

Loewenberg champions the arts

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Photo By BOB OWEN, Staff / San Antonio Express-News

Arts San Antonio chairman Alvin Loewenberg wasn't sure at first that he belonged on the board.

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MORE INFORMATION

Alvin Loewenberg

Age: 63

Education: Bachelor's degree in mathematics from Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1973; master's degree in divinity from Emory University in Atlanta in 1978 and a master's degree in business administration from Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi, in 1987

Career: A healthcare facilities administrator at Methodist Senior Services in Tupelo, Mississippi, from 1979 to '83 and Golden Age Inc. in Greenwood, Mississippi, from 1983 to '90. In 1990, Loewenberg came to San Antonio to be CEO and president of Morningside Ministries.

Boards: Serves on the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce board, as well as several state and national professional association boards.

Family: Single, with four adult children

Hobbies: Walking, gardening, reading, eating out, spending time with friends and caring for his dog, Mamie

Four years ago, Alvin Loewenberg was approached by a friend who said Arts San Antonio was looking for a new board member to replace one whose term had expired.

Loewenberg had served on other boards of directors. As CEO and president of Morningside Ministries, an organization operating senior living communities, he already headed a nonprofit that similarly sought volunteers and donations.

“I was hesitant” about joining the [Arts SA board](#), Loewenberg said. “I didn’t think I had anything to offer. I had almost no involvement in the arts. I didn’t play an instrument, sing or dance. I had an interest in the arts but no direct contact.”

But he did join the board, thinking he might serve a year or two and then rotate off. To make a four-year story short, Loewenberg became Arts SA’s board chairman on Oct. 1 this year after serving the previous two years as board treasurer and finance vice president.

What happened?

Loewenberg said he became increasingly impressed with Arts SA’s mission and the dedication of its seven-member staff.

“I also was impressed with the variety of presentations, different kinds of music, piano and jazz,” he said. “Arts San Antonio involves a lot of different people. There’s something for everybody, and it reaches a broad range of the San Antonio community. There also was an emphasis on providing quality.”

Arts SA strives to educate, enrich and entertain, according to its mission statement. It does so through supporting a series of performing arts at numerous venues and conducting its ARtsTEach workshops at school districts, social service agencies and senior living centers.

Arts SA also provides tickets for youth to attend performing arts events that they otherwise would not be able to attend.

In the organization’s most recent fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, Arts SA presented 28 performances and social events to 22,624 patrons.

ARtsTEach workshops reached 3,472 elementary school students and senior citizens.

Arts SA also specializes in bringing together world-class performers with students. Loewenberg recalled when famed cellist [Yo-Yo Ma](#) visited with local schoolchildren in 2011, the day after he and his Silk Road Ensemble performed at a sold-out [Majestic Theatre](#).

“I was proud of the board for making that happen,” Loewenberg said.

Another recent highlight was helping stage a return to San Antonio of Chicago’s [Joffrey Ballet](#) last year after a long absence. Arts SA also stages yearly performances of Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker ballet. “A lot of people look forward to it year after year,” he said.

Some performances during the current season will be held at the new [Tobin Center for the Performing Arts](#). Loewenberg said he believes the Tobin Center will raise awareness of the performing arts. “Once people go to performances there, they will begin to get hooked on the arts,” he said.

Along with maintaining its current education and tickets programs, Loewenberg said some of his goals as board chairman are to strengthen board membership and increase the pay of Arts SA staff.

“I want to look at our mission as an organization,” he said. “Why do we volunteer and donate? Why are we unique? What do we do that makes a difference? We need to market that mission if we want to increase donations and increase our role.”

Loewenberg stressed the value of the organization’s youth programs.

“ARtsTEach and giving away tickets are ways to get to people early in their education and make them realize that the arts are important,” he said.

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