

December Meeting: Fine Food, Fine Art!

December is our annual Holiday Potluck meeting. This year we will have a bit lighter fare with an Appetizer & Dessert Potluck. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share (your local deli is a great resource at this time of year). MNWS will furnish beverages (after all, we're a watercolor society).

And in lieu of a demonstration, members can bring up to three paintings, unfinished or complete, for peer feedback and discussion. Bring those paintings you're working on that you're not satisfied with, or you've experienced a block with, or are feeling especially proud of and would like to share with your peers.

If you have an easel that is easy to transport, please bring it along, to make it a little easier for everyone to see the work under discussion. (If you don't happen to have one, that's OK—there should be enough to share.)

Time to feast and time to talk fine art. What could be better?

See you there! ■



Show Rules Amended to Allow Canvas, Board, Other Supports

A motion to allow the use of canvas, board and other supports in Minnesota Watercolor Society shows passed easily at the November meeting. Previously, our show rules specified "... works in water-based media on a paper surface that may or may not be altered (e.g. gesso, gel medium) ...". By a large majority, the members voted at the November meeting to amend this phrase to "... works in water-based media on a paper surface (including YUPO) that may or may not be altered (e.g. gesso, gel medium), or on canvas or board that has been treated or coated to accept watermedia ...".

On the other hand, the vote on a motion to allow the use of water mixable oil paint as a subordinate element was very nearly split 50-50 and that motion was tabled, leaving the specifications regarding subordinate elements unchanged. ■

Winter weather got you wondering "Will our meeting be held?"

**Call our
Information Voicemail
Line
952-996-9228**

*to hear about meeting
cancellations due to
winter weather.*

For MnWS workshop information contact

*Bonnie Crouch, coordinator (952-945-0682)
Dianne Jandt, registration (952-891-2375)
or John O'Leary, publicity (952-888-0638)*

Workshop Questions? Who Ya Gonna Call?

Got a question about an upcoming MnWS workshop? Getting a speedy answer might depend on calling the right part of our "Workshop Team". Workshop Coordinator Bonnie Crouch, Registrar Dianne Jandt and Workshop Publicity Manager John O'Leary are the hard-working crew bringing you Gloria Miller Allen, Andy Evansen, Karlyn Holman and more. If you have a workshop question, try calling the team member that handles the aspect you are asking about.

Bonnie will be out of town much of the winter, too, so you might want to start with Dianne or John. If they can't help you, they'll be able to get in touch with Bonnie. If you need another registration form, contact Dianne or download one from the website (follow the link to Events-Workshops).

(see box at left for contact info) ■

Also in this issue of *BrushStrokes* . . .

- ◆ Spring Show Slide Deadline and Show Dates Announced—p.3
- ◆ Fall Show People's Choice Winner Jean Meyer Responds—p.3
- ◆ Shooting Your Art with a Digital Camera—p.3
- ◆ Have a Presence on the Web through the MnWS Website—p. 3

Plus . . .

Registration Form for the **Spring Workshop with Karlyn Holman** Inside this Issue!

MESSAGE *from the President*



Anyone who paints in watercolor can attest to its difficulty in learning, let alone mastering. Why, then, the disrespect it seems to hold in the 'serious art world'? A quick glance through an art book catalogue reveals an abundance of 'how-to' watercolor instruction books, no doubt filled with all sorts of quirky techniques and short cuts. Unfortunately, most of these books do not stress the basics of sound design, composition, or the amount of hard work that goes into becoming an artist, no matter the medium of choice. If you don't know the basics, no amount of salt, masking, or pouring from containers will result in a good painting. The watercolor artist must achieve his/her goals with the knowledge that there is a limit to the amount of revision that can take place once the painting is started. Indeed, a quote from an English art critic in Trevor Chamberlain's book *Light and Atmosphere in Watercolour* states the challenge as such; "To build up a composition in washes from light to dark, while leaving patches of white paper to represent the highlights, requires the forward planning of a chess player, the concentration of a Zen master, and the dexterity of a brain surgeon."

I don't think I'll use that line in any of the classes I teach, as half the students would probably run out the door. But it does make one wonder about my earlier question about the respect, or lack thereof, watercolor receives. Perhaps too many of us fall into the 'formula trap', as I myself am guilty of from time to time. We approach a painting with the steps we need to take firmly in mind beforehand, and leave little to experimentation let alone ingenuity. Those of us in attendance for November's meeting were treated to a wonderful demonstration by Calvin deRuyter. Here is an artist who is breaking down barriers! By working with paint straight out of the tube, oftentimes on watercolor canvas, he has managed to paint outstanding landscapes that make you appreciate the painting first and foremost, and then ask yourself if it is a watercolor, or a pastel, or acrylic or oil. That should be the goal for all of us. Always keep in mind the basics of what makes a good painting, and then use your medium of choice to express what you want to the viewer.

Cal has won two 'Best in Show' awards in as many weeks, the first in the Extremely Minnesota exhibit. He was competing with artists in all media, and he relayed to us an interesting remark the judge made to him after the awards ceremony. She asked him if he worked in other media, which presently he does not, and she told him he "needed to paint in oils", although by her own admission his artwork was superior to everyone else that entered. I wish these preconceived notions could be put to rest. Kudos to Cal for proving her wrong.

I'd like to end my column with another book excerpt, this one from *Carlson's Guide to Landscape Painting* by John Carlson, a famous American painter and teacher whose landscapes are found in museums throughout the world. When discussing which medium the beginning painter should choose, he advises "do not for at least the first year of your study attempt to work in watercolor. Oil painting allows of much abuse in its handling. We can construct and reconstruct, almost at our leisure, the portions of the canvas needing corrections. With watercolor, the case is rather the reverse. The speed of drying of the medium requires a masterly knowledge in its uses; a knowledge of all relations, transitions, juxtapositions and constructions involved in landscape painting. This advice is in contradiction to the popular belief that an amateur should never essay oil painting, a fallacious theory that accounts for the many frail examples of art in watercolor exhibitions. In such examples, solidity, form and color transitions have usually been sacrificed to the maintenance of a few 'clever washes'. Watercolor is a master's medium."

I can't help but wish that Cal had that quote in his pocket when confronted with the judge's recommendation. But he didn't need it, he



▲Cal deRuyter "getting himself into trouble as soon as possible" during his November demo.



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BrushStrokes Newsletter

BrushStrokes is published monthly, September through June. Deadlines are the 15th of the month. Send letters to the editor and art related stories that help inform or educate members to:

MnWS BrushStrokes Editor

1830 Dutch Heritage Ct.

Baldwin, WI 54002-5155

lbaur@mac.com

(please do not use lbaur@att.net--account no longer active)

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Mary Hanson 952-476-6896

Time to Get Ready for Spring!

Just when we enter the month of 4:30 sunsets and snowplows, isn't it nice to know that it's time to think Spring? The Spring Show, that is. Our Spring Show Chair, Mary Hanson, has announced the show dates and slide deadline for our upcoming Spring Juried Show, which is back this year at the lovely Minnetonka Center for the Arts.

The Spring Show will once again be juried by slide, so it's not too soon to start planning your entry so that there is plenty of time to have a good slide made. If you want to check out how your slides look when projected, bring them to the January meeting.

2005 Minnesota Watercolor Society Spring Juried Show
Minnetonka Center for the Arts

Postmarked Deadline for Slides: February 19

Show Opens: Mar 31
Awards Reception: Mar 31
Show Closes: Apr 28

We'll add a "member slide review" after we look at the slides from the Transparent Watercolor Society of America's most recent exhibition. (see below) ■

See Your Slides "On the Big Screen" at the January Meeting!

January's program is a viewing of the slides from the most recent Transparent Watercolor Society of America's (formerly Midwest Watercolor Society) exhibition. Since this does not take very long, we will continue the program with a viewing of member slides. Bring 2-4 slides of your own to share. This is a great way to check the quality of your slides as you prepare for the Spring Show!

If Santa Brings You a Digital Camera . . . Part 1

by Lynne Baur

Hoping Santa will bring you a digital camera? Or, maybe he brought you one last year, but you're still trying to figure out how to use it to shoot your art.

Part of becoming your newsletter editor has been learning some of this stuff. In this series of articles, I'll try to get you started using your digital camera to capture good images of your artwork. If you have a question I don't address this time, send it to me and I'll try to answer it in a later article. I'm no expert, but maybe I can save you some trial and error. In this issue, I'll talk about choosing a camera and some tips for actually taking the photo. Next time we'll talk about how to use your computer to prepare your photo for different uses.

Choosing a camera—Everybody gets caught up in "megapixels" but two other features worth considering are a longer or (optical) zoom or macro lens and custom white balance. For vacation photos, you might prefer one of those ultra-tiny cameras, but this may not be your best option for shooting art.

A "long lens" is the opposite of a wide-angle lens. You've probably seen those funny photos taken with a fisheye lens where the nose is enormous and the rest of the face and body are shrunken and distorted. All lenses have some of this distortion. Wider angle lenses (or a zoom lens zoomed out) have more of it; longer lenses (or a zoom lens zoomed in), especially longer macro lenses, have less of it. Your image will be more rectangular and in better focus across the entire image. But beware—digital cameras sometimes have only

"digital zoom". Digital zoom is really just cropping the image, kind of like getting really close to the TV—you lose crispness in exchange for the larger size. Look for the magic words "optical zoom". That means the lens is doing the zooming in. The downside to a longer lens like a macro or zoom lens is that it's . . . ummm . . . longer—no tucking it in your pocket, at least not if you go with a macro lens, although there are some reasonably good zoom lenses that aren't too large. Even if you don't go for a macro lens, you might still want to avoid the very teeniest cameras, and their teeny lenses are less likely to give you a crisp, undistorted image.

Custom white balance is probably the feature that affords the biggest advantage of digital over film for the amateur who wants accurate color. As artists, you know that the light from different sources has different colors. Film is very sensitive to this; if you don't use the right film and/or filters to shoot your artwork, you can get some truly ghastly colors. But many digital cameras can compensate for different lighting. Check the manual to be sure you can at least select from settings for incandescent, fluorescent and daylight. Better yet is custom white balance; you aim the camera at a white piece of paper under the lights you're going to use, push a button, and the camera balances itself to "see" the paper as white. (If your camera doesn't have adjustable white balance, I'll address another way to deal with it in a later issue.)

And what about those megapixels? How many do you need? It depends on what (cont on p. 4)

People's Choice Winner Responds

Our Fall Exhibition People's Choice Winner, Jean Meyer, got quite a surprise with the last issue of BrushStrokes—it arrived before her official award notification, so she was amazed and delighted to see her painting "Carnivale II" featured in this spot in last month's issue.

In response to her official notification, Jean wrote, "What a wonderful unexpected surprise to receive a notice and generous check from the Minnesota Watercolor Society for the People's Choice Award at the September Splendor exhibit. I feel honored in receiving this special award and my thanks to all who voted for my painting, and the society for their check."

And we feel honored having such a wonderful artist among us, Jean.

Take Your Art Online with Us

If you've dreamed of having a website of your own, but you're not ready to spend the hundreds of dollars it takes to have one set up and maintained, you will soon have a low-cost option for a presence on the web as part of the newly redesigned Minnesota Watercolor Society website. (If you already have a website of your own, you can have a link from our site for free—go to the "Member Links" section of our site and click on "Submit Your Site".)

The board recently approved a plan to offer member pages within our website. For an annual fee of \$30 you can have a page with ten images, contact and biographical information, and optional additional text, such as a calendar of events or artist statement. Clicking on one of the ten images will open a larger version of the image.

To keep the cost low, these pages will be a standard format, and we will ask you to submit your images and text in a specified format. (There is an additional \$25 fee if you want us to prepare your images to the specified format; if you have a digital camera and want to do it yourself, see the article to the left for help getting started.) Also, while the text can be updated during the year for no additional cost, there will be a small fee for changing the images during the year.

A sample page, plus complete instructions for requesting your page and submitting text and images are being developed and should be available very soon at the "Member Links" area on our website. ■

MEMBER happenings

Send member news to: *BrushStrokes*, 1830 Dutch Heritage Ct., Baldwin, WI 54002-5155, or email to lbaur@mac.com.

Terry Genesen Becker's watercolor "Xibalba I" will be part of the Duluth Art Institute 56th Arrowhead Biennial Exhibition, Nov 11, 2004 -Jan 23, 2005. This year's juror was Christi Atkinson, the Associate Director of Education at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

Martha Davidge was the Featured Artist of the Month during November at the Heyde Center For the Arts in Chippewa Falls, WI. Her show hung at the center throughout the month.

Frank Evans will hold a retrospective of his work at the Unitarian Society Dec 5-Jan 9. Please see the box below for more details.

Our November Demo Artist **Cal deRuyter** is pleased to report that both of his entries, "Foggy Mom" and "Johnson Barn #1", were accepted into the "Extremely Minnesota" show at the Robbins

Gallery in Robbinsdale, MN. This juried exhibition is open to all media. "Foggy Mom" received an Honorable Mention and "Johnson Barn #1" took the Best of Show award. "Extremely Minnesota" will be up for the entire month of November. In addition, Cal's painting "Johnson Barn #2" was awarded Best of Show in the Northstar Watercolor Society Fall Show.

Lynn Middleton-Koller is participating in the 2nd Annual Lake Como Holiday Art Show & Sale Dec 10 & 11. The show includes Lynn (watercolor paintings) & 8 other Como Park area artists (photography, jewelry, artisan chocolates, fiber, pottery). Friday, Dec 10 from 3-8 pm; Saturday Dec 11 from 10-5 pm. at the Historic Como Streetcar Station, corner of Lexington Pkwy & Horton Ave in Como Park (St. Paul) Questions? Call Lynn at 651-487-9175.

Congratulations Everyone! ■

Digital Camera (cont. from p.3)

you plan to do with your photos, but for email, web and prints up to about 5x7 or 8x10, the 4-8 megapixel range on most nonprofessional digital cameras will be fine. (A digital camera with enough resolution for slides is another matter. Right now, it's still cheaper to use a film camera, or a scanner. More on that later.)

Shooting your work—When you shoot your work, here are some tips for good results: Set your camera for its highest resolution, sometimes called fine quality, or choose the image size with the largest number of pixels or file size. Light your work evenly using the same type of light for all parts of the work—don't mix and match incandescent and fluorescent, but no need for fancy photo floods. (Direct sun-

Frank Evans Retrospective

Dec. 5, 2004–Jan 9, 2005

22 paintings on display at the
Unitarian Society

900 Mount Curve Ave., Mpls
(south of Walker Art Center)

Please call 612-377-6608 for hours.

light often works great for watercolors, by the way.) Set the white balance! If you don't have adjustable white balance, include a little bit of white paper in the shot; you'll see why in the next article.

Use a tripod, or at least steady the camera on a solid surface if your camera won't mount on a tripod. Line up the camera carefully to avoid the "trapezoid look" that occurs when the art and camera are tipped slightly toward or away from each other, known as keystone-ing in the photo world, or foreshortening for us artists.

Welcome!!

NEW MEMBERS

We have 356 paid members to date.

Carol Berens
Steve Brumbaugh
Patty Burke
Kathryn Emerson
Betsy Jessen
Richard Kochenash
Linda Krueger
Mary Maguire
Doug Meythaler
Carol Spohn
Sally Strand
Susan Voigt


Need a current MnWS Membership Roster?

Call Marian Alstad
(612-824-6460) to have one mailed to you.

This will be easier if you use a long lens, or zoom out your zoom lens (optical zoom only!) (For an in-depth discussion of how to do this, plus great advice about shooting your own slides with a film camera and not a lot of equipment, check out www.artsfortheparks.com/slidetips.html.) However, with a digital camera you don't have to worry about catching a bit of background—you'll crop that out (and you won't need that nasty mylar tape!).

If your shooting work that's already under glass, here's a trick: cut a hole for your camera lens in a sheet of black matboard or foamcore and shoot through that. Now the reflection on the glass will be a uniform black field, and no one will notice. ■

Next time: Preparing images for email and the web.



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Send **Workshop** listings to: *Workshopper*, 1830 Dutch Heritage Ct., Baldwin, WI 54002-5155, or email to lbaur@mac.com.

Marian Alstad.

- ▶Antigua and Lake Atitlan, Guatemala, February 17 to 26, 2005
 - ▶Ireland, May 5 to 16, 2005
 - ▶Tuscany, July 9 to 16, 2005
 - ▶Greece, Sept 29 to Oct 9, 2005
- For details call Marian Alstad at 612-824-6460 or e-mail mardi4011@aol.com ■

Jan Fabian Wallake

- ▶2005- Jan. 10-14 San Diego Watercolor Society, San Diego, CA. Contact: Reesa, 858-483-6566
- ▶2006- June 19-23 Art-in-the-Mountains, Bend, Oregon. Contact: Debra Prater, 541-923-2648
- ▶2006- Nov. 11-14 Brevard Watercolor Society, Cape Canaveral, FL. Contact: Linda Neal, 321-751-5520

Jan has a once-a-month, three-hour class in Roseville. If you are interested in joining this fun and friendly group, call Jan at 651-351-1301 (no long term commitment-come when you can, pay only for the class you attend). ■

Nancy Carney

Nancy will be teaching a class in Very Beginning Watercolor Techniques at Minnetonka Center for the Arts, 6 classes on Tuesdays from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Nov 9 - Dec 14. Call MCA at 952-473-7361 or go to www.minnetonkaarts.org to register. ■

Fred Dingler

- ▶Open Studio, January 5-26. Wednesdays for 4 weeks—morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Contact: Minnesota River School of Fine Art, Burnsville, 952-890-4182
- ▶Acrylic Workshop January 8&9, 9am-4pm. Contact: Minnesota River School of Fine Art, Burnsville, 952-890-4182
- ▶Open Studio at the Northfield Arts Guild. Thursdays, Jan 6-Apr 28, 1-4 pm or 6:30-9:30 pm. Contact: Northfield Arts Guild, 507-645-8877. ■

Susan Voigt

- ▶Watercolor on Canvas Sat, Dec 4, 9-3
- ▶Ink & Acrylic. Sun, Dec. 5, 12-5 both at Tamarack Nature Center. Contact White Bear Center for the Arts, 651-407-0597 or Susan at 651-426-2052. ■

Upcoming MnWS Workshops

Feb 5-6, 2005--Weekend Workshop with Andy Evansen
Mar 28--Apr 1, 2005--Karlyn Holman

Oct 11-14, 2005--Ken Hosmer
For MnWS workshop information contact Bonnie Crouch, coordinator (952-945-0682)
Dianne Jandt, registration (952-891-2375)
or John O'Leary, publicity (952-888-0638)

Northstar News

Workshops

May 16-20, 2005: *Carla O'Connor*

Meetings

December 16. *Shirley Blake demo (watercolor canvases)*

January 20. *Dan Wiemer demo (landscapes)*

February 17. *Michaelin Otis (new book)*

Meeting location is Centennial United Methodist Church, 1524 W. County Rd. C2 at Snelling in Roseville.

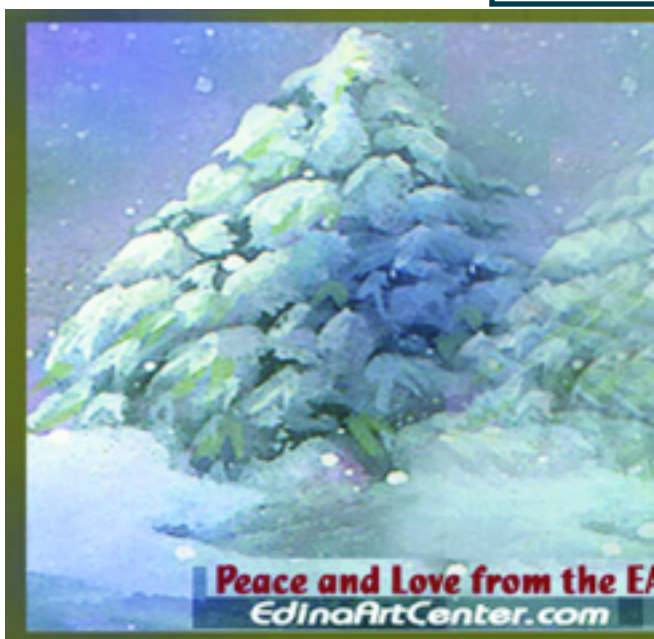
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MNWScalendar

Programs are held the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm.

December

December 9: *Appetizer/Dessert Potluck & Informal Critique. See p. 1*

January

January 13: *Slides of the Transparent Watercolor Society of America 2004 Annual Juried Exhibition.*

February

February 10: *Ceil Hartleib Demo—portraits*

March

March 10: *Mike Wohnoutka—illustrating children's books*
LOCATION: Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Blvd., Edina, MN (Corner of 70th St. S. and

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MnWS Membership Dues:

- Single: \$25
- Couple/Family: \$35
- Seniors (65+): \$20

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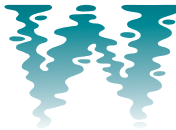
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"To further development of the watercolor artist by providing a supportive environment with education and exhibition opportunities, and to promote public appreciation and greater visibility of the art."

— MnWS Mission Statement