

HUMOR IS AN ART IN ITSELF

by Marie Coady

It promised to be a beautiful day, but the sun still competed with one stubborn, gray cloud that lingered overhead. Slowly it gave way and the sun cast its golden glow on a New England coastal scene that flatlanders would die for.

As the members of the Woburn Guild of Artists stood atop a craggy cliff overlooking the tidal flats of Little Neck in Ipswich, each had set their sights on the horizon to either the sandy beaches of Plum Island's bird sanctuary or the green plume of trees and brush that blocked the view of Crane's Beach but left some fine dunes dipping to the sea.

Jim Inashima chose these dunes and the splash of green that met the sky as his canvas. He stood along the rail fence that kept him from tumbling into the sea and deftly washed his sketch pad with the bright hues of his watercolor creation. "I haven't done this in years," he said, "but today I thought I'd try to combine the sumi, oriental style watercolor technique with the western style." What resulted were vivid, bold strokes that outlined the sun washed beach and made the drab green tree line glow with color.

While Jim created his watercolor, Leo Lambert modestly protested his fame as the Woburn woodcarver, who due to recent publicity is known, as he puts it, "...all the way to the end of my driveway and hoping for the end of the street by next year." Leo was working on a 36" by 22" carving of a place along the famed Oregon Trail called McIntire's Tavern where wagon trains stopped to refresh themselves. Although not yet complete, it was alive with the action of cargo laden wagons and men and women busily tending their teams of horses.

Pauline Widtfeldt chose to sit comfortably in a lawn chair and recreate the neck of Plum Island as it lay stranded from the cliff by a bay filled with boats bobbing in the sun. Pauline wisely chose only a few of the hundreds of boats moored there saying, "I have to pick out one or two boats or it will be a little busy, to say the least." But she did include the small bush and sloping crest of the cliff in the foreground to give her watercolor perspective.

Esther Corleto chose a shady spot to work her magic in oils, setting her sights on the tip of Plum Island and a tall masted sail boat that created a stepping stone for giants to leap across the bay. Her canvas was secured to an easel---at least she hoped it was after last year's fiasco when her easel gave way, tumbling onto Woburn's hockey coach, Frank Newark, who was creating his own masterpiece. Edith said Frank was very gracious and even repaired her easel, tying it with rope, but it was too late to rescue her painting. It had become smeared and dirty as it landed paint down in the grass. Now she was attempting to rescue it from the junk pile.

Marie Pappas was no fool, setting her easel on a huge open porch and availing herself of the cool breeze as the tide made its journey to shore. "I try to get most of it done in the first hour and a half, because I get tired. Also (as the day wears on) the colors change and your mind changes about the colors you chose. So, I lay it in as quickly as possible and then tighten it up later." Marie's painting worked up quickly while an unfortunate insect met its end in her still wet oils.

As the noon hour approached, and the sun blazed mercilessly on the cliffside artists, everyone began to gather on the huge porch of guild member, Lillian Eaton's summer home. Lillian graciously plays hostess to the guild each year for their artistic expedition. Lillian's daughter, Barbara Poore, who is this year's guild president, circulated among the group, keeping everyone entertained and the mood light. Truth is, it didn't take much to keep the mood light. This group doesn't take themselves too seriously. This was most evident at lunch as the members sat around a huge table, eating a box lunch and entertaining each other.

The Woburn Guild of Artists is always looking for new members. Join them in the Community Room at New Horizons on Warren Avenue, October 17th for a watercolor demonstration, but especially for a few laughs. Barbara, Lillian, Jim and Mary, Leo and Kay, Marie, Esther, Pauline and Ed know how to have fun and create masterpieces at the same time. With this group, the two are not mutually exclusive.

July 1996

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