Sharing Light and Life: MnWS at MLM

by Sandra Muzzy

Martin Luther Manor is a nursing home, situated on the Minnesota River Valley bluffs in a very quiet part of Bloomington. The dining room has several large windows overlooking a grassy field and is surrounded by trees. The gradual change of the seasons is observed through these windows. The pace is slow and the sounds are muted. On a dark blue wall facing the dining room hangs a display of vibrantly colored artwork for all to enjoy. For the past 2 years artists of the Minnesota Watercolor Society have been sharing their work with the residents and staff of Martin Luther Manor.

Not all the art displayed has been watercolor. The residents don't mind whether you use watercolor, oil pastel or whatever. There are no restrictions on framing and almost all subject matter has been enjoyed. There are spaces for a variety of different sized art to be displayed.

Our current display artist is Ann Pitman. Ann is a longstanding and hardworking member of the MNWS. This past year Ann has participated in 7 Art Fairs in and around the Twin Cities. Ann says her greatest enjoyment in showing her art comes from seeing the joy in people's eyes when they connect with her work.

Plus . . .

Prospectus and Registration Form for the
MnWS Spring Juried Exhibition
Making Waves
Inside This Issue!

"Save your whites"
a watercolorist mantra if there ever was one.

Now we'll tell you why—

the suggested theme for January paintings is

WHITE

Bring in your completed or unfinished **WHITE** paintings, and have a chance to win in our monthly prize drawing. See you on January 13!

Remember to bring up to 3 of your own slides to share at the January meeting.

We'll view member slides after the slides of the TWSA Exhibition. This is a your chance to check out the appearance of the slides you plan to submit to our Spring Show!

Inspiration for the New Year at the January Meeting—TWSA Exhibition Slides

It's become a Minnesota Watercolor Society tradition! Every January, our program features the slides from the most recent exhibition of the Transparent Watercolor Society of America (formerly Midwest Watercolor Society). TWSA is one of the few remaining watercolor societies that accepts only transparent watercolor in its exhibitions.

On their website, TWSA states, "Modern technology has produced many new 'water-based media' products, referring to any medium that is resoluble in water. There are innumerable watercolor societies that now provide opportunities to exhibit these new products while TWSA remains dedicated to its original purpose. TWSA recognizes an important distinction between 'transparent watercolor' and 'water-based mediums.' With only a few other existing societies, TWSA moves forward with its passion, to preserve and promote the unique character of transparent watercolor as a major medium, for now and for the future."

Because of its historical base in the Midwest, TWSA has been one of the favorite national societies for our members to participate in. But, the recent name change reflects the fact that these days it is truly a society with national stature. Submissions to TWSA juried exhibitions are numerous and it is no easy matter to be accepted. The slides of these exhibitions are always an inspirational representation of the finest examples of transparent watercolor. Maybe seeing these slides will inspire you to try your luck with the 2005 TWSA Exhibition, or perhaps you'll get all revved up to send your slides in for our own upcoming Spring Juried Exhibition.

Our own Dick Green, a Signature Member of TWSA, will provide commentary as we view the slides from the 2004 TWSA Exhibition. Come be inspired! ■

Inspired to submit a slide to TWSA?

*The deadline for receipt of entries to the 2005 TWSA Annual Exhibition is **February 8, 2005**. The show prospectus is available online at www.watercolors.org/2005/.*

MESSAGE *from the President*

Ah, the holiday season. Decorations to hang, shopping and wrapping, cards to send, family get-togethers. For many of us, the time we reserve for painting is the first thing to get brushed aside (no pun intended) to make room for all the festivities. I'm embarassed to say it, but it happens—and it's amazing how quickly one can get rusty. I've found myself saddled with a bad case of artist's block this month, and I'm positive it's a result of falling out of a regular painting routine. There are other contributing factors—my stock of reference photos has dwindled and lost its inspirational 'oomph', and I missed both our society's meeting and my critique group's session this month (it's amazing how important that contact with other artists is). But the main culprit is the failure to pick up a brush and just paint.
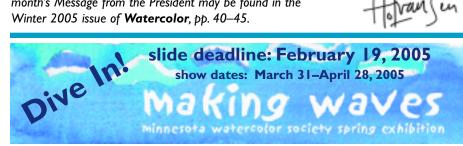
It's easy to stay passionate about painting when you're seeing steady progress, and all artists see steady progress early on if they keep at it because there's so much to learn. Difficult decisions such as color mixing and composition become second nature and we begin to rely on right-brain instincts. Confidence breeds success. Conversely, once we fall out of the 'groove', that blank white paper becomes more and more intimidating. It seems like it takes years of painting to see progress at times, and all it takes is a couple weeks off to regress. And if we demand a certain level of finished quality from all our paintings, the block could become a wall.

Our own Greg Lipelt, a very talented painter, wrote an article for the winter issue of *Watercolor* magazine on the importance of sketching to maximize limited painting opportunities. He has found himself with less time to paint his large, time-consuming oils, resulting in more watercolor sketching. He talks about painting "for the experience and the growth it affords, and not to accumulate an inventory. I think everyone needs to cultivate that confident, no-fear approach to art, and sketching is the best way to go about it." Upon seeing the wonderfully fresh figure studies accompanying the article, I'm convinced that he's right. You can see the bold results of painting with that freedom in his approach. "Seated Figure in Blue and Sienna", although obviously painted very rapidly, has the quality of an award-winner!

Unfortunately, there are times when you just don't feel like painting. Face it, Richard Simmons is the only person I've seen that passionate about their job all the time. At the risk of making it sound too much like 'work', sometimes you may need to paint for the sake of painting, if for no other reason than to stay in practice. The chance of getting your best results at such times may not be very good, but you don't always need to be concerned with building up a stock of finished work. Relax, grab a small piece of paper, and give yourself a short time to capture the essence of your subject without regard for any sense of a 'finished' quality. Then pick another subject and do it again, and again. It may be all you needed to feel refreshed and ready for another run at a breakthrough.

How about including in your New Year's resolutions one to paint a little more this year, just for the fun of it? I think it's a given that, subconsciously, we all want each painting to be a success, and that's good. Just don't demand too much of yourself. If we approach our painting time as a stressful attempt to create a masterpiece, it will become a burden. What fun is that?

The article and images by Greg Lipelt referred to in this month's Message from the President may be found in the Winter 2005 issue of **Watercolor,** *pp. 40–45.*

slide deadline: February 19, 2005
Dive In!
show dates: March 31–April 28, 2005

making waves
minnesota watercolor society spring exhibition

MnWS at MLM

cont. from p. 1—

Ann also currently has work on display in a Kansas City Gallery, from a contact made during an Art Fair. Ann's current work is geometric. This evolved from her concentration on 'design' and trying to create a pathway of light through her painting. Ann will be teaching a class in Hastings on 22 and 29 January. Call

▲Busy MLM display artist Ann Pitman (left), showing off some work with friends.

Barb Pinc of Studio 61 to sign up at 651-438-3488. To see more of Ann's work visit Martin Luther Manor at 1401 East 100th Strreet, Bloomington. Call 952-888-7751 for directions.

The chances of selling your artwork while on display at Martin Luther Manor are slim but really that is not what it's all about. It is about sharing your talent with those who are no longer able to be productive but are still able to enjoy the beauty of your work. It is about giving back, about bringing light and life and a little bit of excitement into a sometimes dreary space. Thanks to many of our member who have displayed their work in the past: Emmy White and Ginny Olson, Dick and Janet Green, Judy Lieber and David Primrose, Agnes Fine, Andy Evansen, Bonnie Featherstone and Sue Beckman, Bonnie Crouch, Lynne Baur, Sandy Muzzy, Nanci Yermakoff and Kristin Gage.

If you have up to 20 framed paintings you would like to hang for a 2-month stretch call Sandy Muzzy at 952-854-7677. ■

▲Previous MLM display artists Sue Beckman (left) and Bonnie Featherstone.

More Opportunities to Share Light and Life

Did you make a New Year's resolution to give back something to your community or a special cause? Here's your chance:

▶**Share your talent with kids**—Lisa McDaniel, who works with Curriculum Resources & Programs, an organization that helps teachers find presenters for their K-12 classrooms is looking for someone willing to volunteer an hour with a 6th grade class of about 30 students teaching "watercolor basics" sometime in January. For more info, or to volunteer, contact Lisa at 952-848-4925 or LisMcDanial@edinak12.mn.us.

▶**Help fight diabetes**—Support camps for kids with diabetes, information and advocacy programs, and research efforts with a donation to the silent auction portion of the Celebrity Art Auction Gala hosted by the American Diabetes Association, Minnesota Area. The deadline for donations is March 1. For more info, or to obtain a donation form, contact Molly Duerr at 763-593-5333 x6652 or mduerr@diabetes.org.

▶**Help your fellow artists**—If you have art books or videos that you no longer use, consider donating them to the MnWS Library. To make a donation, or for more information, contact our Librarian, Ruth Valgamae at 952-920-3975 or bring your donations to a meeting and drop them off with at the Library

If Santa Brings You a Digital Camera . . . Part 2

by Lynne Baur

Last time, we talked about some camera features, and techniques for taking good photos of your artwork. This time, we'll talk about preparing images for use in email and on the web.

Software—To adjust your images to look their best, you'll need some sort of photo-editing software. Don't rush out and buy Photoshop; it's expensive ($700) and more than you'll need. There are far less expensive packages available that will be fine for most purposes. The website www.photo-editing-software-review.toptenreviews.com has reviews of several. My top choice is Photoshop Elements (around $100).

Instead of trying to condense all the manuals for all the image editing packages into one article, I'm going to focus on explaining some of the things that artists may need to adjust that you may not have learned about in shooting general-purpose photos like family snapshots or reference photos.

Image size, resolution and file size—Images on your computer screen, and images produced by a printer are made up of tiny dots (or *pixels*). The more (and tinier) the dots, the finer the detail that can be reproduced in the image. That's resolution. You may have heard the term *dpi* (dots per inch) to refer to this. Different applications demand different resolutions. A typical resolution for displaying images on a computer screen would be 72 dpi (or sometimes 150 dpi). Typically, images that are to be printed should be 300 dpi or better. That's *at the size you intend the image to be displayed or printed.*

Digital images can be scaled up or down, and your camera may assume a different image size than the one you intend for a particular purpose. An image that has

a resolution of 300 dpi at a size of 1x2" will only have a resolution of 100 dpi at 3x6" (those 300 dots that were spread over 1 inch get spread over 3 inches, so there are only 100 per inch now). Just as with a film enlargement, the image gets grainier as you blow it up.

For a given image size, the higher the resolution, the bigger the image file will be, too. For example, an image that is 200 dpi at 8x10" is 1600 pixels high by 2000 pixels wide. These are the measurements of the file in pixels, for a total *pixel-dimension* of 3,200,000 pixels, or 3.2 mega(*million*)pixels. Aha! so that's what all the megapixel stuff is about! The more megapixels, the bigger your picture can be at a given resolution (or the finer the resolution can be at a given size). Actually, the numbers don't work out quite like that, but it's the general idea.

Last time, I advised you to take high-resolution photos of your artwork. The idea is to capture as much detail as you can, and then use your software's image resizing or scaling ability to adjust downward. (Look in the manual for instructions on how to adjust image size or scale.)

A higher-quality image is always best, right? Well, not always. High quality means big file sizes. For email or the web that means lots of waiting around for the image to download.

If you're emailing an image to be printed (for example, in the newsletter), it's best to grit your teeth and send an image that will be at least 300 dpi at the size you expect it to be printed. But if your image only is going to be viewed on a computer screen, you can adjust the resolution down to 150 or even 72 dpi at the size you expect it to be displayed. For example, on our website, the images are generally adjusted to so that

they have a maximum dimension of about 400 pixels on their biggest side and then displayed at a size that makes them about 72 dpi.

File format—There's an alphabet-soup of image file types, but you only need to worry about a few, in fact, to get started, one will do, and that's JPEG (jay-peg). A JPEG isn't optimal for everything, but nearly every program that handles images can handle a JPEG, so if you are just getting started, it's your best bet for minimizing problems. In many cases, the photos you import from your camera will be JPEGs to begin with, but if not, there will probably be a place in your Save dialog box that allows *(cont on p. 4)*

MEMBER *happenings*

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

Larry Johnson had two paintings, "High Mountain Lake" and "Top of the Cascades" selected for the 2004 International Watercolor & Pastel Competition at the Mirror Pond Gallery in Bend, Oregon. Larry was one of 38 artists whose work was selected. The exhibit runs through December 30.

▲Larry Johnson's "High Mountain Lake"

Karen Knutson had paintings accepted into the Montana Watercolor Society Exhibition and the Rockey Mountain Watercolor Society Exhibtion. Shw won a Merit Award for her painting, "Sailing" in the Northern Plains Watercolor Society Exhibtion. She was also a finalist in the *Artist's Magazine* 21st Annual Art Competition in the Experimental category. (There were 13,000 entries in the *Artist's Magazine* competition.)

Dick Green's painting "What Next?", which won Third Honors in the San Diego Watercolor Society's 24th International Exhibition, was featured in the January 2005 issue of *American Artist* magazine (p. 8).

Beverly Peterson's watercolor "Waiting" was accepted into the juried "Extremely Minnesota" show at the Robbin Gallery in Robbinsdale. It received an award of Honorable Mention.

Ann Pitman received an Honorable Mention at the 2004 Maple Grove Art Fair.

▲Ann Pitman at the Maple Grove Art Fair

Congratulations Everyone! ■

Digital Camera *(cont. from p.3)*

you to save your images as JPEGs. Do your editing, and then when you are ready to email your file or use it on the web, save it as a JPEG. Many packages will have an option called something like "Save for Web" which will save your file as a JPEG and also choose a suitable compression for you (see below).

Compression—When you save an image as a JPEG, you will also have an option to specify the amount of *file compression* used (confusingly, this is also called *quality*). When image files are compressed, the computer throws away some of the information, but cleverly, so that the appearance is affected as little as possible. The more you compress, the smaller the file, and the poorer the image, but it's sometimes amazing how much you can compress and not notice. Certainly, for email or the web, you can choose Medium quality (or a level of 5-6 or 50-
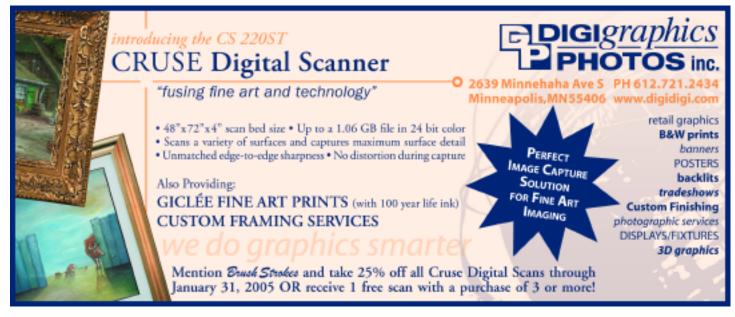
60–different programs use different ways of describing it). Incidentally, if you are putting your images on a CD, you can keep them high-resolution and high quality, since there is not a problem with download times in the case of a CD.

Adjusting color, contrast, brightness, etc.—Your own eye can be your guide when you are adjusting images to be viewed on a computer screen. (For printing, it's more complicated, but that's another article.) Before you start, it is worth learning how to calibrate your monitor (see your computer manual) in case it's out of whack; they change over time.

If your camera doesn't have a white balance, or if it didn't quite do the trick of making your whites really white, check your image editing software to find out how to set the *white point* (or *remove a color cast*), instead of trying to eyeball the correction. Typically, this involves clicking on some area that should be white (that's why you included a small strip of white paper in your image, remember that from last time?) and the computer adjusts the color balance for you. You may find that the Auto Contrast adjustment is quite helpful, too. A lot will depend on your particular camera, so experiment with different adjustments and takes notes on which ones help most. ■

Next time—Preparing images for printing.

the WORK*shopper*

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). ■

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. ■

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. ■

Charlotte Laxen
▶The Palette of Provence, July 20–31, 2005. Lavender and sunflower fields, markets and magical scenery; 6 nights in Bonnieux, 4 nights in seaside village of Cassis. Limited to 12 artists. Contact: Scottie Watson, 952-285-1272 or scottiew1@msn.com. ■

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

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.

MNWS*calendar*

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

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

February . . . .
February 10: Ceil Hartlieb Demo–portraits

March . . . .
March 10: Mike Wohnoutka–illustrating children's books
March 31: *Spring Show Reception at Minnetonka Center for the Arts*

April . . . .
Spring Show reception (see above). No regular meeting in April.

LOCATION: Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Blvd., Edina, MN (Corner of 70th St. S. and Hwy 100)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MnWS Membership Dues:
o Single: $25
o Couple/Family: $35
o Seniors (65+) $20

Name _____

Address _____

_____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

o Check here to have your name removed from the list sent to our exhibition award donors who mail product information to our members.

Mail your application and check payable to Minnesota Watercolor Society to:

Marian Alstad, Membership Chair
4011 Chicago Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407-3142

MINNESOTA WATERCOLOR SOCIETY

4011 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55407-3142

"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