



*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.*

## March 1, 2007 E-LETTER

### MEMBER NEWS:

**Stu Chait's** painting "Autumn Fern I" was highlighted in Steve Carpenter's invitation for the upcoming Winter Class Emerging Artists show. In his spare time, artist Stu is architect. He was honored with the prestigious AIA Rochester Medal of Distinction. Also, Stu has been selected by Steve Carpenter as the architect for Carpenter's new studio in Rochester's Neighborhood of the Arts.

PAP **Kevin Feary** also has been selected as the drywall and painting contractor for Steve Carpenter's new studio.

**Barbara Muratore** and **Sally Moses** are taking art classes together down in Florida. Additionally Barbara is studying with Taylor Ikin; learning about working watercolor on YUPO. Barbara won an award at the Florida art center.

### GVPAP JURY FOR SIGNATURE MEMBERSHIP – coming in May

Associate Artists are invited to apply for Signature Artists level by submitting plein air paintings to the GVPAP Jury Panel for judging. The jury will be in May. The dates, times and place will be listed in the Jury Panel Prospectus which will be issued shortly.

Some of the Specifications for the Jury Panel include:

- ☼ Associate Artists may submit four plein air paintings created within the past two years for consideration to become Signature Artists.
- ☼ These four paintings must fulfill the definition of "plein air painting" which states that a minimum of 85% of painting must be done "en plein air" (in open air, outside; natural light, on site of subject).
- ☼ Only paintings that have not been reviewed by previous GVPAP Jury Panels may be submitted.
- ☼ All "painting" mediums are accepted. However, for the purpose of this jury process submit paintings in one medium only.
- ☼ Paintings must be the artist's original work and may not be produced in any instructional class or workshop.
- ☼ There is no maximum size or minimum size requirement nor is there a "subject theme" requirement for your plein air paintings.

### FEATURE PLEIN AIR ARTIST FOR MARCH

#### **CHAUNCY RIDER by GVPAP Signature Artist Don Grieger**

In 1926 Batavia painter Roy Mason, N. A. (1886-1972) took his paintings to New Hampshire for criticism by and to meet with a man whose work he had long admired Chauncey Ryder, N.A. (1868-1949). Over the years the two became close friends and Ryder was a frequent visitor to Batavia and Roy's home, "Woodchuck Hollow."

Ryder's influence on Roy's work is easily seen. The following information is from "Chauncey Foster Ryder, Peace and Plenty" by Ronald G. Pisano, *American Craft & Antiques*, Sept.-Oct. 1978.

Chauncey Ryder's career began with evening classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. At that time, all wannabe painters *knew* it was necessary to live and study in France, so in 1901, Chauncey and his young bride moved. To supplement his income, Ryder was forced to take students. He disliked teaching, believing that he painted by intuition, and that intuition couldn't be taught. He later explained, "Now I *would* teach if I *could*. In the first place, I don't know, after I have painted a picture, *how* I did it. If I don't know myself, how could I teach others?" After eight years in France, Chauncey Ryder never taught again.

In 1909 Ryder returned to the US and established a studio on 57<sup>th</sup> St. in New York City. Art dealer William Macbeth offered to act as Ryder's exclusive agent and Chauncey agreed. The relationship lasted throughout Ryder's career and allowed him to paint without the distraction of business. He had little interest in self promotion and gave Macbeth complete control to choose paintings and frames for exhibitions, even changing titles if he thought appropriate. During a trip to Monhegan Ryder sold five paintings and wrote to Macbeth to tell him that he was temporarily retaining the dealer commission. He explained, "I am likely to be needy having bought me a little house and 3 acres in Wilton, NH which took all the money I had in my trouser pocket." The following month Mrs. Ryder wrote a description of the property to Macbeth. "A hen coop and a barn...a fine barn for a studio, and I am to live in the hen coop." This modest retreat served as the artist's summer home and studio for the rest of his life. He painted there from April to November and returned to the city for the winter.

His distinctive style of painting became very popular. One critic explained: "Mr. Ryder has sensed the right proportion between the real and the unreal, between detail and vagueness." Another noted: "Chauncey Ryder evolved a style many years ago and has consciously continued within its limits." It was even said that he developed a special color, "Ryder green" and that it was, in part, responsible for the pleasing quality and unique character of his work. Ryder said his greens only seemed different because of the way in which he related them to other colors. Emile Gruppe once commented: "I can't drive along a road up here (Vermont) without thinking of Chauncey Ryder: You know those trees of his sticking up in front of a mountain. My students like his work. They made me ask him how he got his trees to look so natural. 'It's easy,' he told me. 'God saw me painting a tree one day and has been making them on my model ever since.' "

The 1978 article ended as follows: Now that the impact of abstraction has died down, and both abstract art and figurative art can be accepted for what they have to offer, we can once again turn to the work of Chauncey Ryder and appreciate his unpretentious landscapes. Simple expression of one man's joy for living – his art.

## Plein Air Perils by Columnist and Signature Artist Gil Jordan

In this, the second of a series of short narratives detailing strange encounters while painting outdoors, I repeat my invitation to members of GVPAP. At the post exhibition dinner, many of you spontaneously offered impressions of the satisfaction, joy, difficulties, and wonder of *plein air* painting. Those stories deserve a wider audience, so dig into other veins of the creative well and send your offerings to me at [gfjordan@frontiernet.net](mailto:gfordan@frontiernet.net).

Last month, I wrote about an Annie Oakley type who initially thought she was confronting hunters, not painters. A similar confusion occurred when three of the All-Weather Gang were painting on farmland situated above Conesus Lake. Although absorbed in capturing the scene, I became vaguely aware of the sound of a tractor. As the noise grew louder I observed a farmer on his way up the hill toward our location, then returned to the intricacies of my painting. Before another minute went by, I looked up into the steely eyes of the tractor driver, headed straight for me with his forked bucket extended and apparently without the slightest inclination to change his course or speed. A one-inch flat brush is a poor defense against an angry man, so I tried a wan smile. Ominously, it was not reciprocated. Despite the fact that three of us were standing by our French easels, we were apparently mistaken for surveyors who had previously angered the farmer when, unannounced, they charted the path of a new gas line over his land. It must have disappointed him to find that he was not dealing yet again with those unwelcome intruders (who also use three legged equipment but, contrary to his thinking, generally do not take the trouble to load it with paints in order to disguise their profession). Satisfied, finally, that we were mere lunatics, he returned to his house, no doubt girding his loins for a future encounter with the real enemy.

## The Ashcan School

Imagine an art critic helping to give recognition to a painting movement based completely upon the artists' choices of subject matter. That is what happened in the early twentieth century when a revolutionary group of realist painters chose as their material the everyday life of New York. The painters took the ordinary elements of alleys, tenements and slum dwellers and filled canvases with their simplicity and reality. A critic disliked the material so much that he dubbed the work of these eight artists the "Ashcan School."

Artists included in the Ashcan School were Arthur B. Davies, Robert Henri, George Luks, William Glackens, John Sloan, Everett Shinn, Maurice Prendergast and Ernest Lawson (known as The Eight). Others considered in the Ashcan School include Alfred Maurer, George Wesley Bellows, Edward Hopper and Guy Pene Du Bois. This group was very diverse in style and technique, but their focus on urban scenes—particularly those exposing the shabbier aspects of city life—drew them together. Their rebellion against academic art led several of this group to play key roles in organizing the Armory show in 1913. This was an iconoclastic exhibit which led to the founding of the Society of Independent Artists (1917).

Conservative in style, the Ashcan paintings were revolutionary in content. Gone were the stoic portraiture that had before been accepted by both critics and the public. Also absent were the landscape paintings of the nineteenth century. The Ashcan artists focused on a totally urban vitality. Their intention was not to flaunt the depictions, but to bring an awareness and reality to painting. Having begun their painting careers as newspaper illustrators, four of the painters' works displayed their earthy, basic images as if using images to tell stories. These works captured spontaneous moments in everyday life and included such titles as *The Wrestlers*, *The Shoppers*, and *The Hairdressers' Window*. Gritty and new, this group was also known as the New York Realists and was called by other critics "the apostles of ugliness."

Robert Henri was an influential teacher who admired the unpretentious realism of artists. He helped influence his colleagues and is given credit for the formation of the realists' Ashcan group.

Although the movement ended soon after it was named, it did influence painting in America. In the 1920's and 1930's, following the decade of great change in America, scene painting often showed less than idealistic subject matter. Just as the Ashcan School had done, these painters of everyday life met with criticism and were thought rebels because they shied away from the more acceptable images popular at the time.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE: SPRING IS COMING

March is the most glorious painting month of the year. We can paint the colorful snow yet we may enjoy the warmth of Spring days. But, don't shed those layers of clothing too quickly. It may still get very chilly quickly; especially when an unexpected shower of rain or show passes by.

Next E-Letter Deadline March 25<sup>th</sup> Send your news and stories to [info@gvpap.com](mailto:info@gvpap.com); *Plein Air Perils* to [gfjordan@frontiernet.net](mailto:gfordan@frontiernet.net)

See the new information on the website: [WWW.GVPAP.COM](http://WWW.GVPAP.COM)