

Plein Talk



The Newsletter of the Washington Society of Landscape Painters

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear WSLP Members,

As you all know, these are tough financial times. When disposable income is tight, people are not usually purchasing paintings. They are more interested in food for their dinner table than food for their soul. You won't be affected much, if your clientele languish in the top 2% income bracket. Don't we all wish that!

For those of you who want options to keep yourself in art supplies, studio rent, frames and canvases, here are some suggestions. I am not advocating any of these...these are just food for thought.

Many of you are already teaching classes and workshops, which are terrific ways to pick up additional income. If you are not already teaching, consider it. I began teaching in 1983, and am still at it in little bits here and there. Between teaching in my studio and teaching plein air workshops, I taught steady for 23 years. I would never have considered teaching, but Fred suggested it. He comes from a family of schoolteachers, so he thought it was a natural thing to do. Therefore, I tried it, and some 25 years later, I'm still at it in a small way. It can be quite lucrative and sustaining.

Then there's the internet...the "paintings in a day" websites, like www.dailypainters.com. These are mostly cheap paintings, alla prima, plein air, and it can be quite lucrative. Then there's selling your paintings on e-bay. Go to www.e-bay.com and type in landscape paintings in the search box to see what is being offered. You might be very surprised what you find here.

We all know that the painting business is seasonal with additional ups and downs with the economy. So perhaps this is the time for self-analysis of your work, experimenting with something new as in a different medium or genre. Paint interiors around your house, for example. Paint still lifes. Take some classes, and use this down time to grow as a painter.

Expand your inventory. Do some masterpieces. Enter some national shows. Design your website. Stretch some canvases. Be prepared for the growth in the economy, which will happen. Be ready and make the most of it. Carpe diem!

Barbara Nuss

WSLP Member News:

Barbara Nuss has been accepted as an artist member of the National Guild of Realism. Her painting "Blue Canoe" can be seen on their website (www.realismguild.com) under "N" artists. She has also had a painting accepted into the Regional Oil Painters of American Exhibition at Richland Fine Art in Nashville, TN. In early September, she judged the 6th Annual Randolph County Community Arts Center Gala Exhibition and did a 2-day workshop on classical still life painting. Then in November she judged "Harmony with the Natural World" at Blanche Ames Gallery in Frederick, MD, and did a 1-day workshop for the Laurel Art Guild on painting from photographs. Her still life show at American Painting Gallery in New York City runs through January 11, 2009.

Jack Pardue has an article in the *Pastel Journal* magazine's October issue. He has been busy giving workshops from Maine to Ocracoke, NC, Ohio, the mountains of Virginia, and Appalachicola, FL.

Jean Brinton-Jaecks' painting "Nantucket and Vine" was accepted into the Exhibition of the National Arts Club, New York City, in October. She is teaching painting classes for the Corcoran College of Art and Design and at St. John's College this fall.

Lani Browning was juried into the 53rd Annual Southern Vermont Arts Center National Show, that ran from September through October. She's been painting in Montana this past summer, and has indexed the WSLP archives and member lists from 1912-1998 (*Wow! Thank you, Lani!*)

Fiona Corn escaped the summer heat and painted in Maine in July.

Bethanne Cople participated in the Carmel Art Festival and won an honorable mention. In the Plein Air Easton event she won "Best Pastoral". She has travelled to paint in Maine and in West Palm Beach. She has been appointed President of American Women Artists and gave a workshop in April at Great Oaks Manor in Chestertown, MD.

Ed Cooper painted in Italy, and also participated in Plein Air Easton, a juried event. He had a show at South Street Gallery in that same Maryland eastern shore town in September.

Meg Walsh won an honorable mention for a painting of the Potomac shoreline in the annual Art League (Alexandria, VA) landscape show.

Marietje Chamberlain has had a large painting chosen by the Ambassador and Mrs. Jeffreys for the Art in the Embassies Program. It will travel to Ankara, Turkey, for a 2.5 year stay.

Sara Poly participated in the Sedona Arts Festival and Plein Air Competition in October.

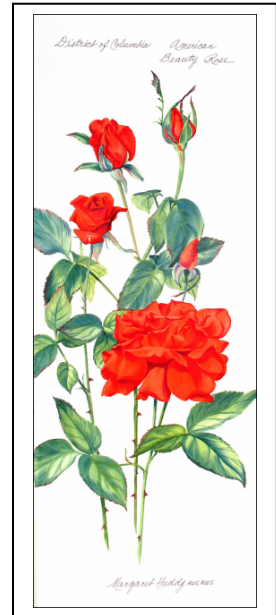
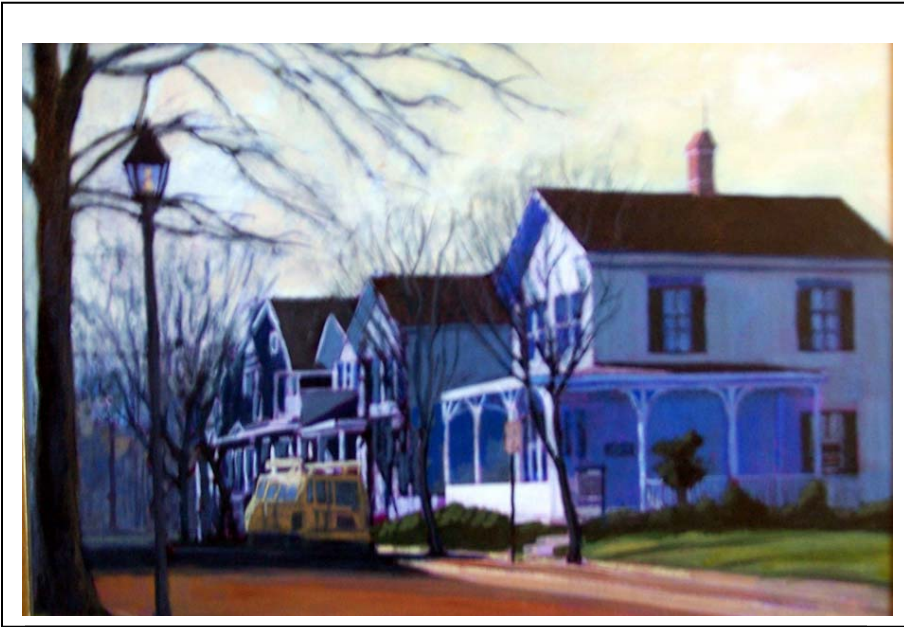
Margaret Huddy had a solo show at Foxhall Gallery in September. She is writing and illustrating a book on the state flowers, to be published by the National Credit Union Association. It is due out by Christmas. She also taught a "Color for the Watercolor Artist" workshop in Bozeman, MT, this past summer.

Bernie Dellario's landscape painting "Almost Home" was selected as a finalist in the *Artists' Magazine* 25th Annual Art competition, and will be listed in the December issue.

Nancy Tankersley had a solo exhibition at the College of Southern Maryland in La Plata, MD, titled "Plein Air to Studio". Included were two Nature Conservancy paintings "Choptank Wetlands" and "Treasures of the Nanjemoy", as well as plein air studies of these sanctuaries and some figurative work. She won Best of Show and First Place in Oils and Acrylics at the Chesapeake College Open Juried Exhibition in September for her portrait "Tony". In November, she judged for Out and About, the 2nd annual plein air competition in Norfolk, VA.

Dick Whiteley won second prize in the 22nd Alexandria juried show “Young at Art” for his painting “South Street”. Not only does this painting include the gallery owned by one WSLP member (Nancy Tankersley), but it also includes the “artmobile” van owned by another (Ed Cooper). This painting received an Honorable Mention at an Art League monthly show last year, but, inexplicably, failed to sell when hung in its namesake gallery.

Genevieve Roberts has traveled to Tasmania, where she had work in the World Exhibition, and then to Australia and New Zealand (“artist’s heaven”, in her words), followed by Hawaii with its black lava fields and breathtaking views. She won First Place in Prints at Cider Painters of America International exhibit, a First Place award at the Cobblestone Gallery Juried Show, and a Second Place at the Fells Point Annual Juried Show. Her prints are monotypes, which are really paintings transferred from plates to paper by hand or press, and she reports that they’ve been selling well.



“South Street” (Dick Whiteley), “Blue Canoe” (detail) by Barbara Nuss, Flower paintings by Margaret Huddy (right)

A TNC Adventure(continued):

The last time we left our intrepid painter Ed Cooper wedged among the trees in the wilderness in his quest for a painting of Nature Conservancy sanctuary. His saga continues:

... I was wedged in. And that nub under the middle of my canoe was doing its best to come through the bottom. The canoe screamed and screeched and I could see the aluminum bottom bending up every time I moved. I finally worked myself off and went on. But more cautiously!

After I left the TNC property there were several miles of a twisting and turning river to go. And it got more and more difficult. And I got more and more tired, especially when I start running into more and more obstacles. After some time I got a call from Bobby Clontz. He wanted to know where I was and how things were going. He had finished the burn at Piney Grove and volunteered to come down and drive me back to my van. When I described my surroundings he knew exactly where I was and estimated I should reach the end of the route in an hour, by about 5:30. He would meet me then.

But right after the call I went around a turn and came to a large - about 5 foot diameter - tree across the river. Completely across. The top was buried in a steep river bank. On the opposite side at the bottom was a jungle of trees and brambles. Through the brambles. Another 100 yards and another tree, but this was not difficult to pass, a small portage. Then another, and this was a killer. It appeared newly fallen. I couldn't find a way around it. Rather than try to get my canoe up over a 3 foot high trunk I tried to go between the branches. And my canoe got wedged in. One disadvantage of having an 18 foot canoe, as I slid it under a high branch and over a low branch - and these were big branches - the weight of the front of the canoe pulled it down and the back got caught on the upper branch. It took about 30 minutes of wiggling, pushing, pulling, and wiggling some more to finally get it free and through the tree. By then I was getting tired and aggravated. No Choice. Go on.

Things did not improve much. On the lower part of the trip it was more like a plain old ordinary obnoxious swamp. Not like the rather clean TNC area where you could maneuver around obstacles. There were lots of fallen trees and piles of debris. And they would always manage to line themselves up to extend from one side to

the other. The channel was more difficult to follow. I would follow what appeared to be the main channel for a while and suddenly it would dissipate in many small channels. Nothing to do but go on, and on. Down and back dead end channels, around or over logs and debris. I was trying to follow the flow of the water.

Previously it had helped me keep to the main channel. But here it was flowing everywhere. And only 4 or 5 inches deep many places. Mr. Baker had said to keep to the left channel. Head into the right channel and you may pass by his house without knowing it. So I kept looking for a channel to the left, and could not find any. In fact I couldn't find any channel at all, just shallow flowing water.

And then I saw a building. And there was Bobby ahead and on the left. It was almost 7:00 PM by now. I was very late. And he was watching me make a fool of myself blundering around in shallow water. He probably thought I had never before been in a canoe before. Well I hadn't, at least not in a swamp. We don't allow swamps on the Shenandoah. I was tired. He signaled me to go back and to the right. It happened that the main flow of the left channel was way over to the right. There was too much junk and not enough water to try to paddle. Frustrated with fumbling in low water I finally did what I should have done earlier, I got out and dragged the canoe to the main flow on the right. Found the channel, pushed the canoe in it, and paddled to the landing. Bobby grabbed my bow and pulled it ashore. Finally.

What a difference a trip makes. When I had started out my canoe was all organized, places for everything and everything in its place. When I finished everything - including me - was wet, coated with mud, and sloshing around in the bottom of the canoe. At least my paints were dry enough and my camera was fairly dry, although it had stopped working for a while, until it dried out a little. I splash a lot when I paddle.

I was sorry I had kept Bobby waiting so long but I was glad I would not have to bike back to my van. Thanks Bobby! He had hung around to help me even though he had been working since early morning and had suffered a painful burn on

his leg. We loaded my canoe and all of my muddy, water logged belongings on his pickup and he drove me back to my van, and helped me load up. I use the term load up carelessly. Of course we put the canoe on top and tied it down. But everything else was poured on top of whatever was there. I was tired and had to drive home. Tomorrow I will clean everything out. Then Bobby showed me the best way out to Route 460 and north.

Well, my cruise down the Blackwater turned into much more than a mere cruise, it was an adventure. The type where, in the midst of difficulties, you ask “What am I doing here?”, “How did I get myself into this?”, and “I wanna go home”. But when it’s over, you think, well, I made it!, and it wasn’t really that bad after all.

Bobby asked about my feelings about the Blackwater River Preserve. I said I was very moved by it and would do a great painting that

would express my feelings – that it is a danger to mankind, all the trees should be cut down, the swamp should be paved over, and all the little animals should be sent to homeless shelters.

And now this: I had made this trip rather precipitously because I was afraid I would not be able to make it later. It is now 4 days later, and I have just received an email from Bobby saying that in the last 48 hours they have had 3.6” of rain and that the water in the Blackwater is 4 feet higher than when I was there – I could have floated over all those obstacles. And the Blackwater will be navigable for the next couple of weeks. What is wrong with the weatherman, doesn’t he know we are supposed to be in a drought situation! And Bobby, thank you very much for your suggestion that now I can make another trip down the Blackwater, but I think I will pass this time. But.....

Pen and Ink

Mary Kokoski

The financial markets are experiencing worse spasms than my back after lugging a French easel up a steep trail. If I were an abstract expressionist perhaps I could paint the Dow Jones Industrial Average, with wild stabbing, fitful strokes in shockingly bright pigments, mostly from the red portion of the color wheel. It would, at least, be healthier exercise for my hands than wringing them and pressing them to my face in despair (ah, yes, Edvard Munch has already cornered that motif).

What is an artist to do? How horribly will this affect the art market? Should I pack up the brushes and take a training course in household plumbing repair? That would really make my back muscles unhappy, and, besides, I’ve no good comebacks for butt-crack jokes.

In Ellicott City autumn leaves are fluttering in bright, translucent waves onto the riffled surface of the Patapsco. The sky is a flawless cobalt blue, accented only by wisps of mares’ tails near the horizon. The day is warming rapidly. I bravely risked spending a now precious \$1.50 on a hot chocolate, and, licking the rich, sweet dregs from the bottom of the cup, I stop to consider that the world hasn’t suddenly come to an end- - yet. I’m outside, away from the radio and internet. Whatever economic calamities are coming down, I won’t hear about it, at least for the next few hours. A great blue heron rises from its perch on a river rock, and, at the other end of the bridge a school group is *woowooing* train noises under the enthusiastic direction of their teacher. Life is going on, right now and in this moment. I set up and paint.

(October, 2008)

Happy painting!