

MNWScalendar

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

April 5
“Spring Tonic” Spring Show Reception

April 30
Ron Ranson Workshop

May 10
Pat Undis Demo

LOCATION: Christ Presbyterian Church,
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o Seniors (65+) \$25

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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



MINNESOTA WATERCOLOR SOCIETY

BrushStrokes

Volume 27 Number 4

April 2007

Judging/Awards - What Were They Thinking?

By CeCeile Hartleib

For the past few weeks several MnWS board members have been participating in an ongoing conversation regarding the subject of judging art shows and the competence or incompetence of the judges chosen in the past for our Spring and Fall Exhibitions. We have considered the process of judging, the difficulty of deciding award winners, how those decisions are made, and the criteria, if any, that judges follow.

I am pleased with our conversation because, even though we have differing opinions and our discussion could have become argumentative, I think we have been respectful of each other's thoughts and feelings. We have aired our differences and have dealt with them in a mature manner. I believe that differences of opinion need to be dealt with in this way - that talking things over and allowing others to express their differences is the only real way to get things accomplished. Change and growth in our organization will not happen if we ignore our differences or stuff them under the table.

Below are excerpts from the emails received on this topic. I have taken all the emails from each person and put them into a single commentary for each person. Unfortunately, I had to condense the content due to space restrictions. For this I apologize.

Jeanne Long began the dialogue:

I can't help but wonder if people are hesitant to enter (MnWS exhibitions) because of the vagaries in the judging process. When I first entered shows I imagined there would be some consistency and that judges would pick the highest quality artwork to hold up for us beginners to emulate. Instead I found the shows to be a function of each judge's preferences rather than understandings of what constitutes high quality art. It doesn't make sense that a member can enter

their work in two shows in succession in the same organization, and in one get Best of Show and not even an Honorable Mention in another. Or that for a while an artist will get many awards and then get none when their work is the same or even better.

I wonder if it would make sense to not allow any of our judges to see the names of the painters when viewing the slides or when they are viewing the originals? If there were a pattern in terms of people receiving awards we'd know it had nothing to do with familiarity of peoples' names. I know that there are many styles of painting as well as many subjects and techniques, but I still maintain that there are levels of competence in painting and that judges should be picking those works to single out in order that our shows edify, rather than just entertain, or worse reflect popular trends independent of true worth.

The author responded with:

We place post-it notes over the names when we have local judges. We also have a list of criteria, which we give to the judges who may or may not read it. They may have their own criteria to follow. They are usually very competent artists who have had lots of art training. I think that most of us know that judging is very difficult and that most judges try to keep their own personal taste out of their selections.

Emmy White comments:

What is novel, exciting, good, true, and beautiful is all in the eye of the beholder. 'What for Pete's sake is art?' has been a question historically. This question will continue to be debated eons into the

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“Getting Rejected Can Be a Good Thing”

by Karen Knutson

I just received my rejection notice from Missouri Watercolor Society for my painting, “Sleeping Beauty.” Well, actually, I should say I received my “decline notice” - that sounds nicer. I was really bummed at first, because this society is a very good art organization and I'm close to getting my signature membership in it. Being honest with myself, though, this painting never got the response from myself that I wanted. You know.... that “wow” feeling of accomplishment. I felt good about it and liked it, but didn't feel the “wow.” Getting declined can be a good thing. It makes me really analyze my paintings and in doing so, I usually can see what I would do differently in the next painting. And I grow as an artist. Isn't that what we all really want?

Sometimes, I look at the decline notice, and totally disagree with the judge's decision. That's OK too. The difference being that I really, truly, believe in that painting. I enter it in other shows and usual-

ly get accepted with that very same painting, sometimes, even winning an award!

Usually, I know when I have a winning painting. I'm not talking about knowing that the painting is good; I'm talking about that feeling when you KNOW that it's great! There's a feeling of pride and accomplishment when I have completed with that painting, and I just know that it's a good one. It has that certain something that makes me want to look at it for a long time. It draws me into it, because there is usually a hidden story or perhaps a mood that is evident about the painting. It demands attention, whether it is in colors, value contrast, great design, confidence, or something that is new and exciting. When that happens, I usually mark NFS on the price, and enter it in as many shows as possible within the next two years. Now, I'm even more determined to paint GREAT paintings, and enter more shows. In this case, getting rejected was a good thing! P.S. Since writing this, I've received one more decline notice, but 3 more accepted notices. And the roller coaster of emotion continues.....

MESSAGE *from the President*



When I'm creating a painting it goes through several phases. In the beginning I am keyed up and excited. In the middle there are usually some hills and valleys. Some nagging questions come up. Can I pull this together? Can I resolve certain areas? Then I usually finish with a masterpiece or a real clunker. Painting a larger watercolor in a direct method is great fun, but it can also be an emotional rollercoaster. Oftentimes I cannot paint and truly evaluate in one sitting. The next morning, I am excited to view a painting that I worked on the previous day. It sounds funny, but it usually looks much better or much worse than I remembered it. I am giving a more honest appraisal, away from the heat of the creative moment. I am looking at it with fresh eyes.

Several years back a wonderfully wacky woman in one of my classes was being extra hard on herself. She thought her work was terrible and everyone else's work was terrific. (The grass is always greener phenomenon) I proceeded to point out all the things she had done right and explained how her painting was unique. To make a long story longer, she explained how she put everything in the trunk of her car after class. The next day when she removed paintings and supplies from her car, she was surprised to find she suddenly liked her work, that it wasn't so bad after all. I tried to explain to her she was seeing with fresh eyes. She jokingly explained it must be the trunk fairies. (The trunk fairies I came to learn are magical creatures that fix paintings overnight in the car trunk.) Needless to say, everyone got a lot of laughs and we referred to these magical creatures many times throughout the remaining classes.

I thoroughly enjoyed Nancy Carney's presentation and demo at the March meeting. She explained how sometimes she would put a painting in a hallway or an unusual place so that when she came upon it, the piece would surprise her. She would see it in a different way, and maybe evaluate it in a different way. I can relate to this, because I have found myself doing the very same thing. It's almost as if you're viewing someone else's work. A lot of artists talk about viewing their painting from 3 feet and 30 feet. (Hopefully it's successful from both of these vantage points.) I subscribe to this and believe the distant perspective is so important. Step away... come back... and look at your work in a whole new light. Look at it with fresh eyes. It may surprise you, I am sure it's better than you may think.

Happy Painting!
DAN WIEMER

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future. I personally think it is, as a dear friend once said, a crapshoot - whether a painting is accepted into a juried show or rejected. It's a game. Rejection and surprise are part of the game. As far as awards go, they vary as do human beings - subjective, objective, and emotional. To establish rules as to value, design, composition would interfere with the mystery and the excitement of the game.

Jeanne Long added:

If we all agree to subject our work to the vagaries of the judging process as it stands, then we should probably accept the fact that the process is meaningless. Why would you get excited over a meaningless decision? Whether or not my painting reminds a judge of their granddaughter is irrelevant to my improving as an artist. I want competitions that have meaning.

I disagree that "what is novel, exciting, good, true, and beautiful is all in the eye of the beholder." There is real beauty and there is real ugliness, and the fact that people are now afraid to differentiate is sad. People fear being called judgmental. They want to be considered "inclusionistic." I believe that if we include everyone and say there's no difference between one action and another and it's all subjective, we lose our humanity.

From Deb Chapin:

Last year's judge certainly had no awareness of who was who. I sat there quietly as he went through the work. He was looking at elements such as design, color, edges, movement or emotional impact, and took a long careful look at each of the paintings. There were a few I would have chosen differently, but for the most part I agreed, not that he knew it one way or another. As chair-people we must look for our judges carefully. I received names of possible judges from people I respect, looked them up, checked their pedigree, measured them personally and then asked them. This year's judge was adamant that just these picks would represent her choices. The others didn't fit her vision, her knowledge and her reputation. I have to respect that. She is in the business of knowing good art. *(To be continued next month.)*



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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
16800 Blenheim Way
Minnetonka, MN 55345
cjmay@eganco.com

Advertising Placement
For ad rates or to place advertising, contact
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MnWS Workshops

► **Doug Lew**— *Composing & Capturing Motion in Watercolor* #5190-Tu, W & Th, 9:30–4pm, June 5-7, \$195 non members/ \$175 members (either Edina Art Center Members or Watercolor Society Members).



“Red Tide” by Doug Lew

Painting motion in watercolor is largely to create an illusion by means of a series of suggestions and eliminations. These optical manipulations can be learned by an artist once he/she understands the perception of motion held by the beholder. This lesson will investigate and make clear what those perceptions are. Through demos, students will learn the technique for each of these perceptions. The class will apply ‘Composition’ learned the previous day and incorporate the lesson in order to make a better painting.

► **Lana Grow**—#1 Aqua Media/ Acrylic and Collage, Experimental and Energizing May 7-11, 2007; Duluth Art Institute-Lincoln Park, 2220 West 2nd Street, Duluth, MN 55806 218-723-1310, Shannon Cousino
—#1 or #2 Aqua Media/ Acrylic and Collage, Experimental and Energizing

► **Jeanne Larson**—May 24-26, White Bear Center for the Arts 2-day Workshop
—May 28-30, Minnetonka Art Center 3-Day Workshop
—June 16, Show Opening. Invitational Spring Show-Fineline Gallery in Door County, (Ephraim WI)
“Spirit of Flowers-The Healing Garden”
—July 16-20, Grand Marais Art Colony - Spirited Watermedia Workshop-5 days
—Sept. 9-16, The NEW Madeline Island Art School, 5-Day Watermedia Workshop

► **Kathy Kovala**—“Weatherscapes” Workshop, May 21-25, Nisswa, MN. Fee \$525 for 5 days, includes lunches; 9:30 to 4:00 at New Lake Edward Town Hall. Contact Pat Dillum at dillum@uslink.net or 218-568-5276 or go to www.kathykovala.com. Register early, space is limited.

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Northstar News

April 16-20: *Robert Burridge Workshop*
Contact Georgiana Ruzich
763-424-5164

April 19: *Robert Burridge Demo*
May 18-20: *Art on a Line*

For meeting info contact
Diane Kuenzli, 651-771-6303.
Meeting location is Centennial United
Methodist Church, 1524 W. County Rd.
C2 at Snelling in Roseville.
www.northstarwatercolorssociety.com

► **Ron Ranson Workshop**—April 30-May 4; 9 to 4 pm. Few spaces left, sign up now! Ron has written many books and is one of the most sought after instructors. Learn to simplify your paintings and paint with conviction and good design! The atmosphere will be fun while learning!

Location: Bloomington Armory, 3300 West 98th Street, Bloomington, MN 55431. **Cost:** \$395–MnWS members, \$435–non-members. **Call:** Susan Zinschlag, Phone: (651-437-9327); email: s.m.zinschlag@att.net with questions. *(Sponsored by MNWatercolor Society.)*

► **Karen Knutson**—“Watercolor with Wild Imagination” (watercolor and collage workshop); August 6-10. Madeline Island School of the Arts, Madeline Island, WI. Call (715) 747-2054 or email: Info@MadelineArtSchool.com. Cost: \$450.00
Level: Intermediate - Advanced

For this workshop, you take a ferry over to a beautiful island, and get to paint for 5 days in paradise! Imagine the paintings that will come from this tranquil setting. The workshop site is a brand new building. Always wanted to do a semi-abstract painting, but don't know where to begin? Experience the hands-on demos, fun tricks, design and color techniques to create more meaningful paintings. Karen's classes are very popular, so sign up soon. See advertisement on www.madelineartschool.com

the WORKshopper

Send **Workshop** listings to: *Workshopper*, 16800 Blenheim Way, Minnetonka, MN 55345, or email to cjmay@eganco.com

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April-October 2007
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Mini Shows Held Every Month

April — Nothing for this month due to the spring show.

May — Landscape,—abstract or realistic

► **Calvin deRuyter** will be conducting a 2-day workshop, July 17-18 (Tues-Wed) in Battle Lake, MN. The workshop will explore color relationships, complimentary color overpainting, some design elements, as well as his painting without palette—mixing and working pure colors directly on the paper. For more information on the workshop, contact Vicki Larson at 218-948-2645 (email vickilar@gctel.com), or contact Calvin at 651-645-7045, ext. 1, or email calboy55@hotmail.com.

► **Roz Stendahl** is teaching a 5-day Nature Journaling and Sketching (with watercolor) workshop at Grand Marais Art Colony, August 8–12. Participants will make an elegant and sturdy 8 x 10 hard-covered journal on the first day. The remainder of the workshop will be spent exploring and observing the beautiful area around Grand Marais while practicing a variety of journaling techniques. All bookmaking and sketching experience levels are welcome. For information see www.rozworks.com/cl_NatJournGM.html or call the school at 1-800-385-9585.

► **Jan Fabian Wallake**, author of “Watercolor: Pour It On,” will instruct painting workshops at the following locations:

—May 21-24 at the Moose Lodge Spring Art Retreat, northern MN (a private, all-inclusive painting retreat for five artists). Contact Wallake Studios at 651-351-1301.

—June 11-14—Madeline Island Art School, Wisconsin. Contact 715-747-2054.

—Aug. 26-31—Dillman's Art Resort, Wisconsin. Contact 715-588-3143.

—Oct. 8-11—Moose Lodge Fall Art Retreat, northern MN. Contact Wallake Studios at 651-351-1301.

—Oct. 22-26—Saanich Peninsula Art Soc., British Columbia. Contact Ruth at 1-250-655-4836 or Wallake Studios at 651-351-1301

Jan also teaches a once-a-month class in Roseville. Contact Wallake Studios at 651-351-1301.

/VISUALLY SPEAKING/

Spring Watercolor Workshops

THE PORTABLE WATERCOLOR JOURNAL

Instructor: Holly Nelson Skill Level: All

Learn to use watercolors and a sketch kit to record beautiful images in your journal while enjoying nature, travel or simple reflection during your day.

E423W Friday, April 27 (1 session) Added by popular demand!
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

\$43 Members / \$48 Non-members

\$10 Materials Fee

WHAT'S NEXT:

Minnesota Watercolor Society Spring Juried Show

Opening Reception April 5, 6 - 9 pm. FREE admission

This beautiful show runs April 5 - May 4

Minnetonka Center for the Arts

SPIRITED WATERCOLORS

Instructor: Jeanne Norris Larson Skill Level: All

This workshop is designed to access that fun part of watercolor painting that will help you find the “zone” where you do your very best work.

E421W Monday - Wednesday, May 28, 29 and 30
(3 sessions) 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

\$200 Members / \$216 Non-members

Studio classes in painting, sculpture, ceramics, photography, jewelry, fiber, glass, drawing; Gallery Exhibits; Gift Shop; Café

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MEMBER happenings

Send member news to: *BrushStrokes*, 16800 Blenheim Way, Minnetonka, MN 55345, or email to cjmay@eganco.com. Images are welcome and will be used as space permits.

Welcome!

We have 389 paid members to date.

NEW MEMBERS

Anna Morales
Juliet L. Anderson
Rhonda Swanson
Fran Linder
Michael D. Dunn
Suzanne Potter
Lorraine Levandowski
Scott Bean
Linda Collins
Vicky Dean
Loren Kuusinen
Sharon McKisson
Victoria Zobel



Nancy Carney at March meeting.

Annual Spring Juried Exhibition "Spring Tonic"

Minnetonka Center for the Arts
2240 North Shore Drive
Wayzata, MN 55391
952-473-7361
map/info:
www.minnetonkaArts.org

April 5 – May 4

Reception: Thursday, April 5
6-9 p.m.

Judge for the 2007
Spring Exhibition
Sally Johnson, Director
Groveland Gallery, Minneapolis

For additional information contact
Deb Chapin, Spring Show Chair
952-890-8684

Please join us!

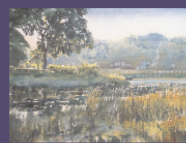


Recent
paintings
by
Minnesota
Watercolor
Society
members

Emmy White
"She Wears Her Heart
on Her Sleeve"



Dan Wiemer
"Beautiful Red Wing"



Joanne Long
"Reflecting Pool"
Best of Show
MnWS Spring Show 2006
Northern Lights Exhibition
2005



Paul Higdon
"I Will Return to New Orleans"
People's Choice Award
MnWS Spring Show 2006

2nd place
2006
Minnesota State Fair
Fine Arts Exhibition

► **Dick Green** TWSA Master, has a painting accepted into the Red River National Juried Exhibition at the Hjermkomst Center, Moorhead, MN

► **Robin Berry's** painting, Razzle Dazzle, has been awarded the Ogden and Mary Pleissner Memorial Award for the 2007 American Watercolor Society Show. It has also been selected for the traveling exhibition.

► **Sandy Muzzy's** painting "Rehearsal in Black and White" was accepted into the RRWS National Juried Show.

► **Lynne Baur's** "Summer Dreams", a collection of watercolors celebrating the colors and moods of summer, will be on display at the Northfield Arts Guild in "The Other Room" April 4-28, 2007, with an artist reception Thursday, April 12 from 6-8 p.m. Northfield shops are open until 8:00 p.m. Thursday evening—it's a great little town for an excursion!

▼ Summer Dreams by Lynne Baur



Northstar Watercolor Society— The fifth annual **Art on a Line** show and sale will take place May 18-20 at the MN State Fair Fine Arts Building. Contact Leny Wendel, 651-653-0032, leny_wendel@msn.com) or Connie Keithan, (651-774-2677, conkaystpaul@yahoo.com) with questions.

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