

Plein Talk



The Newsletter of the Washington Society of Landscape Painters

Volume 2

Edition 3

Summer 2008

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear WSLP Members,

My message in this newsletter is on a serious note that needs to be heeded by all of you.

The Orphan Works Act of 2008 is now before Congress, and as far as I know it is "in committee." This act, if passed, would have serious consequences for all artists.

HR 5889, as it is known in the House of Representatives, and S2913 in the Senate, essentially "limits the remedies in a civil action brought for infringement of copy right in an orphan work, if infringer proves that: (1) the infringer performed and documented a reasonably diligent search in good faith to locate the copyright owner before using the work, but was unable to locate the owner; (2) a Notice of Use was filed with the Register of Copyrights before the work was used; and (3) the infringing use of the work provided attribution to the author and owner of the copyright, if known."

In other words, the act of signing our work no longer would constitute a copyright. We would have to register with a digital image, at a cost of course, every single sketch, image, or piece of art with the copyright office. Imagine the time, the costs and the paper work!

More importantly, we could find our work copied without our consent. Anyone could use our work, claim that they searched for us and for our permission, denied that they found us or even tried to find us, and then went ahead and used our work. How vulnerable we would be!

This is definitely an act that we DO NOT want passed in Congress. This act would negate the previous law, which gave copyright protection to any artist the moment the art was created.

Do your part to notify your congressional representative and senator by going to <http://www.capwiz.com/illustratorspartnership/home/>. Click on the first bulleted item: "Tell your Senators and Representatives...." Click on "Take Action," enter your Zip Code, and go from there as required. Very easy, and let's hope, effective.

Barbara Nuss

President, Washington Society of Landscape Painters

WSLP Exhibitions, 2008:

”DC Parks”, landscapes at American Painting gallery through September 2, 2008

“The Long View”, select WSLP members exhibition at the Atheneum, through August 2, 2008.

Exhibition of Nature Conservancy paintings, at the Atheneum gallery, November, 2008 through mid-January, 2009 (details forthcoming)

“Small Treasures” exhibition at American Painting in December, 2008.

Member News:

Sara Poly won third place at the Riverbend Plein Air event, juried by fellow member **Bill Schmidt**. **Glenn Perry** won a second place People’s Choice award at the Ice House exhibit “Paint Morgan County” in Berkeley Springs, WV. **Marietje Chamberlain** took a prize for Best Use of Color at the Riverbend paintout event and a third prize at the “Seeing Eye” exhibition in Easton. **Nancy Tankersley** was awarded a fourth place at the Wayne Plein Air juried competition in Wayne, PA.

Margaret Huddy had had paintings accepted into the Watercolor USA Honor Society exhibition and the Watercolor USA annual exhibition, both in Springfield, MO. **Nancy Tankersley** has exhibited in the 2008 Salon International, hosted by Greenhouse Gallery in San Antonio, TX, and also in a 5-person show at the Ladew Gardens in Monkton, MD, along with **Tim Bell**, Gavin Brooks, Larry Moore, and Gene Costanza. **Glenn Perry** has had two paintings accepted into the Juried Alumni Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, held in the Samuel M. V. Hamilton Building. **Margaret Kranking** has been included in the McBride Gallery exhibition “Historic Annapolis”. **Dick Whiteley** finished 15 paintings for his new gallery, Gallery 30 in Gettysburg, PA, and had a reception in April.

Glenn Perry will be jurying the Large Works Show at the Torpedo Factory in November. **Margaret Kranking** taught a three-day workshop at the Vienna Art Center (VA) in June, while **Sara Poly** taught in Bath County as resident artist. **Margaret Huddy** did a demonstration of gouache painting for the Springfield Artists Guild in April, and gave a talk to the Vienna Art Society (VA) about working on a residency at our National Parks in May. She then taught a workshop in Bozeman, MT, in June.

Margaret Huddy is producing a full color book of her Sycamore Series, which will be available to order in her studio and website, while, in the meantime, she has painted two illustrations for the White House Historical Society book on Flowers at the White House. **Marietje Chamberlain’s** painting “Evening Haze” had a full page on the cover of the Alexandria Gazette Packet’s Entertaining section, and other WSLP artists participating in the Atheneum gallery’s exhibition “The Long View” had at least one image in the same publication.

Sara Poly and other WSLP members have been painting in the little town of Barga, Italy, where they will also have a show- - and we’re looking forward to an exciting report on their adventure.



"Bushman Farm 2", Dick Whiteley



"New in Town", Nancy Tankersley



"Sycamore, Crescent Moon", Margaret Huddy

From the Archives:

*As the WSLP approaches its centennial anniversary in 2013, we have been increasingly busy reflecting on our storied history, updating our archives, and compiling biographies of all the members. **Lani Browning** has waded through three volumes of archives and completed 42 pages of research, indexing and cross-referencing each name, biographical information, and artistic accomplishments. Her meticulous work will, hopefully, give us a complete biography for each member, with resume, personal photograph, and samples of their work. Her job is monumental, but she is loving the process. Hats (berets?) off and brushes raised in salute to Lani!*

The Nature Conservancy Project Update:

The first exhibition of Nature Conservancy paintings by WSLP members will be held in November, 2008, at the Atheneum Gallery in Alexandria, VA. Details of the show, including the reception, will be forthcoming soon.

Natural lands are often beautiful, but they can also be shy in giving up their secrets. Here begins the tale of one determined WSLP painter in his quest to capture the essence of a TNC preserve on canvas:

A Tale of the Joys of being a Plein Air Painter, Part I:

By Ed Cooper

This is a story about a small excursion I took to the south eastern area of Virginia. The purpose of the trip was to do some sketches of the Blackwater River Preserve for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) project.

Bethanne and Marietje also have a TNC location very near the Blackwater, so we tentatively scheduled a joint painting expedition the first week of June. All was well until I contacted Bobby Clontz, the TNC Land Steward for Southeastern Virginia. He sent me an email briefly outlining some of the problems of the Blackwater. Low water, portages through mud, downed trees, and other unpleasant aspects of the trip. He also said that if we wanted to go we should do it very soon because the water level of the river was falling rapidly and that would seriously complicate the trip. With the current drought conditions and with no rain in sight, I was afraid that it may become impossible to visit the preserve for some time.

I forwarded Bobby's message to my trip companions. Bethanne's response was "I agreed to do what???". Unfortunately, she had other responsibilities and could not go at this time. Marietje could not be reached. So I went alone.

This was a dilemma. I was really not prepared. Normally for a trip like this I would try to get in shape beforehand by doing some canoeing on the Shenandoah River. But now it appeared that there was no time- - nothing to do but to go now. So I packed my paints, camera, and other essentials – compass, GPS, maps, food, water, etc., loaded the canoe on the van, and headed

south. I was taking my big old, heavy, 18 foot aluminum canoe, perhaps not the best choice for a swamp. I have a small, lighter canoe that would have been easier to handle, but Bobby had said that a Cypress nub once went through the bottom of his canoe. So I decided to take the aluminum one. Besides, it was wider and more stable and I could not have painted in the smaller canoe.

Since I was alone I planned to paddle the canoe down river, then take my bicycle on the 8.3 mile trip back to the van parked at the starting point. On the afternoon of Wednesday the 16th I made a quick reconnaissance of the Blackwater area. The roads bordering the river had interesting names, such as Rattlesnake Ridge Road, Rattlesnake Road, and, joining the Blackwater was the Rattlesnake Swamp. What would Bethanne and Marietje have thought? But, after all they are only names, and old names at that. I am sure all those rattlesnakes have long since succumbed to old age. Hopefully they neglected to reproduce.

Wednesday night was spent at my grandson's place in Norfolk. By then the water level on the gauge was down to 3.8, the minimum Bobby had indicated was desirable. On Thursday morning I asked for some last minute advice from Bobby, who was occupied with a spring burn of the undergrowth at the Piney Grove Preserve. Then I headed out for a hopefully leisurely and enjoyable cruise down the Blackwater. Considering the twists and turns in the river it is probably about an 8 mile trip. I will be going with the current, it'll be a breeze. I finally got the canoe in the water about 10:00 AM.

When on the river it is almost impossible to tell where you are. All you can see are trees and there were so many twists and turns in the river,

and even more twists and turns around obstacles, that it was almost impossible to accurately determine your direction. Since I had to find the TNC property, I had worked out the approximate GPS coordinates of the place where the river entered the TNC preserve. Finding the exit was much easier since a pipeline cut a broad swath through the trees near that point.

The trip was not difficult, almost pleasant, especially when in the area of the TNC Preserve. The swamp was wide and relatively uncluttered. It was usually fairly easy to find detours around fallen logs and other obstacles, except for one incident. It happened when I was trying to get my canoe over a very slippery downed tree trunk blocking the waterway. It was not large, and barely out of the water. Of course I slipped and went up to my hips in black water. And to my amazement I saw my reading/painting glasses right before my eyes! As I went down they had not - they had just popped out of my shirt pocket. Unfortunately they did not remain suspended long enough for me to grab them. They disappeared in the black, black water. No glasses. Great start!

Further into the TNC Preserve I made a couple of 8x10" oil sketches in the canoe. I had to. In a swamp there is no place to get out. Also, after about 5 hours sitting on a canoe seat you get very sore. There are those darned nubs, they stick up like spears, and some lurk just below the surface. I ran over several, but there was one incident in particular that made me appreciate Bobby's warning about them. I was in a channel and was maneuvering around a nub sticking out of the water. What I did not know was that there was a second just below the surface a short distance into the channel. And there was a third, also submerged, several feet closer to me. I ran right up on the third one and my bow got stuck between the first visible one and the second submerged one. 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. . .

(to be continued)

Pen and Ink
(from the Editor's desk)

After last year's punishing drought, this summer is surprisingly, and refreshingly, well-watered and lush. Verdant fields beckon, and riverbanks and mountains afar beg to have easels planted on them. The problem this year is the price of gasoline. Artists would rather paint than become mired in such boring details as the cost of moving easel and painter to motif. However, the numbers on that credit card receipt sliding out of the gas pump are causing some of us to ponder the potential of that old sticky jar of linseed oil as a biofuel.

So far this painter has not been deterred by the "pain at the pump", but I have taken a renewed interest in subjects closer to home. I find myself looking more closely at that old Victorian house, that intriguing alleyway overhung with oak limbs and wild grape, and parts of the nearest state parks that I haven't really explored. I stop and gaze at the last golden rays of sun on familiar parts of my neighborhood when I'm out on an evening walk. As an artist, isn't it part of my job to help others see familiar, mundane, often-overlooked subjects in new ways? Economic factors may be sinking my already modest portfolio, but I am lucky - I am still rich in creative ideas, and the world, both far and near, can still provide a wealth of potential new paintings if I am open to seeing them.

Mary Kokoski

Happy painting!!