



Good Morning!  
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## Local Leaders

### Maria Wasowski & Pat Miller / A Show Of Hands

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**Maria Wasowski & Pat Miller / A Show Of Hands**  
2204 Mount Vernon Ave  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
(703) 683-2905  
[www.ashowofhands.biz](http://www.ashowofhands.biz)

#### About Maria & Pat:

Maria grew up in the area and has been involved in the arts since her childhood. "I always had something artistic going on. My grandfather was a painter. When I was a child he would take me to museums where we would discuss the paintings. I continued my interest in art through college (where she got a degree from GW in commercial art), and started working afterwards at a graphic design firm." Maria has worked with various media and has recently taken an interest in jewelry, which she sells at the shop. Maria is active in the community, serving on many boards and committees to help advance community issues.



Pat grew up in a small farm town in Iowa, where creativity was a fact of life.

"We didn't have the resources that are available to students today, so we had to create our own. Learning to be creative fueled my interest in the arts and my desire to work in it." Twelve years ago Pat founded Art on the Avenue, Del Ray's hugely successful Multicultural Arts Festival which draws 40,000 visitors each year. She's also chair of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, whose mission is to "lead and advocate for cultural development within the City and surrounding region."

#### About A Show of Hands:

Started in 2005 and recently named Virginia's 2007 Retailer of the Year, A Show of Hands will celebrate its second birthday on November 23rd. "A Show of Hands grew out of Art on the Avenue", says Pat. "People kept coming by and commenting that it was too bad there wasn't a place year-round to sell all this stuff." The proverbial light bulb went off, and A Show of Hands was born. "Art on the Avenue started as a place for local artists to show their creations, and A Show of Hands is an extension of that. The shop was created for artists who haven't tried to sell before. Literally, artists have run out of people to give their creations to - we provide a space for them to offer their works to a broader and more diverse group." Lately, the shop has been moving onto its second phase. "We're promoting the performing arts now", Maria told us. "We're currently promoting the Alexandria Harmonizers, who are hosting a holiday dinner theater Nov 30 - Dec 1. Another addition here is our monthly Featured Artist. It's a way to give each artist more validation and "face time" in order to further promote them."

#### Business Philosophy:

"We are here to support the artist." Most of the artists we have here had no place or means to show their work. Works are shown here on consignment, so the artist doesn't have any upfront costs. We want it to be a place where artists and individuals could meet and get to know each other."

#### Why did you choose to do this?

"We both had the same dream, to create a space where local artists could show their work and interact with the public. When this space became available, we jumped at it."

#### Why Alexandria?

"There is no other place! This is our home. We've been part of Del Ray for so long, we couldn't live anywhere else. Everyone knows everyone here."

#### Funny Story?

"We had to do a lot of work to our space before we could move in, and we were pushing to open as quickly as possible. Artists began dropping off their work soon after the contractors had used a jackhammer to break up the concrete floor. There was dust and debris everywhere. I started to panic - why would artists want to leave their work at a place in shambles? I then realized that the artists trusted us and shared our vision of how the place would soon be. It was very reassuring to see that others believed in our dream."

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