

GENESEE VALLEY



PLEIN AIR PAINTERS

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.

November 13, 2009 E-LETTER

Congratulations to three members recently juried into Signature Membership of GVPAP:

Cathy Chin
Kevin Feary
Jeff Swaluk

FALL PAINTOUT IN THE FINGER LAKES

According to reports from some of the intrepid *plein air* painters who ventured into the Finger Lakes for a three days celebration, the scenery was spectacular, the *bonhomie* as good as it gets, and the weather two months past the calendar date. In other words, it was cold – very cold – and rainy at times. Yet, creative people make adjustments, such as substituting lessons in watercolor painting (**Cathy Chin**) and exercises in value painting (**Phyllis Brice Ely**), sessions that won wide praise from other participants. So far, there has been no accounting of the wine consumed, but considering the temperatures any number of bottles would be justified. Many thanks to Corinne Avery and Carol Kase for organizing this memorable paintout. At the moment, both are toiling to arrange a similar experience (with better weather) next year in the Adirondacks.



Keuka Lake

Photo by Corinne



Seeking Shelter

Photo by Corinne



Phyllis teaching values

Photo by Corinne



Margaret Piscitello Photo by Nina Rupp



Barbara J. loaded for bear



Corinne's pastel in progress

Photo by Corinne

In a continuing series of articles related to the colorful history of art, Don Grieger takes a look at one of the most famous associations of painters.

ABOUT THE GROUP OF SEVEN

Don Grieger

Most GVPAP members are probably familiar with the plein air work of the Canadian painters known as "The Group of Seven". Among the more popular trivia questions such as, who is buried in Grant's Tomb, is the question, how many artists were in the Group of Seven? The answer is – eleven. Lawren Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, A.Y. Jackson, Franklin Carmichael, Frank Johnston, F.H. Varley and Tom Thompson are the original members of the group. A.J. Casson, Edwin Holgate and L.L. FitzGerald were

added after the group name had been selected. Notice that there were eight original members. It was decided to only count seven in the group name because Tom Thompson happened to be dead when the group was formed. I believe it is somewhat unusual for art groups to admit dead people to full membership. (If the GVPAP should decide to adopt this policy I would like to nominate my friend and mentor Carl W. Peters for Signature Membership, though dues collection could be a problem.)

Lawren Harris best expressed the beginnings of the group in his 1964 essay titled, "The Story of the Group of Seven". "I look upon the Group of Seven as a movement in art in Canada, and not in any sense as an organization. I first met MacDonald at an exhibition of his sketches more than 50 years ago. These sketches contained something new in Canada, an indefinable spirit which seemed to express the country more clearly than any painting I had yet seen. Here it seemed to me, was the beginning of what I myself felt; what I was groping toward – Canada painted in her own spirit."

Harris and MacDonald later attended an exhibition of Scandinavian painters at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo. According to Harris, "This turned out to be one of the most stimulating and rewarding experiences either of us had had. Here were paintings of Northern lands created in the spirit of those lands. Our purpose became clarified, and our conviction reinforced."

The Group's first exhibit was in May, 1920. Many felt the Group existed, without the name, ten years earlier. All believed Tom Thompson, who died in 1917, was a leader of the movement more than anyone. In particular Thompson's work in 1912 of the Mississauga country north of Georgian Bay, and his way of painting, provided a *modus operandi* for the Group. The Group's name probably came from Lismer. He mentioned it to Harris one night before he wrote it on one of his drawings. Lismer knew of "The Eight" or "Ashcan School" having recently worked in Halifax, home of Ernest Lawson, one of "The Eight". When painter Emily Carr met Lismer, shortly after meeting Varley and Jackson, she wrote in her journal; "I wonder if these men feel, as I do, that there is a common chord struck between us. No," she replied to herself, "I don't believe they feel so towards a woman."

The Group's last exhibit was in December 1931. It should be noted that, though an original member, Johnston only participated in the first exhibit.

In 1933 the Group expanded to 28 members, including (gulp) – WOMEN!

Of course the name was changed to The Canadian Group of Painters. The Group continued to grow, including many of Canada's best known artists, and exhibited from the 1930's to the 1960's. The Group was disbanded in 1969.

The information in this article was taken primarily from the book "The Best of the Group of Seven" by Joan Murray. I can highly recommend a visit to the McMichael Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto to see the work of the Group of Seven.

More to come on Tom Thompson and the Group in the future.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES

RepARTEE: A New Art Gallery

Brenda Lyness reports that Ray, Erika, and Kristina Hutch have opened a gallery located in the Penfield Arts Center, the former Penfield library now adapted to studios, a frame shop, one main and several smaller galleries. Fifty artists participated in the opening on October 17th, including five members belonging to GVPAP:

Phil Bliss, Phyllis Bryce Ely, Robert Keim, Kathleen Hess, and Brenda Lyness.

1570 Gallery at Valley Manor

Although it is too late to attend the opening, remember that the current show – “Brush with Art – Go Figure” features **Kathy Bolin, Barbara Doyle, Marilyn Feinberg, and Rona Poss.** Their figure studies will be on display until December 31st. The address is 1570 East Avenue, Rochester.

Barnes & Noble, Monroe Avenue

The current RAC exhibition in Pittsford is open until November 28th. Participating members from GVPAP are **Don Grieger, Barbara Jablonski, Kevin Feary, Bob Keim, and Phil Bliss.**

Scottsville Demos

Many thanks to Carolyn Parker who organized an all day paintout and meals in Scottsville on October 14th. **Phil Bliss** and **Gil Jordan** demonstrated in oil and watercolor, then circulated among 18 other artists to offer suggestions as they worked in their chosen medium. The morning weather was little different than experienced by club painters at Keuka and Canandaigua Lakes – cold and drizzly. Fortunately, the afternoon was more accommodating. Thanks also to Brande Arno who provided breakfast.

Photographing Your Paintings

For any of you struggling to take accurate photographs of your paintings, here is a link to a two minute video sponsored by American Frame:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYTRYIIh-k0>

From the Robert Genn newsletter

Asked by a reader about the advisability of finding someone to keep an artist accountable, Robert Genn replied: “Regarding those who challenge and hold you accountable, only one friend is needed for this job. He must be a person with a lot of character. He is yourself. You may find him critical or cranky at times, but he means well. Leave your other friends to keep track of themselves. They're probably too self-occupied to worry about you, anyway.”