

the Dragonfly



Dorland Mountain Arts Colony Newsletter ♦ Winter 2013

Robert Willis: a man of many talents

Robert Willis may be 90 years old, but after talking with him I was convinced that 90 is the new 60. Robert has been the artist in residence and caretaker of the Dorland Mountain Arts Colony for more than 20 years and is loved and remembered by the many artists who have stayed at Dorland during this time period. In addition to doing much work around the colony (like sprucing up trails and chopping wood), Robert is a working artist whose watercolors have been exhibited all over the country and the world. He also currently teaches painting classes to a group of enthralled students.



Photo by Todd Montgomery

My interview with Robert was captivating. He is an engaging, articulate and impressive man and I could have listened to him talk about his fascinating life for hours. Here is just a brief summary:

Many past residents who recall Robert may not know that his life has led him down many different paths. He was born in rural upstate New York and recalls being “a depression kid” during his teenage years. His father died when he was 16 and his mother supported Robert and his brother and sister in part by teaching piano lessons for 50 cents a lesson. After his father's death, Robert helped support his family with a variety of jobs like working in a coal yard and driving for a veterinarian.

He recalls that he was always drawing. His high school art teacher encouraged him to submit a portfolio to the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and he was thrilled to be accepted at this famous art school. He attended Pratt for more than a year when Pearl Harbor changed his life. He joined the Army's Tenth Mountain Infantry Division, which had been looking for men who could ski, survive cold weather, and had experience with animals. Robert fit the bill on all counts. He was eventually sent to Europe, where he fought through the Alps in Italy and was awarded a Bronze Star for meritorious service in action.

Before shipping off to Europe, he married and eventually had six children. (He now has 13 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.) Perhaps it was his children who inspired him to write and publish six children's books. One of his books won the prestigious Follett award in children's literature. He also applied his artistic ability to becoming a graphic artist, a career that helped support his large family. He worked with design firms, for magazines and corporations, and did cosmetic packaging.

For ten years, after his children had grown up, Robert lived in France when one of his sons, also a successful painter, lived there. Robert says this experience opened the door to renewing his own creativity. He primarily spent his time in France writing a novel and painting the gorgeous landscapes around him. His watercolors hang in each room of the Pasifleur Hotel in Vergez France, the village that is the source of Perrier water. He has also exhibited and won awards in a variety of shows and his paintings grace the walls of many fortunate collectors throughout America.

After he returned to the U.S., Robert stayed at Dorland as a resident and then became its caretaker. In 2004, when a massive fire devastated Dorland, he lost everything, including all the paintings he had stored there. For quite a long time, he lived in his VW van on the Dorland property while he helped manage the colony's restoration efforts. Although the existing Dorland has two cottages, rather than the original six, it is now thriving and attracting residents again after being closed for four years. Robert and his wife, Janice, also an accomplished artist, live on the property and care for it. Their dedication and knowledge of Dorland's history have inspired many appreciative residents throughout the years. It is also wonderful that Robert's sons and grandson frequently help with some of the heavy work on the property.

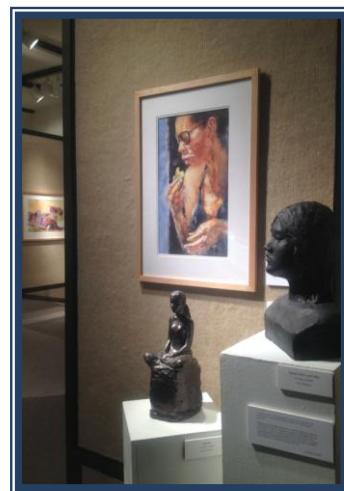
Robert has also appreciated the opportunity to meet so many artists from around the world. He says, ***“Artists who are serious about their work find that Dorland's serenity and isolation can be very conducive to the creative process.”***

Throughout his life, Robert has found time to write, draw and paint. His paintings usually depict dramatic landscapes that capture the feeling and mood of the setting. Robert eloquently expresses why watercolor painting has always beckoned him, when he says, “The watercolor medium is elusive and capricious, and it taunts us with the promise of glorious possibilities. My infatuation with it goes on and on.” For those of us who are fortunate to have met Robert, our infatuation with him will also go on and on. It is not an exaggeration to describe Robert as representing the heart and soul of Dorland.

By: Susan J. Montgomery

Associate Artist Exhibition Art Gallery, Mt. San Jacinto College

The Art Gallery at Mt. San Jacinto College recently hosted an exhibition of work by sixteen Associate Artists of Dorland Mountain Arts Colony. "Dorland Mountain Arts Colony Associate Artist Exhibition" was on display from November 5 through December 13, 2013. The public reception was very well attended and included music, hors d'oeuvres, introductions and discussion about art and Dorland. The exhibit brought together 16 local artists who share in the support and preservation of Dorland as a secluded retreat where visual artists, writers, composers and musicians can create in a setting of natural beauty. Each participant had experienced the balance of solitude and inspiration that Dorland provides. The conversations generated by this exhibit are sure to be picked up and continued at future Associate Artists' events.



Participants included; Michael Barrios Carriere, Janice Cipriani-Willis, Stephen Eldred, Elliot Framan, Dennis Galceran, Lanie Galceran, Robin Golden, Suzanne Lingold, Laura McCoy Plant, Nanci McGraw, Robert McGraw, Todd Montgomery, Barbara Perryman, Reza Sephadari, Linda Stewart and Robert Willis.

A literary reading event was hosted in the gallery on November 26. Writers involved with Dorland Mountain Artist's Colony each presented a sample of their work. Participants included: Brynn Taylor Ashford, John Clinton Gray, J. Darrin McGraw, Eugenia Parrish, Laura McCoy Plant, Dr. Lisa Sanchez and the Dime Stories writers group of Temecula.

The Art Gallery is located on the San Jacinto campus of Mt. San Jacinto College, 1499 N. State Street, San Jacinto, CA 92583. Public hours are Monday through Thursday from 10 - 4pm. Gallery exhibitions and events are free and open to the public.

Associate Artists: we all benefit

The Associate Artists is a group of artists affiliated with Dorland Mountain Arts Colony. They meet about four times a year to socialize, discuss how to support Dorland and each other, and sometimes enjoy brief presentations by artists about their work. The Associate Artists meet at a variety of different places, including homes, art galleries, and wineries and we always have a good time. In the future, field trips to artists' studios or other interesting sites may be planned.

There are many benefits to being an Associate Artist, including:

- **Opportunities to visit** Dorland's beautiful setting and work on your own creative project or just soak up the spirit of the serene setting.
- **Use of the Dorland logo** on your business card or website, indicating that you are a Dorland Associate Artist.
- **Discounts** on residencies at Dorland.
- **Invitations** to Associate Artists' quarterly meetings where you can meet other artists.
- **Opportunities to display your work.**
- **Notices about volunteer opportunities.**

Most importantly, your contribution of \$100 per year for the Associate Artists' annual dues, helps support Dorland's ongoing operations and special projects. Associate Artists may live in Southern California or support Dorland from afar.

For more information or to join Dorland's Associate Artists' program, call Laura Plant, Dorland's Executive Director, at 951-302-3837 or go to Dorland's website: <http://www.dorlandartscolony.org/>

A glance at this year's residents

2013 has been a very productive year for Residents at Dorland Mountain Arts Colony.

Writer, **Kim Fay**, maintains a very interesting blog. Check it out at: literateinla@blogspot.com.

In early Spring, two past residents returned to soak up our atmosphere. Writer, **Julia Gibson** and artist, **Wicki Van De Veer**, renewed old friendships and felt the same magic that Dorland has always held for them.

Grace Jahng Lee, a prolific writer from New York City, spent 12 weeks with us, working on her autobiographical novel. One of her delights was how roomy our cottages are compared to her New York efficiency apartment. While at Dorland she published an article celebrating Father's Day in Korean American News: <http://bit.ly/Hxmser>

Long term resident and supporter, artist **Jane Culp**, returned this summer – but not to paint. She wrote the program notes for her November exhibit in New York.

Husband and wife writing team, **Anna Leahy** and **Douglas Dechow**, got right to work on their new book. They agreed that it was wonderful to get away from day-to-day life and accomplished a lot. So much so, that they are returning for another two weeks in January 2014. Read Anna's blog about creating at Dorland: <http://bit.ly/17AiaOp>

Linda Kissam, food, wine and travel writer, took a short break to reboot a few weeks ago. She has already posted her observations on her informative website: www.winechix.com.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation go to all of the wonderful people who support Dorland and the ideas it represents.

Bobbie Allen
Baily Winery
John Burbee
Karen Cahill
Michael Carrier
Michael Cartwright
Jane Culp
Leslie Doherty
Eileen Doktorski
Stephen Eldred
Dennis Galceran

Lanie Galceran
Julia Gibson
John Gray
Pamela Gray
Curtis Horton
George & Shirley Jagels
Bob Kahler
Keyways Winery
John Lane
Grace Lee
Celeste Littleton

Todd & Sue Montgomery
Jeanie Olson
Barbara Perryman
Tom Plant
Phillip Routh
Marion Siu
Linda Stewart
Studio 395
Temecula Valley Women's Club
Wicki Van De Vere
Robert & Janice Willis

Please contact us for any errors or omissions. We sincerely apologize and hope you understand.

**PLEASE...befriend an enchanted place.
Dorland needs your financial help now more than ever.**



Method of Payment:

☐ Check - made payable to Dorland Mountain Arts Colony and mail to address below. \$ _____

☐ Please charge my gift of \$ _____ to my ☐ Visa or ☐ MC

Account # _____

Exp. Date _____ 3-digit auth code (VIN#) _____

Signature _____

Please Print:

Name _____

Company Name (if using corporate card) _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Country _____

Telephone: W/Cell (____) _____ H (____) _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Yes, I/We would like to receive mailings and email updates from Dorland.

Dorland Mountain Arts Colony is a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Tax ID number: 95-3786125
PO Box 6, Temecula, CA 92593 ♦ 951.302.3837 ♦ info@dorlandartscolony.org ♦ www.dorlandartscolony.org

An important message . . . from Curtis Horton, Board President

Dear Friends and Supporters:

I have been President of Dorland's Board of Directors for a bit longer than is healthy (about 9 years) and look forward to passing the baton one of these days, but in the meantime I would like to sing the praises of our most recent generation of Board members, all of whom have themselves done creative work in various fields. They intimately understand the needs of artists, and help all of us on the Board focus on how we can best meet those needs.

Currently, one of the most pressing needs is "a room of one's own" for visual artists to splatter to their hearts' content—otherwise known as a studio. Our current cottages don't provide sufficient space or flexibility, and we also want the capability to support the creation of large-format works. Thanks to a referral from former resident and Board member Julia Gibson, her friend, architect Daniel Hoffmann from Taos, New Mexico, has donated his services and prepared plans for a simple, multi-purpose space which will meet the needs of visual artists. A Board member and others have committed to providing seed money for this project, and we are currently seeking the additional funds needed to make it a reality. Will you help?

Not only will this centrally located, light-filled space serve visual artists whenever needed, it will also serve as a gallery and even a small performance and gathering space during the traditional Dorland Open Studio and other public events on an occasional basis. You can help us carry on in the spirit of the old Thompson's Studio building (destroyed in the

fire), while offering even greater benefits to the Dorland community.

We are also hoping that a generous Dorland supporter will consider helping us build additional cottages. We had six before the fire and now we only have two. It is only by increasing our capacity for more artists to stay at Dorland that we will continue to support our ongoing expenses and, very importantly, enhance our ability to support our mission of providing space for artists to work in what we believe is one of the most inspiring settings in the world. Would you like to help us achieve our goals and have a cottage named after you?

If you are interested in any of these charitable opportunities, please contact me or our Executive Director, Laura Plant. There is also a form on the back of this newsletter for you to use in making any size contribution to Dorland before the end of the year. Keep in mind that a donation in ANY amount matters to Dorland and we very much appreciate your generosity.

Thank you for being a friend of Dorland. Wishing you a wonderful and creative holiday season,

Curtis Horton
Board of Directors President



Dorland Mountain Arts Colony
PO Box 6
Temecula, CA 92593

Follow Dorland on Facebook

**Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Temecula, CA
Permit #173**