



**November - December  
2024  
Newsletter**

Shenandoah Valley Watercolor Society  
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## Recovery & Resurgence

Three years ago, after COVID, our SVWS membership had drastically dwindled. We were desperate for people to fill the officer, or any, positions, yet a wave of inspiration and energy moved through our meetings and renewed friendships. We became more visible on social media and worked hard to have meaningful programs. As new members joined, they brought friends, sparking new life. Our meetings were hives of conversation and activity where paintings were critiqued and successes celebrated.

As this year draws to a close, it's a good time to look back at 2023 and 2024. Two accomplished artists created well-attended workshops, bringing fresh ideas. Members joined together for weekly painting sessions, as well as a monthly plein air group, which included settings at a farm, riverside park, and coffee shop. Our members have shown their paintings in two annual shows at VMRC. Seven have become Signature Members, now able to exhibit at five local venues. Karen Moyers was accepted as a new Master Signature Member. Our membership has doubled as the medium of watercolor is also experiencing a resurgence.

Next year, expect mini-workshops where Signature members will teach us about composition, perspective, color, setting up your studio, portrait painting, landscape painting, abstracting your work, taking photos of your work, working through a creative block, and much more. What an exciting year ahead!

I've learned in the past two years that we are a living, breathing, creative group of artist-friends who are excited to paint, anxious to improve our skills, willing to exhibit near and far, and pleased to pitch in to help with whatever is needed! We are indeed blessed.

Barbara Gautcher

*When we strive to become better than we are,  
everything around us becomes better too. Paulo Coelho*

*Just one small positive thought in the morning  
can change your whole day. Dalai Lama*

## Our Featured Artist: Cynthia Brock

By Mindy Morrison

When an ethereal watercolor landscape, slightly abstract, snatches your curiosity for a closer look, chances are it's a "Cynthia Brock." Recognizable to the eye long before your feet reach the painting, her free-flowing, silky yet edgy style exudes simplicity and complexity. Her paintings truly reflect her.

Born with dyslexia, a common brain disorder causing difficulty with reading, writing, and spelling, Cynthia was presented with a tremendous challenge. It has nothing to do with intelligence and is found in people throughout the world. It is simply a quirk in the brain. In all probability, Leonardo da Vinci and Picasso were dyslexic.

Because of the way her brain is wired, Cynthia had to create her own solutions and coping strategies to be successful. From a young age, she was forced to perceive what was asked of her, then innovate a working strategy. To "go with the flow," she flowed in her own current. One can see the uniqueness of her ideas in her distinctive art.

As an artist, Cynthia began by dyeing silk scarves, loving the flow and mix of dyes. She enjoyed its unpredictability and challenge. She traveled to fashion shows where her scarves were in high demand. Watercolor was a natural drift because it had the same qualities. Right before COVID shuttered the world, Cynthia joined the Shenandoah Valley Watercolor Society. When the forced isolation was lifted, she entered her first Member Show, winning First Prize, then won First again in her second show. Today, her original greeting cards are top sellers at Oasis.

At 94, she's found a slice of heaven with watercolor. As a child of Eastern Texas, Washington, and British Columbia, she was fascinated by the diversity of landscapes. When her family moved to Virginia, she became enamored with its rich scenery. Nature is what she enjoys painting the most. Her long list of favorite landscape artists include: Steven Quiller, Thomas Schaller, Dean Mitchell, Morten Solberg, Barry Hilton, John Lovett, Edward Wesson, Allan Morgan, and Oliver Pyle.

A woman who knows the importance of quality, Mrs. Brock uses only Daniel Smith paint and Arches paper, saying, "I have more confidence in what I'm doing when I work with quality materials." However, cheap sketch pads are used for numerous sketches and value studies, to see what floats to the top of the pile. In the past, she was "stingy with watercolor paper because I didn't want to waste it. Now, more than half goes into the trash." An animal lover, she includes a bird in most of her paintings "to give it life."



The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity noted “high creativity in children and adults with dyslexia is a result of the dedication and time they spend exploring new methods of learning.” Like Picasso, da Vinci, Ansel Adams, Albert Einstein, Walt Disney, and Steven Spielberg, Cynthia Brock excels as an artist because of her gift of dyslexia. We all have challenges to overcome, yet how you recover, offers a unique opportunity to prevail.

**Source:** Creativity and Dyslexia by Marie Lunney, December 16, 2016  
<https://www.lexercise.com/blog/creativity-and-dyslexia>

## Member News

### Results of our VMRC Member Show:

**Best-in-Show:** Rob Kloetzer, *Swallows at the Meadow*

**First Place:** JanetLee Wright, *Primetime Pokeweed*

**Second Place:** Laura Pooler, *Antique Bottles*

**Third Place:** Barbara Gautcher, *Poppies by the Fence*

**Honorable Mention:** Bahir Al Badry, *Dialogue*

**Honorable Mention:** Donna Detrich, *Well Worn*

**Honorable Mention:** Karen Moyers: *At the Auction IV (PA Haiti Benefit)*

**Honorable Mention:** Jennifer Wharton, *Serenity*

**Honorable Mention:** Ann Harrison, *Flowers That Make Your Heart Sing*

**And two more special awards,**

**Judge’s Choice:** Lynda Chandler, *Trillium*

**Memorial Award:** Lois Whitecotton, *Morning Shadows*

**Still to be announced,**

**Members’ Choice:**

**Viewers’ Choice:**

### Looking for Classes to take?

**New Member David Draime** has opened Draime Fine Art Studio School at 1153 South High Street in Harrisonburg. Classes are available in Beginning and Intermediate Drawing, watercolor and oil painting, portraiture, working with colored pencils, drawing and painting the plaster cast. For more information, go to [www.draimefineart.com/classes](http://www.draimefineart.com/classes)

**Since this is the last newsletter for 2024,** the following are final thoughts from two more of our SVWS leaders:

Dear Watercolor Friends,

I'd like to share reflections as the year closes out, on my two years helping to serve Barbara and our organization.

I have a small journal my husband, Bill, gave me for my birthday in 2022. The cover is embossed with a letter from Claude Monet (my very favorite master), written to Berthe Morisot, a fellow Impressionist in 1888. I wrote the translation on the inside cover.

He closes the letter with this, "My greatest wish was to exhibit with you and be assured of you and Manet, of my friendship."

My two joys these past two years were to assist Barbara, and therefore, each of you, in whatever way I could. Secondly, the opportunity to participate in our two member shows: challenging and life- giving!

Thinking of the future, I hope we continue to encourage and support our artistic endeavors, no matter where each of us are on the journey. Thank you for entrusting me with your support!

**Lois Kauffman**

**From Lynda Chandler:**

Since joining SVWS in 2021, I first served as Secretary, and for the last two years, as the Social Media Coordinator. Our social outreach now includes Facebook and Instagram, as well as our website. My daughter, a website designer, and I update the website, and we have plans to improve our Meet our Members section. We want to include more of your artwork so please email me your photos. We average at least two inquiries about membership each month.

As 2024 ends, our membership has more than doubled in three years. Although I am in Florida for half the year, I will continue to serve SVWS. It's a great fit for me, and I look forward to the future for our talented artists.

## Upcoming Events & Exhibits

**November 1, 10 – noon: Paint Party** at the Price Rotary Senior Center **every Friday so mark your calendars.** There are usually several members who paint together and share ideas. Throw in \$2-\$4 to offset the cost for the space rental. Bring your painting project with your supplies. The building is directly across the street from the UC Center where we hold our monthly meetings. When you enter Westover Park from 33, go up the hill and park in the first parking lot on your right. We'll be waiting for you! **No Friday Paint Parties on November 29 and December 27.**

**November 2, 10 – noon:** Monthly SVWS meeting.

**November 9, 9 – 11am:** Pick up your paintings from the Member Show. Be sure to sign them out before you leave. We must account for every painting before it leaves the building.

**December 7, 10 – noon:** A potluck party instead of a monthly SVWS meeting. Our traditional final gathering of the year, there will be no business or program, just a party. You may bring an original greeting card you've created for our holiday or winter card contest with prizes worth vying for! We will share a delicious potluck and enjoy old and new friendships. Also, you may want to clear out painting items, books, or magazines you no longer need, still in great shape, to share with others. Expect a fun time!

**January 4, 10 – noon:** Monthly SVWS meeting. Our meetings are held on the first Saturday of every month at The UC, Youth Center for the Westside Baptist Church located directly above this building.

**January 6 Next Gallery Day:** SVWS Signature Members are invited to show and sell their work at three locations in Harrisonburg. Paintings are changed every three months on the first Monday following our regular monthly meetings.

- Taste of Thai restaurant, 917 S. High St. - Contact Lois Whitecotton, Lwhitecotton@yahoo.com
- The Rocktown Gift Shoppe inside the Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center, 212 South Main St. Contact Barbara Gautcher if interested.

- OASIS Fine Art and Craft, 103 S. Main St. Contact Donna Detrich, [DonnaDetrich@gmail.com](mailto:DonnaDetrich@gmail.com)
- Sharp Litigation Offices, 1224 Newman Avenue Suite 201, Harrisonburg. Our newest location, ask Barbara Gautcher for more information.

**Harrisonburg Plein Air will resume in the spring.**

## Brushstrokes

Inquiring minds want to hear your joyful news! If you sell a painting, receive an honor or award, are exhibiting, or teaching a class, email Mindy Morrison at [MJDM@comcast.net](mailto:MJDM@comcast.net), and we will celebrate your success in our next bimonthly newsletter.

## News for the Next Newsletter?

Send it to me, Mindy Morrison, at [MJDM@comcast.net](mailto:MJDM@comcast.net). Please specify in the Subject line “For the next newsletter.” This bimonthly newsletter’s color scheme is spruce and coneflower blue. A virtual Thanksgiving turkey to editors JanetLee Wright and Barbara Gautcher for their polish!

### **Help Wanted**

Partner with me on the SVWS bi-monthly newsletter. You would update each regular section, including Member News, Upcoming Events & Exhibits, and Brushstrokes. I will continue the feature story and quotes. We will use the same format. Really shouldn’t take very long every other month. If you are interested, text me at 540-435-6535 or email me at [MJDM@comcast.net](mailto:MJDM@comcast.net).

Mindy



*By Cynthia Brock*

"Artists have an interest in ... so-called inspirations; as if the idea of a work of art, of poetry, the fundamental thought of a philosophy, shines down like a merciful light from heaven.

In truth, the good artist's or thinker's imagination is continually producing things good, mediocre, and bad, but his power of judgment, highly sharpened and practiced, rejects, selects, joins together; thus, we now see from Beethoven's notebooks that he gradually assembled the most glorious melodies and, to a degree, selected them out of disparate beginnings.

The artist who separates less rigorously, liking to rely on his imitative memory, can in some circumstances become a great improviser; but artistic improvisation stands low in relation to artistic thoughts earnestly and laboriously chosen. All great men were great workers, untiring not only in invention but also in rejecting, sifting, reforming, arranging."

**Friedrich Nietzsche**

Source: **JamesClear.com**