

Plein Talk



The Newsletter of the Washington Society of Landscape Painters

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

“Dear Artists,

For all of you that depend on decent weather for those valuable plein air sketches, this has not been the year so far. The three Sunday paintouts had lousy weather. Either rain, frigid cold, or fog. Actually the fog was rather interesting, with many moody sketches done at the Old Anglers’ Inn site. But if you were looking for bright and sunny, forget it! Most of the winter was too cold, and now that it is warmer, it is raining. Not that we don’t need it, because we do. But we all need to get our paintings done. Mother Nature, help us here.

This year should prove to be busy and exciting for WSLP. You will need your best work for these upcoming shows. There are four exhibits scheduled. First, the summer show at Andrei’s American Painting Gallery: *Washington DC, en plein air*. In September is the all member show at Artspace Herndon, called *Open Spaces*. Lastly, two shows in November-December: the annual member exhibition at Strathmore Hall in Bethesda, and the small treasures show at American Painting. Prospects are good for exhibits of Chesapeake Bay Foundation sites and more Nature Conservancy sites the following year.

One reminder: at the last meeting Gavin Corn emphasized the importance of registering artwork with the copyright office, and registering one’s signature as a trademark. He recommended the website www.nikondigital.org for more information. Protect your creativity!

So keep your brushes and your paints ready for the next beautiful day. It could be fleeting and rare.

Regards,

Barbara

Member News

Barbara Nuss won Best in Show at the National League of American Pen Women's regional multi-media exhibition at the Ratner Museum, Bethesda MD with her painting *The Burnside Bridge*. She has also been accepted into the following: Plein Air Easton and Paint Wayne (PA).

Marietje Chamberlain was accepted into the prestigious Plein Air-Easton! competition, to be held in Easton July 20-26. Two hundred applicants applied and fifty were accepted. This juried exhibition and competition is produced by Easton Main Street in partnership with the Avalon Foundation and culminates with an awards presentation and multi-day exhibition and sale at the Academy Art Museum, a museum accredited by the American Association of Museums.

She received a most warm letter in the mail from the Ambassador of the US to Turkey, where her art is in the Art in the Embassies program. In his words: "...*Moonlight Bay* is one of our favorites, and is the only painting which we display in our formal dining room. We love the sense of space in the five part landscape, and we know that our guests appreciate your effort and skill as well. We are serious about nature and the need to preserve it, and your work sends just the right message...."

Bruce Handford has a one man show at the McBride Gallery 215 Main St, Annapolis MD. www.Mcbridegallery.com April 19 - May 10, 2009.

Nancy Tankersley has been accepted into Salon International at Greenhouse Gallery in San Antonio and is also part of The Artistic Process at the Academy Art Museum (Feb. 20- April 4 in Easton). On exhibit are a painting of the Choptank Wetlands called *A Fragile Balance* along with her journal, sketches, color studies and digital photos. She will participate in the Sedona Plein Air Invitational in October.

Bill Schmidt's painting "*Bermuda Morning*" has been accepted into the Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art in Paget, Bermuda. One of his collectors from the Bendann Gallery of Lutherville, MD generously covered the cost of this accession by the Museum, which opened recently featuring paintings of Bermuda by artists such as Winslow Homer, Thomas Anzhultz, Frank Bicknell, Marsden Hartley, and others. Bermuda is one of his favorite painting venues, and he has painted there on seven trips since 1984. (This painting is a view from the 6th floor of the Fairmont Southhampton Hotel looking toward Dockyard.)

Meg Walsh's painting, "*On the Rocks*," won an Honorable Mention at the January 2009 exhibit, "Let Their Be Light" at the Alexandria Art League Gallery.

Margaret Huddy won an award at the 35th anniversary exhibition of the Potomac Valley Watercolorist at Strathmore Hall this month for her painting "*Sycamore, Crescent Moon*". She taught a gouache workshop for the Fairfax Art League and the McLean Art Club She has spent a week painting in Tucson, AZ. Her book of state flowers should be out soon.

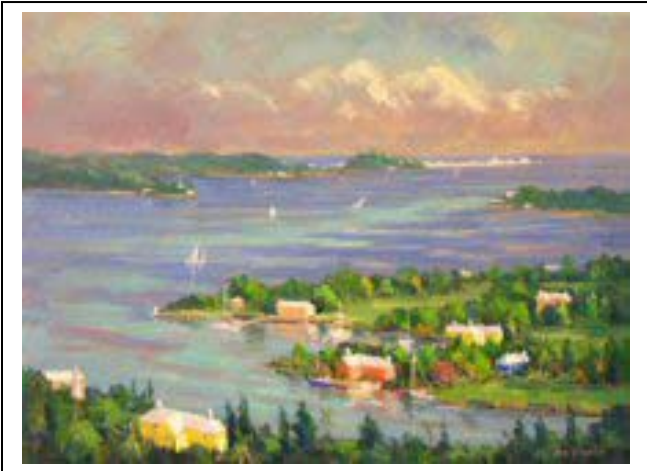
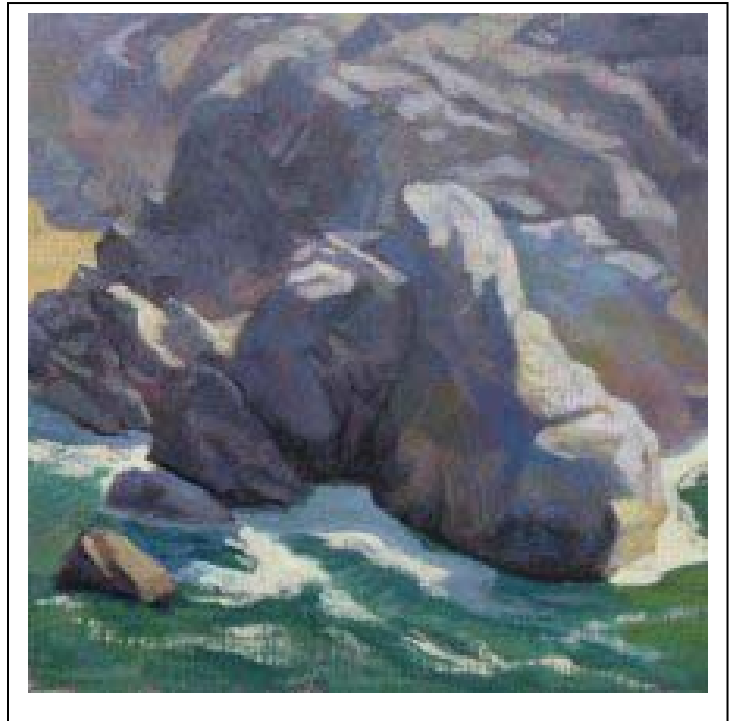
Mary Wright Baylor has shared with us the news of her father, **Tom Wright's** ambitious painting project:

“On Sunday, February 15, the new entryway at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Annandale, VA was dedicated. My dad designed and painted artwork for that new space which demonstrates times of the day: morning, noon, and evening (which he is still finishing.) He based the painting on well-known hymns. The painting on the left represents morning: “The Gilded Sky” (“When morning gilds the Sky, My heart awakening cries.”) The painting on the right represents noon, is based on “Idle Plain” (“Come labor on, who dares stand idle on the harvest plain?”) The almost completed evening painting is based on “Darkness Falls at Thy Behest” (“The day thou gavest Lord is ending, Darkness falls at thy behest”).”

As you can imagine, the congregation is ecstatic at his generous and stunning gift to the church and the paintings greet everyone who enters St. Alban’s. Of course, I am simply an objective, unbiased daughter reporting the news!”



*Tom Wright's paintings dedicated at St. Albans
(photo courtesy of Mary Wright Baylor)*



“Bermuda Morning” Bill Schmidt (above); “On the Rocks”, Meg Walsh

(above right); “Burnside Bridge”, Barbara Nuss (right)



Tales from the Plein Air

Painting in the great outdoors captures not only the beauty of nature on canvas, but also some experiences that last a lifetime. In this and upcoming issues of *Plein Talk* the intrepid artists of the WSLP will recount some of their adventures painting out in the great big world beyond the studio door.

Artist accused of being a horse thief (by Margaret Huddy)

One gorgeous fall day I was driving around Middleburg with one of my students looking for a place to paint. At that time I was driving a big old Dodge Ram van. Upon going down a narrow country road I saw the perfect pastoral scene just waiting to jump onto paper: fall colors, pond, red barn, horses, old house. I stopped to consider where I could park when a white van drove down the winding road from this estate and stopped to see if I needed help. I asked if it would be okay if I just drove across the cattle guard and park so we could set up to paint. They said, "Sure". So we proceeded to do so. The first thing I did was get out my camera with my long lens to photograph the horses which would, of course, move and I planned to put them into the painting later. Suddenly the horses were taken into the barn and a few minutes later a man in a snazzy red convertible raced down the road and demanded to know what I was doing on his property. I tried to explain that I was an artist and that I had asked if it was okay. It turned out I had asked the carpet cleaners. The proprietor said he had seen us, saw me photographing his horses and saw my big old van and thought I was planning to steal them! He did allow me to stay and paint but every 10 minutes someone drove down to check on us. I'm sure my license number was recorded.

How do you say "plein air"? (by Sara Poly)

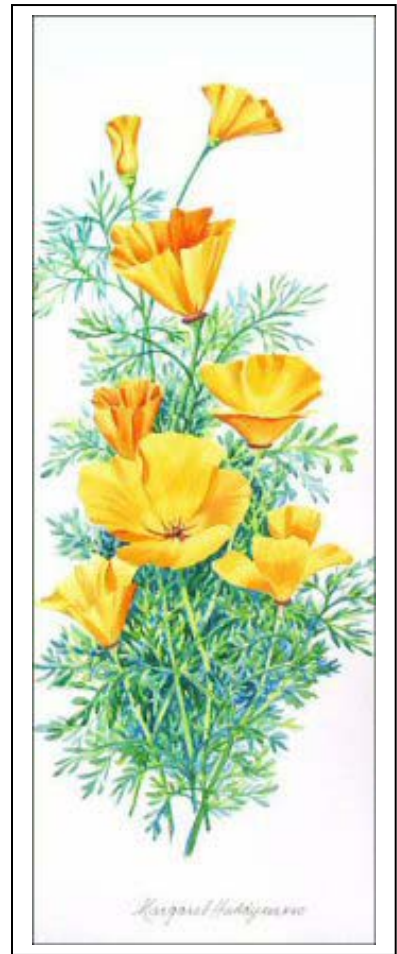
Painting in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where I teach a workshop during February, is quite a treat! While plein air painting one warm sunny day in the Centro, the main square, many folks stopped by to look and connect. Many of them were from the US and Mexicans also...they are a lovely people. A man happened to be sitting on the bench near me and painting...he was a resident, he said, and loved sitting quietly in the Centro and painting. His painting was fabulous!!!!

Then a charming young woman who spoke English stopped by and helped me figure out how to say "plein air painter" in Spanish...which is "pintar al aire libre" I was very excited to learn how to say it and we had a happy time together.

Soon a man walked up and seemed interested in what I was doing..we spoke a bit, then he introduced himself as the director of the National Arts Club in New York!!! We had a lovely chat, and I told him about WSLP of course!



Above: "In the Moment" Sara Poly



Right: "California Poppies" Margaret Huddy

Pen and Ink

Like most artists I am not one to paint primarily for the market. I choose my subjects because they choose me. Beauty, light, atmosphere, or even a challenge are what put an itch in my brush hand. I paint because it is my passion, and because it just doesn't do to ignore the muse when she's favoring me with her attention. (Muses can be rather high maintenance creatures.)

Still, like most artists, I do need to feed both body and soul. "Starving artist" is a stereotype best reserved for bad fiction, and, while there is some truth to the aphorism that the best things in life are free, I don't necessarily recommend the Dumpster Divers Seafood Special. Unless one is independently wealthy, the only way to spend more time painting is to engage the market and sell some of those paintings. That is especially difficult in this recessionary time, when even the independently wealthy have been reduced to independently somewhat-better-off-than-most. It forces me to pay attention to questions such as: "What would it take to sell more paintings?", "What kinds of paintings are still selling?", "Where will I be as an artist when the economy finally improves?", and "How do I get these car seats out to see if there's any loose change hiding underneath?"

I hope the economic situation will improve soon. I have faith that lovers of art will return to galleries like desert wildflowers blooming after a rainstorm. In the meantime, I keep painting (and console myself with the knowledge that, having once occasionally eaten in some of DC's better restaurants, I know which dumpsters to target). I remain true to my artistic voice. My muse won't allow me to do otherwise.

Mary Kokoski

