



Banner artists revealed inside

## *The President's Message*

I'm writing this on Sunday morning the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. I've cleaned, organized, washed, sanitized and I've tried to do some art. Trying to keep my spirits high with the knowledge that this sheltering will be over soon and we will be back to our new "normal".

As expected, our May meeting has been canceled along with the hangings at the Galleria and the Annex; but we have great hopes that we will be able to meet in June to celebrate the young scholars who are the recipients of our scholarships for young artists majoring in art.

Several members have asked about the results of our recent survey about the structure of our future art shows. The Executive Board has reviewed the results and read all the written comments and determined that the best solution going forward is to have one, fine art only show in the Winter and a combined fine art and applied arts show in the Fall. For traffic control issues, we will have separate rooms for the fine art and applied art exhibits. Both shows will be juried. We thank you for your participation in this survey. Our members have spoken and we have listened.

Please stay safe and healthy. We will all come thru this with a better perspective, a better handle on our priorities, a better love for the beauty we share and especially a true appreciation and understanding of the goodness and kindness of mankind.

*Barb Justice, President*

**PS:** Please check your information posted in the new directory. If there is an error please email corrections to Janeen Whetstone, our membership chair, ASAP. She is making a page of corrections to be added to your directory. Thank you!

Check out the events Calendar on the last page



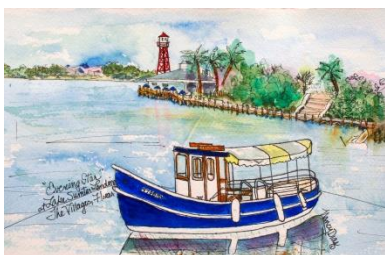
## Spotlight on You



### MEET NANCY DIAS



I have lived in The Villages since 2002 and almost immediately immersed myself in the workshops at Paradise and Saddlebrook taking a beginners class with Jan Ramsey in watercolor and was hooked. I joined the VAL and VAA and painted every day. In 2003 The Villages had a Buffalo Round-Up Contest to find art for their new schools. Pete Hawes encouraged me to enter and they picked my baby buffalo "Butterscotch Baby" to hang in the Elementary School. Since then The Villages selected me to paint a mural "Evening Star" at the Rohan Recreation Center and purchased another painting, "Magnolia Spray", to hang in the Fenney Recreation Center.



I became very involved volunteering with both art groups. I chaired the VAL Artist Showcase from 2006 to 2012 and again in 2014. In 2006 the Summer Art Festival at Lake Miona was added which I chaired as well. At one point I was Vice President of the VAA, ran a boutique tent at Artists Round The Square and The Annex Show.



Chairing two shows a year with VAL along with my duties to the VAA was effecting how much time I devoted to painting. In 2014 I became President of the VAL and loved doing that. During this time there was a goal of mine that I kept pushing to the back burner. Finally when the VAL became an art group that involved all forms of art and not just painting I decided this was my time to remember my goal and devote myself to becoming the best watercolor artist I could be. In pursuit of that goal I started to join other watercolor groups around the state and became involved with their organizations and challenged myself to compete with some of the most talented watercolor artists in the state.

I already belonged to the Florida Watercolor Society and was working on becoming a Signature Member which includes being juried into three annual exhibitions. In 2016 and then again in 2018 I was accepted with abstract paintings "Exploration" and "Short Circuit" in FWS giving me two of the three points I needed, one to go. I have always challenged myself with painting something difficult and out of the ordinary. I have learned from many good teachers. Finding out if my art would be accepted was very challenging for me. Winning a few awards along the way is like frosting on a cake. I like corners by the way.



Exploration



Short circuit

Back in Rhode Island I never envisioned where I would be today, I just knew I liked art and wanted to take some classes... someday. Pushing myself out of my comfort zone has led me to a fulfilling life as an artist. 2019 was a momentous year with many accomplishments; being accepted in Acrylic Painters USA, Tallahassee Tri-State, Central Florida, Georgia, and Florida Watercolor Societies with awards in 3 of them. Along with that came a First Place in Abstract/ Impressionism with The Artist Magazine in the January 2020 issue for "Short Circuit". Seeing your painting in a full page magazine article was indescribable.

2020 has seen acceptance of "Endeavor" into Louisiana International Watercolor Society, artists from France, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Canada, Greece, and throughout the U.S. was my competition. The reception and awards are in May in New Orleans. Along with that, Southern Watercolor Society comprised of 18 states has juried in "Tilting at Windmills" and the artist reception and awards are in May in Nashville. The list of accepted artists humbles me. My husband Wally says that he loves to watch me at the receptions talking to the artists and looking at the wonderful art.



Endeavor

It has been my good fortune to be accepted in a world that gives me and Wally so much joy; we travel to the receptions and meet artists from all over the country. I have a website where you can see what I've been up to in the News tab at the top and my newest paintings along with some of my favorites. I invite you take a look.

[www.nancydias.com](http://www.nancydias.com)



Tilting at Windmills

On my painting easel is this phrase that describes my journey :

"If you want something you never had...  
You have to do something you have never done"

-Thomas Jefferson





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## Conversations

With Martha Ayotte



Send your topic suggestions for  
Conversations to Martha at  
[mayotte22@aol.com](mailto:mayotte22@aol.com)

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## Quarantine Art Activities

We all want to stay safe during this pandemic. Maybe we can't go to classes, but why not take this opportunity to advance our talent in other ways.

Do you have your own website? If not, this is a good time to create one. Then, when someone asks to see your artwork, you can give them your website address, or even better yet, hand them your business card. Myself, I have a website created by Wix, which is the most popular website builder, and fairly easy to learn. Wix is free unless you want to create your own domain name. Other popular website builders are GoDaddy, if you want a no-frills website, or Weebly, which is one of the easiest to learn.

Did you know you can still visit a museum online, without the crowd? Most art museums have virtual tours where you can actually stroll through the museum and view artwork through your computer. This may give you inspiration for a painting. If you are teaching a class, you can give your students (or grandchildren) an assignment to find a certain painting or artist in a certain museum.

Now is a good time to sort your photos. Most artists have many reference photos. We never seem to have the time to sort these photos and put them in individual files. Doing this will save you a lot of time in the future when you're looking for a certain subject! Don't have many photos? Grab your camera and go out there and take some pictures. This is a good time to take pictures of landscapes or architecture with no people around. Learn a new art technique or media. YouTube has thousands of free videos on just about any subject. Universities also have some free art courses: California Institute of the Arts has a free course on Graphics design. Michigan State has a free course on Photography. University of Central Florida has a free course on the Psychology of Art and Creativity. Harvard has a free course on Egyptian art. Some other excellent learning sites where you may have to pay a small fee are: Lynda.com, skillshare.com, and Bluprint.com.



There is an excellent app called Zoom that is very popular during this time of social distancing. Before the epidemic came along, did you paint with other artists or run a class? Zoom is an internet video conferencing tool where you can host calls with other artists. Users can open chat rooms and can have up to 500 attendees all sharing the feed from their webcams, thus giving the illusion of a typical meeting. You could even start up a neighborhood art class using Zoom.

Do you have any old or bad artwork you just can't throw away? Here are some suggestions: Use the painting for the base to create a collage. Cut up the artwork and make bookmarks or greeting cards, and just add a nifty or catchy phrase. If there is some part of the painting you like, crop the painting and mat it.

Another use for old or bad art is to download a photo program like Fotosketcher. It has lots of filters to change your art into interesting digital masterpieces! Fotosketcher is free and very easy to use. Upload your artwork and make some useful gifts for friends and relatives. I have used Fineartamerica, where you can print your art on phone cases, totes, mugs, pillows, towels, yoga mats and more. Do you know you can create your own masks on Fineartamerica using your own art? What a wonderful gift this would be! Check it out.

I hope you find some enjoyable artistic activities to do during this quarantine, and please, stay safe!

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## *Scholarship News*

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### **Updates on the VAA Class of 2020. We have Good News!**

**Four seniors from our local high schools have been selected as winners of our 2020 VAA Art Scholarships.**

It has been an adjusted and different selection process this year due to the challenges of our national and Villages shut down situation. However, our local students have risen to the challenge of finishing high school academic classes and AP Art Portfolios at home. They do not know at this time if they will have graduation ceremonies and activities, and some are still deciding on colleges they cannot visit. The Scholarship Comm. will aid them in any way that we can to support their final selections, and make calls concerning their financial needs.



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**Our Scholarships will (hopefully) be awarded at our final VAA meeting of the year in June. At that time we will have our catered lunch & party, and you will get to meet our young artists in person.**

We will all look forward to getting out, catching up and honoring members of our next generation of FL artists.

IN THE GOOD NEWS DEPT..... The (previously scheduled) Spring **Art Film Series** is ready for a restart as soon as the Entertainment Dept. is up and running again. Additional showings of "Leonardo" and other announced films from Museums & Exhibits around world are coming and are exceptional. They surely give us something special to look forward to. Travel and touring will very different for all of us in 2020. Museums will open slowly and schedules will change. So..... look for our updates, and enjoy world class artists and shows right here in The Villages!

We continue to live in unexpected and uncharted times. May that can-do spirit, that makes us all artists, keep us inspired and working every day! We hope you and your families are well..... and that **Creativity is our "cure" for the mind and the soul.**

Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

*Helen Poor and The VAA Scholarship Team*

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## *Events & Opportunities*

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### **Village Art Center and Workshops**

*Wanda Boyd and Bev Hennessey*

News from Village Art Center!

If you haven't been getting "Motivational Monday" from Bev Hennessey, you are missing out on a great way to start your week. Bev has done a fantastic job of curating inspirational stories, emails, articles and other uplifting tidbits to keep us all connected during this time. Email Bev at [bbaug97@aol.com](mailto:bbaug97@aol.com) and she'll make sure you get your own copy, delivered right into your inbox.

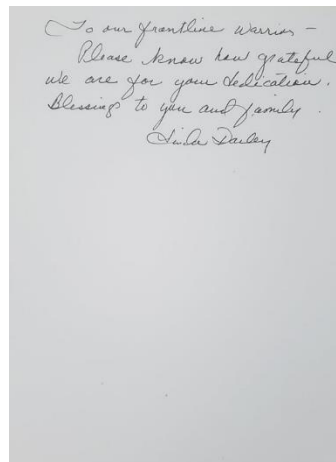
In addition to the newsletter, we've started a creative outlet that also gives back to the community -- cards for first responders and patients dealing with the virus. We have artists making cards for both groups, and could even expand it to include those essential employees that are so often overlooked. If you are interested, visit our website, <http://www.villageartworkshops.com>, and look for the "Art Cards for First Responders" link on our homepage to get all the details. We've had a terrific turnout and I'm loving looking at all the beautiful cards people are making.



Here is a card  
Janeen Whetstone  
made



Linda Dailey has  
taken it a step  
further, and is  
matting smaller  
paintings and  
putting a thank  
you note on the  
backboard



Aren't these terrific?

We also have some great plans for Village Art Center when we re-open. Cindy Vener will be teaching a series of one-day acrylic workshops, and Kathy Mantel is teaching a series of one-day batik workshops. These workshops will be from 9 am to 3 pm with an hour for lunch, but the dates are yet to be determined, so keep looking at our website and we'll put the dates on there as soon as we get the green light.

I'm also teaching an "Ultimate Beginner" watercolor class geared towards people who aren't sure which end of the paintbrush to use (both ends, actually, which you'll learn in the class), and again, these classes will start as soon as we get the go ahead to reopen the center.

And last but certainly not least, we are working on another terrific season bringing in the best nationally known artists to lead workshops in watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil, batik, collage and more. We've got some old friends coming back, and some new artists that are going to blow your socks off. I'm very excited about our season and look forward to seeing you all back at Village Art Center.

## Banner Artists Revealed

Painting #1	"Sea Grapes"	Marilyn Bachelor
Painting #2	"Kickin' Chickens"	Wanda Boyd
Painting #3	"Moon Flowers "	Cheri Ptacek



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## *Thoughts from Outside VAA*

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THE WATERWORKS

Ken Austin, NWS

© 2020/Ken Austin, NWS

### **Thoughts from the Lockdown**

Wow! This can't be happening to US! And just when we were all so happy to be together! Well, on second thought, making light of a serious situation isn't necessarily an appropriate thing to do. It's like that old saw, "But other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?" We are all in this together and we can only hope we and those we love will survive.

Much of the country is at a standstill, waiting and hoping. Nonetheless, if you're healthy and active, you might be short of things to do – and you know what an idle mind is! So, how about pumping out a few super paintings between sewing those masks and wiping down the mail? "But," you say, "what is there to paint here in my house?" Well, look around you! There's a world of things to paint in your everyday existence!

How about a quick still life? They're always easy to set up, and they don't move while posing. You don't need boutique flowers, fancy gloves, and a cut glass pitcher on a rosewood table to make a nice painting. I've painted many a still life featuring an old Ball jar, an apple, some watercolor brushes, and whatever I could find that offered an interesting shape/color/size for my paper. Think about a single wildflower or blossom in a small glass vase, with the sun shining on and through it. And some those I've done are just fine!

Add some stuff for scale – maybe your keys, or a pipe, or a music box, or something personal and interesting. And think small! The beauty of this kind of exercise is that you can do a painting that's only the size of a piece of typing paper or less! It takes less time, less material, and angst, but... as always... there are some important things to remember!

- You don't need to paint every hair on that tomato stem
- You don't have to produce art of museum quality
- You don't need to use the smallest brushes in your fine collection of painting tools
- You don't have to ever, ever, ever show it to anyone
- You don't even need to copy the colors, shapes, or composition of the real thing

WHAT? Yep, it's true.

It's all up to you. You are creator and critic. You giveth, and therefore can taketh away.

Now, I don't mean to say you can't sit down and paint a portrait of someone else who's locked in with you, or paint anything any size you want. It's just that I don't paint portraits, or dogs or cars, etc. Therefore I'm only able to give you some small guidance here because, on some previous occasions of my being out of commission from the rest of the world, I realized that these small works were fun, challenging, and made great gifts – though not necessarily to other artists. (You know how they are! Everything has to be just so –so.)





But I've found there can be some real benefits in this time of nothingness, and some of these are:

- You can hone ways to express your talents as an individual
- You can be forced to look at the main subject—the feeling and content of the small work because it won't be worth spending exorbitant amounts of time on it.
- If it turns out good (or GREAT!) you can congratulate yourself for finding a new path to fame... PAINTING MINIATURES!
- You won't be glued to the TV, listening to all the news about stuff you can't do anything about and, finally,
- You'll feel better about this whole thing when someone calls and asks, "What are you DOING during all this downtime? " and you can answer –"Making something beautiful!"

And I'm pretty sure you can. And I'm pretty sure you will!



How long is this social distancing supposed to last? My husband keeps trying to come back in the house!





## Bulletin Board



PO Box 1655  
Lady Lake, FL 32158-1655  
[visualartsassociation.com](http://visualartsassociation.com)

### CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

**(PENDING LIFT OF RESTRICTIONS)**

**Friday, June 5, 1:00**

General Meeting

**NO MEETINGS JULY OR AUGUST  
(VAA goes dark)**

**Friday, September 4, 1:00**

General Meeting

**Friday, October 2, 1:00**

General Meeting

**Saturday, October 10** \*

Fall Show, Rohan  
*Fine and Applied Art*

**Sunday, November 1** \*

ARTS at Brownwood Paddock Square

**Friday, November 6, 1:00**

General Meeting

**Friday, December 4, 1:00**

General Meeting

**Sunday, January 10, 2021** \*

ARTS at Spanish Springs

**Saturday, February 8, 2021** \*

Winter Show  
*Fine Art Only*

\* indicates show or exhibit activity

### VAA Executive Board

President	Barb Justice	<a href="mailto:grannieb43@gmail.com">grannieb43@gmail.com</a>
Vice Pres	Catherine Sullivan	<a href="mailto:cnjsullivan@aol.com">cnjsullivan@aol.com</a>
Secretary	Marilyn Wright	<a href="mailto:marilynwr555@comcast.net">marilynwr555@comcast.net</a>
Treasurer	Billie Edwards	<a href="mailto:billieedwards@gmail.com">billieedwards@gmail.com</a>

### Past Presidents

Lee Asta  
Marge McQueston  
Frank Zampardi  
Nan Kohr

### Appointed Board Members

Helen Poor  
Bobbi Ruben  
Sally LaBaugh  
Janeen Whetstone  
Cheri Ptacek

### Newsletter Staff

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**Helen Poor, Scholarship**  
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**Betty Eich, Photo Focus**  
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**Darlene Hayes,**  
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**Martha Ayotte, Conversations**  
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**Cheri Ptacek, Editor**  
[ptace002@umn.edu](mailto:ptace002@umn.edu)

**No Meeting is scheduled in May.**

We will keep you informed as soon as we are able to meet again.

Meanwhile, stay safe

And **keep creating!**