about all of the people coming home for the holidays over Christmas. They are showing that they don't care about Toledo at all, beyond their pet 2-mile radius outreach project.

7b. The Toledo Museum of Art continues to publish Art Matters magazine, several e-newsletters, and has an active presence on social media platforms.

Whereas in the past the museum published *Art Matters* on a quarterly basis, recently they have reduced that and the last one they published was September 2022. The one before that was published in January 2022. They don't have a calendar in them anymore, listing their programs and events, classes, lectures, all their doings for their members and the public. The e-newsletters are random and unorganized. They don't have a calendar on their website. My guest editorial had to prompt them to get some class listings up (summer camp), because this weekend all they had listed were redundancies of Family Center sessions on Saturdays and a few classes for the week of April 10-14.

8. The Toledo Museum of Art has always hired the best talent from anywhere and we see ourselves as a magnet for bringing talent to Toledo. 90% of staff live in the greater Toledo area.

If roughly 300 people are employed by the museum, which I'm not sure of how many but around that, then 30 live out of town! They hired a branding person for a new branding department who lives in Colorado. He hired a woman who lives in Lansing to be the communications manager (will provide you the title if needed) and here they are telling people in our community what our community wants to see on the walls, literally, when they are not part of our community. It's an insult to our community. The Lansing woman appeared on TV saying that Toledoans want to see themselves on the walls, then wrote the last *Art Matters* magazine, then quit. Great. That's really helped the museum to have this out of town talent.

Lenisa Kitchiner, the new curator of African Art, works full time in Washington DC for the Library of Congress. She doesn't even have an art degree. She is telling us that she is going to tell us our stories. She doesn't live here so she doesn't know our stories. And at the same time taxpayers are paying her a full-time government salary. And now the museum is paying her too. I would think that, with Bowling Green not far away, that we would have some local talent, or at least talent that is willing to relocate to live in Toledo. They should be aware of our community before they start telling us our story.

Why did the museum hire a curator of ancient art, Carlos Picon, the director of the Colnaghi art gallery in New York, who is an ancient art dealer? Isn't that a conflict of interest?

9. The Toledo Museum of Art's operating budget does not include art acquisitions. Purchases of artwork are made with Libbey Art Funds and other donor restricted art funds. Exhibitions and education funds (excluding salaries and benefits of associated staff) are roughly 10% of the operating budget and continue to grow year over year. Between fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021 there was a 20% decrease due to the impact of shutdowns related to COVID-19. However, from fiscal year 2021-2022 there was a 96% increase, nearly doubling the museum's expenditures on education and exhibitions.

For the meager exhibitions they had in 2022, (I counted five) there is not much to show for it. Literally.

Again, looking at the 990s that were to come, after this statement in regard to a 20% decrease then a 96% increase "nearly doubling expenditures on education and exhibitions," that is not true. The reported financial records do not even come close.

The museum sold three French Impressionist paintings for \$59.7 million — the Cezanne and the Matisse were purchased with Libbey Endowment money. Those two paintings sold for \$57 million. Those two paintings were sold to the same buyer. (Very mysterious.) Adam Levine said he was starting a new fund with the auction proceeds — he said that in an email to members, and also to the press. Why didn't the money go back into the Libbey Endowment? The Libbey Endowment has restrictions on how the money is to be used, and this new fund, that apparently

is not public information like the Libbey Endowment is, and has none of Libbey's restrictions as far as been made public, sounds like it could be a secret slush fund for whatever — it's not public like it should be. The money should have gone back into the Libbey Endowment.