



Official Newsletter of your Lake County Art League

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The Lake County Art League year runs from September through June. We meet on the third Monday of these months, 7-9:00 pm. Meetings in September, October, January, February, March, April and June include presentations and are held at State Bank of the Lakes in Grayslake. November and May meetings are the closing critiques for our popular fall and spring membership shows, and are held at the Jack Benny Center for the Arts theatre in Waukegan. Finally, we take a holiday break in December. Here are dates that should be on your horizon now:

Monday Feb.18 LCAL meeting
State Bank of the Lakes, 7:00

Monday March 18 LCAL meeting
State Bank of the Lakes, 7:00

Monday April 6 Spring Membership Show Check-in
Jack Benny Center, 10-1 pm



February Presentation – Deb Edmunds

Deb Edmunds loves to paint trees. She says it probably started as a kid anxiously trying to figure out a way to climb up them, branch by

branch. “My favorite always being the mighty oak and the birch.” At some point she started drawing them, and now she fills sketchbooks using watercolor to capture the wonderfully variable shapes and shades. Then she adds casual ink scribbles to hint at lacy textures among the fine branches and understory, but also the busy carpet of grasses.

“When drawing a tree,” she says, “so many artists will ignore their unique shapes and patterns that every species of trees possess. While some branch out in all different direction, others like the pine will shoot straight out and their needles droop. Bark on trees also varies in shape and color. The leaves too have distinct patterns and colors.”

Deb is a painter and a self-taught weekend artist. Her profession for the last 30 years has been as an interior house painter, with an emphasis on custom finishes and various faux techniques. Her weekend painting is *en plein air* whenever possible, but otherwise at her kitchen table studio.

To this she adds:

-My media are watercolor, gouache, pastels, acrylic, mixed media, and pen and ink.

-I've been painting since late 80's, when I started with watercolor.

-I took several watercolor and pastel classes but have no formal art education.

-Monet and other impressionist painters have influenced my work.

Deb once worked all year producing and illustrating a children's book for Paddy Lynn, a storyteller/actress. "She asked me to illustrate her story for her and I accepted the challenge back in March of 2012. Now the book is available on Blurb in eBook form and on Amazon in book form." You can see her work and purchase and look at

https://www.amazon.com/Follow-Wind-Wherever-Blows-Illustrations/dp/0988613603/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1357964680&sr=8-1&keywords=follow+the+wind+wherever+it+blows.

Deb's Lake County Art League February presentation is going to be about painting *en plein air*. "And," she says "I was also thinking about focusing on trees."

You can get more information on Deb at <https://debedmunds.wordpress.com>, where you will see a lot of trees, and at <http://dledmunds.blogspot.com>, where she shares her successes and frustrations with a much wider range of subjects.

New Member Anne Marie Bracken Will Handle *Member News*



Member News was separated from *Sketches* last year because it was overwhelming *Sketches* both in space and editing time. It has since become even more popular because this format has no space limitations, allowing us to show much more of your art, and to add member comments like recommendations, questions, concerns, and offers for help. Even as a search was planned for someone to take over this fun news venue, Anne-Marie Bracken joined the art league and wrote on her Membership Form that she would like to help with the newsletter. She has now seen the February *Member News* and says "This is a good example of what to expect format-wise for the future." She will immediately become our *Member News* editor. Send your news to amabracken@gmail.com.

This remainder of article continues our practice of profiling active new members so that you recognize them and can talk about mutual interests. Please introduce yourself to Anne-Marie as soon as you see her.

Anne-Marie Bracken has arrived in Lake County from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

This journey started in New York, NY where at the Fashion Institute of Technology she majored in textile design. She also attended several classes in watercolor, Photoshop, and marketing graphic design. Later she served as a school volunteer and taught art appreciation to 4th/5th graders. That was in Utah.

Years ago she and her husband settled in Naperville and raised two sons. When the boys left for college and work mom and dad headed to Roanoke Virginia. Anne-Marie's mother lived there and they wanted some quality time with her as she was getting up in years. She too was an artist, so there was a lot of shared creative time. She passed and both Anne-Marie



and her husband retired, so they decided to return to Chicagoland where their eldest son, his wife and two girls live.

A multiple award winner, Anne-Marie has been involved in both commercial and fine art for many years. While in Naperville she provided graphic art for the Ball Foundation, as well as a lot of marketing materials for Williams Architects.

At Virginia Tech she helped curate art exhibits for the College of Engineering and she too exhibited at several of those shows. In addition, she got engineering students to participate with selected examples of their projects shown as artwork. Anne-Marie also served as editor and graphic artist for an engineering newsletter, and provided program graphics and marketing for the department's conference in 2009.

Having been a member of the DuPage Art League in Illinois, she joined the League of Roanoke Artists (LRA) in Virginia. With her mom she exhibited in shows and a number of Roanoke venues like our own On-The-Wall sites. She functioned as the LRA editor and graphic artist for their newsletter for several years.

Anne-Marie says she “delights in noticing patterns in nature and expressing her connection to the earth through her art,” which would include digital photography (example to the right), watercolor and mixed media. “Besides art, a bond from music is strong in our family. We raised our sons to appreciate a variety of genres and we're proud that both of them are creative musicians.”

She says is thrilled to have now connected with the LCAL. “There are so many talented people with whom I am eager to make their acquaintance. I'm happy to offer my services to the league newsletter, and am pleased to see that there are opportunities to exhibit work. Being around other artists and showing my artwork helps to keep me productive and vital.”



There is No Adler Invitation Show This February

For six years Adler's curator annually reviewed our Fall Membership Show on the walls of the Jack Benny Center and invited five members to show a body of their work the following February. Selection had nothing to do with who won awards or any critique comments, and Adler did not repeat earlier invitations. Adler professionals promoted the event in mailed flyers and local newspapers, and also on their marquee on Milwaukee Ave. Reaching deep into our talent pool, Adler has given quality Libertyville exposure to about 25 of our members, and incidentally given early recognition to gifted new members. Now the absence of a February invitational show this year has been noticed.

Adler skipped our 2019 Fall Membership Show when they established an annual “exhibition series” of six events that will no longer be free to exhibitors. We are back on track now that the art league has agreed to a \$250 fee each year, and we will build each show around an interesting theme. Besides our normal opening reception, each of our artists will speak briefly to the theme at what Adler calls “Gallery Night.”

Adler says the fee will make the exhibition series close to being self-supporting, and believes that cleverly themed shows and the personal sharing at Gallery Night will improve publicity and attendance.

We are proposing to Adler that our themes over coming years will fall under our stated purpose to “create more interest in art in Lake County ... and to develop a higher appreciation of visual art.” We will showcase the artistic quest, creative processes and viewer involvement that lead to deeper artistic moments. The February 2020 exhibition will go right the point with a working title of “Where Fine Art Starts.” It will explain how five artists came to enter a particular artwork in the 2019 Fall Membership Show, and how their artistic journeys converged at that moment. It will be about sharing and mentoring, about how artists speak to viewers through art, and how the viewer's life experiences yield deeper meaning to the artist's work. Our members will tell a familiar story that should interest artists, want-to-be artists and both serious and casual viewers of art.

A Proposed JBC Fund Raiser is Still Possible

Last fall the Jack Benny Center has proposed a joint fund-raiser called “Personality Paints,” where about six Waukegan personalities get to paint their favorite Waukegan scene. The catch is that each personality is not an artist, although some may have that skill, and they would work with an artist from LCAL for instruction, guidance, and assistance. This will culminate in a gala event where each piece of artwork is auctioned off. The money raised would go to a new initiative to take free art instruction into areas of need, and the fundraiser would bring exposure for that and for both the Jack Benny Center and the Art League. The LCAL artists could be paid for their time, or the artists could volunteer their time on behalf of the LCAL and the money raised would be split between us.

The idea was first introduced to the membership at the November critique. While there has been no immediate interest, recent discussion showed that many members sensed, incorrectly, that “Personality Paints” implied portraiture. Now two of our members plan to demonstrate how the fund-raiser would work at our April general meeting. Pat King and Skip Wiese will help two Waukegan Park District volunteers *paint their favorite Waukegan scene*. The action will be narrated by Ty Rohrer, the park district’s manager of the Benny Center, and he will have previously painted his favorite Waukegan scene (the Carnegie library) with the help of Chris Tanner. We will watch as each of the WPD volunteers narrows his or her view into something that reflects personal feelings, develops that into a compelling composition, builds shapes and values, and finally works with color if meeting time permits.

At the conclusion of the April meeting there will open questions for Ty, Pat, Skip and even the park district volunteers. Then we will be a brief discussion on how to scale this up and whether the artists would be paid. We will conclude with a show of hands to confirm that the Art League would like to participate. Whatever the outcome, Pat and Skip are experienced teachers and we will all learn something.

We May Fill Presentations Director Position with Several Members

There are four Director’s positions that need to be filled. **Programs** have been ably handled by Susan Schneider, but that position will become vacant after this May. The 2008 recession made **Workshops** difficult to fill, and the position has been vacant for some time. Now there are at two members interesting in restarting workshops, but family health issues are complicating the restart.

Visual Recording and **Historian** positions are also vacant but may no longer be needed. Our Visual Recording Director records demonstrations and workshops, but popular video formats (cassettes, digital disks and now digital streaming) have changed quickly and become prohibitively difficult to staff, costly to equip and inconvenient for members to use. Our Historian archives art league events of interest in scrapbooks, but the flyers and newspaper clippings in our scrapbooks are of little value any more. Newspaper relationships have become very difficult to sustain without professional help, so now we mostly reach the community through e-mail, our web site and social media.

The clear priority is to find an immediate successor for Sue as Programs Director. Our Constitution and Bylaws leave that to the president, but after a quick six rejections Oliver has asked his directors for help. A new strategy, borne of our study of Membership Form comments, is to try a **Presentations Committee** approach. A small group of members who are well-networked in the visual arts could annually find and commit an interesting variety of seven presenters and two membership show critique artists (we have no meetings in July, August or December) without severely burdening anyone.

Spring Membership Show Check-In April 6

It’s time to start thinking about our annual Spring Membership Show at the Jack Benny Center. Consider which piece you have sculpted, painted, drawn or photographed in the past three years that you might want to display and have critiqued. Better yet, use this as a chance to show us a new approach or a new vision to hear what your fellow artists have to say. You have eight weeks to finish your latest and best work.

Refreshment sign-up

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|-------------------|------------------|
| February | April |
| Debbie Kalinowski | Fran Isaac |
| Mary Neely | May |
| Roger Shule | Jack Littlefield |
| March | Val Brandner |
| Carol Kapheim | Jennifer Lee |
| Norine Fendrych | |