



*Genesee Valley Plein Air Painters, Inc., a not-for-profit artist association, promotes and inspires quality plein air painting while providing socially pleasant painting opportunities for its membership throughout the year.*

## January 15, 2010 E-LETTER

### 5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WINTER SHOW

The Barnes & Nobel show opened amid rather dire winter weather, which not only limited attendance but involved Brande Arno and her mother in a 29 car pileup on the Thruway. Except for her car, Brande and her mother, driving her own car, emerged unscathed. Earlier, on receiving day for paintings, Jeff Swaluk was marooned somewhere West of Erie and was unable to submit his entries. Despite these weather related disappointments, the reception was festive. For those of you who have not seen the web page devoted to the exhibition, here is the link:

<http://www.gvpap.com/show2010.html>



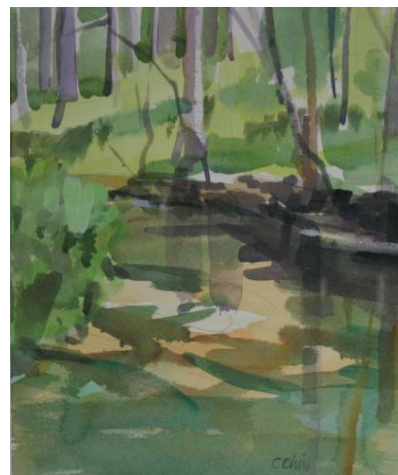
Kevin Feary      Jen Spaker      Bob Keim      Barbara Jablonski      Gil Jordan

Absent Award Winners: Don Grieger, Chris O’Handley, Cathy Chin

Many thanks to the show chair, Brande Arno, and the various committee heads: Phil Bliss, Hanging; Nina Rupp, Reception; Dave Huebsch, photography. I apologize for omitting other members’ names, as I do not have a list of participants. Even though you remain anonymous, be assured your efforts added up to another successful GVPAP winter show.

## MEMBER NEWS

**Cathy Chin**, newly installed Signature Members, is having a show at the Mill Gallery, 61 North Main Street, Honeoye Falls during January. She is showing recent plein air work in watercolor and gouache for the month of January. Gallery hours are: M, W, F, Sat 11-3, Thu 11-8. You can contact the gallery at <http://www.millartcenter.com> or 585-624-7740.



**Bob Keim** is included in a group show by Manhattan Group Art at the Little Theater Cafe, 240 East Avenue from January 9 to February 6, 2010. The Manhattan Group was founded 65 years ago by local artists and acquired its name from lively meetings over lunch at the now sadly defunct Manhattan Restaurant. Other artists' work in the current show are Ed Balcer, Dick Burandt, Warren Aldoretta, Don Franklin, Bill Haywood, Dick Kane, Dick Kalkman, Lou Lanzi, Victor Mastrandea, Bill Smith, and Ron Summers.

**Judy Soprano** is leading a painting tour in the Lake District in England beginning May 15, 2010. The host Inn is located in Bowness-on-Windermere and artists will go to memorable locations each day for painting and sketching, then explore Cumberland fare in cozy pubs and cafes. There will be lots of activities for the non-painter, too. Check out the website for a complete description of this tour. <http://www.creativeartsholidays.com>



**Chris O'Handley, Nina Rupp and Kevin Feary** braved the elements recently while celebrating the winter solstice at Braddocks Bay. That only three painters showed up for this occasion speaks sufficiently about the temperature and wind factors that day. From Nina's photo you have to admire their dedication.

**Chris** wants to know if any member is interested in acquiring his unused Guerilla Paintbox. He doesn't like the layout of the box, although they are popular with other painters. If you are in the market for one, e-mail Chris at [cohandle@rochester.rr.com](mailto:cohandle@rochester.rr.com)

**Laura Birmingham.** Barbara Jablonski has just been informed that Laura, “gvpap member, superb artist, and lovely person,” has died.

**Hiroko Battey** has completed a monster mural at her apartment complex. Its size would be comparable to around 200 paintings for a quarter century of GVPAP exhibitions. What a challenge.



**Steve BonDurant** deserves our appreciation for engineering a marked reduction in the file size of these newsletters. In the past, those of you with dial up could read a novel in the time it would take to receive these pages. Now, with an 80% reduction, you will notice a much shorter download for the news of the month.

**Phil Bliss** conducted a one day workshop on plein air painting on Jan 15 at the RepARTEE Arts Cent4r in Penfield.

## Strategic Opportunity Stipends

The Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, in partnership with the New York Foundation for the Arts, has funds available to award artists for work occurring between March and June 2010 that will significantly enhance their careers. Visual, literary, media and performing artists may request support ranging from \$100 to \$600 for specific forthcoming opportunities. For more information about the grants and filling out the application, call the Council at **(585) 473-4000, ext. 206**. The deadline for the next round of SOS grants is Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>.

**In a return visit to the Group of Seven, Don Grieger examines the mystifying case of Tom Thomson. In this age of polls, you can establish your authority as an historian by weighing in on this curious episode. (GJ)**

## **THE DEATH OF TOM THOMSON – ACCIDENT OR.....???**

As previously noted, Tom Thomson has the unique distinction of being the only member of the Group of Seven who was dead when the group was formed. Thomson died in 1917 in what remains to this day, something of a mystery. Though we know him for his painting and consider him a great artist, Tom was an accomplished outdoorsman, fisherman, expert canoeist and licensed Algonquin Park guide.

It was about noon on July 8th. The day was cool and drizzly. Somewhere in the distance a dog was barking. Thomson paddled off to fish one of the many interconnected lakes from Canoe Lake. He disappeared from view as he rounded the Wapomeo Islands and was never seen alive again – as far as was ever reported. His canoe was spotted later that afternoon by Martin Blecher. Thomson was found on July 16th. The official cause of death was listed as “accidental drowning”, though it was noted that he had sustained a four inch gash on his right temple and that his right ear had bled. The lower part of one leg was wrapped in fishing line. Decomposition had begun.

Thomson’s body was found about 9:00 AM on July 16th by guide George Rowe who reported the find to Park Superintendent Bartlet. Rowe and fellow guide Lowrie Dixon moved the body to the lake shore. Later that day Martin Blecher and Hugh Trainor covered the body with a blanket. The next day, Dr. Ranney, coroner from North Bay and Dr. Howard of Toronto arrived, performed a brief examination and ordered the body to be embalmed, placed in a casket and advised burial at the Canoe Lake cemetery. Later, at the request of the Thomson family, the body was moved to the family plot at Leith.

Crime scene investigation in Algonquin Park in 1917 was primitive at best. I submit the following facts so that GVPAP members may perform their own Cold Case investigation. Please report your opinion; accident, murder or other, by email to [gfordan@frontiernet.net](mailto:gfordan@frontiernet.net). He will summarize the results in the next newsletter.

1. How does a licensed guide, expert canoeist and strong swimmer drown on a canoe trip?
2. The majority of wilderness canoe drowning victims are found with an open fly. Evidence of a failed attempt to stand and relieve themselves. Tom’s was closed.
3. What caused the 4 inch head gash and bleeding from the ear?
4. Tom’s canoe paddle was never found. Was a murder weapon hidden? Canoe paddles float.
5. Tom and Martin Blecher were considered rivals for the affections of Winifred (Winnie) Trainor. Why not report or investigate the overturned canoe he saw?
6. Tom and Shannon Fraser, owner of Mowat Lodge, were said to have argued over money owed Tom, who frequently stayed at Mowat Lodge. Thomson loaned Fraser \$250 for the purchase of two canoes. Repayment had been in small amounts – and slow.
7. Could the fishing line found neatly wrapped around Tom’s ankle have been support for a sprain as thought? Or had a weight been attached?

You may find the article “The Search For Tom Thomson” by Peter Webb of interest. It can be found at [www.bushwacker.ca/thomson](http://www.bushwacker.ca/thomson) If Tom Thomson had been an ordinary mortal, no doubt he would have been long forgotten. However, as a Plein Air Painter, envied by men, desired by women, the mystery lives on.

Information for this article was taken from:

“Tom Thomson, The Silence and the Storm” by Town and Silcox

“Tom Thomson, The Algonquin Years” by Addison

“The Best of Tom Thomson” by Murray

## Painting Titles

Before our show opened, there was a conversation about titles for art work. It came about because some of you submitted titles impossible to fit on the limited space of a title card, something like J. M. W. Turner's extravagant title: "*The Fighting Temeraire, tugged to her last berth to be broken up, 1838.*" The engraver who got the commission to provide the plate for Turner's painting was probably overjoyed with the order. Aside from the practical need for shorter titles in our shows, the entire subject of inventing titles for our work is problematic. I once knew a painter who created about one thousand watercolors each year - not conventional paintings but endless series of experiments in colors and shapes. His solution was simply to number them: "1980 No. 570" Composers do more or less the same thing with opus numbers, leaving other people to supply further identification like "The Eroica Symphony," "The Unfinished Symphony," or "The Archduke Trio." Aside from bare bones titles, there are purely descriptive titles ("Red Barn") or punning titles ("Pier Pressure") or mystery titles when the viewer is left to figure out a possible connection with the visual work. In 2006 Robert Genn ruminated about this whole subject, soliciting titles from his readers for a dramatic painting of Indian totem poles in a Canadian winter. The submissions illustrated how varied titles can be and how any work can be pegged with an indifferent, prosaic, or poetic title. How important is a title? Does it change the viewer's experience or persuade him to purchase a work of art? If the latter were the case, I imagine all of us would spend more time being as creative with words as we are with images. If you have further interest in this subject, you can use the link below to read Genn's and his readers' remarks:

<http://www.painterskeys.com/clickbacks/painting-title.asp> - top

Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable.

George Bernard Shaw