

Art is *not* canceled: meet painter Chee Ricketts

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles about artists in Greene County

The front-line question for nearly every recent article has been how has the pandemic affected XYZ? Local painter Chee Ricketts says the ability to focus on her artwork has been a positive outcome.

"I think everybody has been upset about what's going on, worried about the health care workers and the frontline workers who are taking care of sick people and worrying about old people in nursing homes who can't see their family... there are a lot of things to be concerned about," said Ricketts, a Stanardsville painter. "Rather than the pandemic affecting my art, my art has lifted my spirits and kept me from being as worried and as



focused on all the things that are going on that are potentially devastating."

She hopes that by sharing her artwork, she will help to lift others' spirits as well.

Ricketts, who retired as chairman of the Fine Arts Department for Hampton Roads Academy in Newport News in 2005, has produced artwork in a wide variety of mediums throughout her career. During 26 years of teaching in both public and private schools, she had the opportunity to teach art to students in every grade level. After all her years of teaching, her hope in retirement was

to focus more on creation, which she is happy to say she has done.

These days, she focuses mainly on watercolor and also dabbles in acrylics.

Since the pandemic has forced her to spend more and more time at home, Ricketts said she has spent most of it in her studio working.

"I've never been a painter who's wanted to do social commentary or things that have a dark mood," she said. "I've always wanted to focus on subjects that sort of reflect the beauty of the natural world. When we moved here, we moved to a farm on a hill, so when I go outside there are mountains all around me and there's also sky all around me. I became very intrigued by cloud formations and the colors in the clouds, and for me it was sort of a spiritual journey

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COURTESY PHOTO

Local artist Chee Ricketts works on a new watercolor at the drafting table in her base-ment studio. "Lavender Ladies' is based on my memories of visiting White Oak Lavender Farm over in the valley," Ricketts said. "After working in a small format and on different substrates, I am now on my fourth attempt at creating a successful painting."

Ricketts

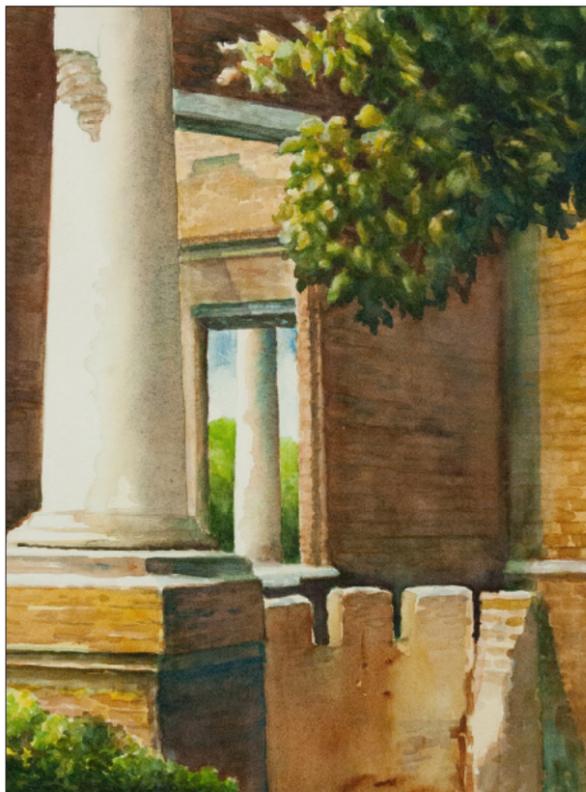
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to be able to focus on that subject matter."

Aside from having more time to devote to painting, Ricketts says the pandemic has enabled her to pursue new skills. After her husband passed away in 2019, Ricketts finally agreed to teach a watercolor class through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Virginia. Now that all classes will be moving into a virtual mode of operation, Ricketts said she's needed to spend a good amount of time researching the best methods for teaching art courses online.

As opposed to an academic course that can be taught by posting video lectures or having brief discussions online, for art courses it is very important to have the proper camera, lighting and setup in order for students to be able to adequately follow along and see the intricacies of the work being created. Ricketts plans to teach distantly from a local studio and says she never would have learned these unique teaching skills in her previous work as an art teacher were it not for the pandemic.

Ricketts' work is represented in the Annie Gould Gallery in Gordonsville, the McGuffey Art Center



COURTESY PHOTO

"All That Remains" is a depiction of Governor Barbour's mansion in Barboursville, painted in watercolor by local artist Chee Ricketts. Although she normally prefers to paint from direct observation, due to the current health crisis this work was created from photographs taken prior to the pandemic. "I am attracted to the textures, earthy colors and irregular shapes in crumbling architectural subjects," Ricketts said. "Even in a state of near ruin, these old buildings remind us of our past."

(artists' cooperative) in Charlottesville, and the Firnew Farm Artists' Circle's biannual shows. She is a member of the Virginia Watercolor Society and the Southern Watercolor Society, and has taught workshops for the Shenandoah Valley Art Center in Waynesboro, the Arts Center in Orange

and the Central Virginia Watercolor Guild in Charlottesville.

Images of Ricketts' work can be found at cheekludtricketts.com. For the past several years she has been focusing on cloudscapes, which you can see from the work she has displayed online.

Artistic focus as an escape: meet Vyvyan Rundgren

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

Editor's note: this is part two in a series about artists in Greene County

During a time of pandemic, with near-constant news briefings and reports and citizens arguing over the latest executive orders, changes to business functioning and the barrage of daily public health data, those blessed with artistic talent are finding refuge in the art of creation.

Local artist and treasurer for the Art Guild of Greene Vyvyan Rundgren says she uses her art as an escape from the daily reminders about the ongoing pandemic.

"I have been making face masks for UVA, guild members, church friends and my son's fire station, so the pandemic seems to be on my mind every day," Rundgren said. "I think (art) is more of an escape. Between the three things that I'm doing, my mind is pretty empty ... sometimes I just do what's in front of me. I get tired of painting on a barn quilt, so I can work on a gourd and then I can sit down with the sewing machine and just rotate through the three things."

Rundgren, who has spearheaded the effort to create a Barn Quilt tour in Greene County and who has painted hundreds of barn quilt boards over the years, is taking a break from teaching classes until they find the safest way to hold group events moving forward. But that doesn't mean she isn't working on her own creations.

"Besides doing barn quilts, I am working on decorative gourds," she said. "I do burning and carving ... lots of crazy shapes, but also love doing birds, flowers, Celtic designs, apples, leaves, wheat, et cetera."

Many types of gourds are grown for



decorative purposes rather than for eating, according to Rundgren. Due to their hard outer shells, it's possible to dry the gourd and decorate the outside without needing to empty it out or cook it like an Easter egg.

"Most of mine are whole, and you can shake them and you can hear the seeds and that's okay," Rundgren explained. "If you want to make a bowl, you have to cut it open and then clean out the inside." She gets her gourds from friends' farms or orders them online from various gourd farms.

Since the start of the pandemic and with the stay-at-home orders in Virginia, Rundgren has found more time to devote to her artwork.

"I have a lot more time to clean the gourds that have been sitting in the barn, and a lot of my time at home has been spent working in the yard, accomplishing things that I have wanted to do for several years," she said. "Taking a break from the yard also lets me work on my gourds."

Rundgren also takes time to get out in nature and uses her talents to remind others to stay safe in a unique way.

"As an Art Guild member, I have managed to remind folks to wear their masks by displaying the masked 'chicken' in



front of the Farm Bureau and a masked 'cow' on South River Road," she said, referring to the decorated haybale animals she created which have now been adorned with cloth face mask coverings as a friendly reminder to protect each other during the ongoing pandemic. "Maybe someone would like a pig or a goat or a duck on their farm."

While sales have been down recently due to canceled art shows in the spring, Rundgren is hopeful that the fall shows will be able to run this year and hopes to continue creating until then.

For more information about the Art Guild or for up-to-date information about upcoming classes, visit artguildofgreene.org or facebook.com/ArtGuildOfGreene. For more information about barn quilts, visit exploregreene.com/explore/barn-quilt-trail or contact Vyvyan Rundgren at vyvyanr@gmail.com.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Various decorated gourds from artist Vyvyan Rundgren's collection.

Artists keeping busy in quarantine: meet Cory Ryan

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

Editor's note: this is part three in a series about artists in Greene County

For the creatively talented among us, being quarantined spells an opportunity to focus on creating. Cory Ryan, president of the Art Guild of Greene County, spoke recently about productivity during the pandemic, including the creation of personal protective equipment (PPE) to donate to first responders in our area when the pandemic first came to light.

"We reached out to all the guild members to donate supplies so I could make face shields," Ryan said. "Not face masks, but the plastic clear shields that the doctors are using. I made a hundred of those and they went to UVA, so that really felt



good to contribute in that way for the pandemic."

In the months since the stay-at-home order and self-imposed quarantines, Ryan has been grateful for the opportunity to keep focused on her artwork.

"I just have a lot more time on my hands, because I'm usually on the go doing something, either taking care of grandchildren or doing something to prepare for an event for the guild or my church—and all that kind of came to a screeching halt," she said. "So, I spend a lot more time in my crafts room."

Ryan, who worked in



the IT department for Dominion Energy for 32 years, says she had already been spending increasing amounts of time crafting since her retirement.

"My husband would tell you it's full time, but it really isn't," she said, laughing. "It is a hobby, but I do spend a lot of time in my craft room."

From painting to

weaving and jewelry-making, Ryan likes to try different forms of art to keep her mind busy.

"I do pine needle baskets; I weave or coil pine needles into different containers. And I do quilling, which is a paper art," she said. "You take long strips of paper and coil them into different shapes to make a theme

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COURTESY PHOTOS

Above left, a pine needle basket crafted by Cory Ryan. Above right, Ryan works on a beaded necklace in her craft studio.

Ryan

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like a flower or dragonfly or whatever you need. I usually do notecards with quilling, but you can do art pieces or even jewelry."

On any given day, Ryan will focus her work on orders she has to fill first and then on using whatever art supplies she happens to have on hand that day.

"We took a trip to Costa Rica last year, and I was inspired by the mandalas they have there, so beautiful and colorful," she said. "So, I started doing mandala art last year. As I travel, I get inspired to pick up something new."

Ryan also works on decorative gourds, using a variety of methods to turn these otherwise inedible plants into creative treasures: "If you see the bird feeders in people's yards that are made out of gourds, they've got a hole in them for the bird and the bird loves to use the stuff that's inside to build their nest," she said. "I don't do too many bird feeders; I do mostly bowls, but I

put beads on them, feathers on them, I do dot painting on all kinds of things."

Ryan sells her artwork through her Facebook page as well as at Qute Scraps in Ruckersville. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and modifications to doing business, she says she is keeping quite busy.

"I post new things on my Facebook page, and talk about what it looks like and the size and the price," she said. "And then people can message me to purchase it and I'll arrange for a safe delivery. And then of course I do have a lot of my things in Qute Scraps, which is doing a bang-up business."

Qute Scraps gift shop in Ruckersville sells works by multiple local artists, and during the pandemic the owner, Danielle Oakes, has been selling via Facebook Live video sessions.

"They have all these Facebook Live sessions every week, and she is selling more now than she ever did before the pandemic," Ryan said. "It's really amazing. It's really kept me busy and happily busy because I'm actually fulfilling orders that come in to her shop



COURTESY PHOTOS

Above, Cory Ryan shares an example of quilling, which is artwork created from curled pieces of paper. Right, one of Ryan's decorative gourds is decorated in her popular dot painting style.



for different things. It's been a godsend to all the vendors that are in there; she has 55 vendors and she's been keeping us all busy."

According to Ryan, the Qute Scraps vendors have formed bonds of friendship through the weekly video sessions that may not have been possible before COVID.

"It's funny because when we're all on the live session, we can see the names of people

that are logged in watching," she said. "We're actually getting to know each other and she has people in Delaware and New York and Richmond and different states all logging in and saying hi to each other."

In a time when not much else in life seems to make sense, it is heartening to know that artists are out there creating artwork and sharing it via whatever means necessary to

help lift all our spirits.

"I'm so glad I have all this stuff to keep me occupied and motivated to get out of bed in the morning," said Ryan. "It's therapeutic, for sure."

To see Ryan's work or make an order, visit facebook.com/oneofakindcory. To visit Qute Scraps, check out facebook.com/QuteScraps or visit the shop when it reopens to the public.

Artist in Residence: meet Cat Denby

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

Cat Denby always had a creative side, but never expected to become an artist. Then in 2009 her husband bought her art supplies and the self-taught pastel artist hasn't looked back.

"I define myself as an animal portraitist, but I end up doing a little bit of everything as doing commission work puts you in that position," said Denby, who lives in Ruckersville.

On her website you'll find work that includes her two pugs and other animals, as well as children's portraiture. During the quarantine due to COVID-19, Denby has been quite busy with commissioned work.

"It's been an uptick in business. I think because people aren't going out to brick and mortar



stores and people are already starting their Christmas shopping, she said. "But, at the same time I haven't sold many what I'd call gallery pieces—something that wasn't commissioned by somebody."

Denby started life with a degree in comparative literature, "which, of course, means I got a job in anything else," she said. She got a job as a part-time dog groomer and veterinary technician before working for her husband, who owns a website development company.

When her husband, Chad, bought Denby the



art supplies she started to teach herself to draw.

"I already had an affinity for animals so I ended up getting into that and posting some stuff on Facebook and requests started coming in for commissions," she said. "I figured why not

have a hobby that pays for itself. It's been fun."

Her favorite part about animal portraiture is the candidness of the poses.

"They don't pose. You can't ask a dog to smile

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for you, he's just natural," she said. "There's something really wonderful about a candid pose."

Denby works every day on commissioned pieces and tries to fit in other pieces she wants to create, as well.

"I usually spend anywhere from one to three hours a day working on commissions," she said. "Usually, I'll spend a half hour or so every day working on something that would either be for an art show or for a gallery. I'm not at the point where I'm brave enough to make this my full-time career."

However, that's a goal for Denby and her husband.

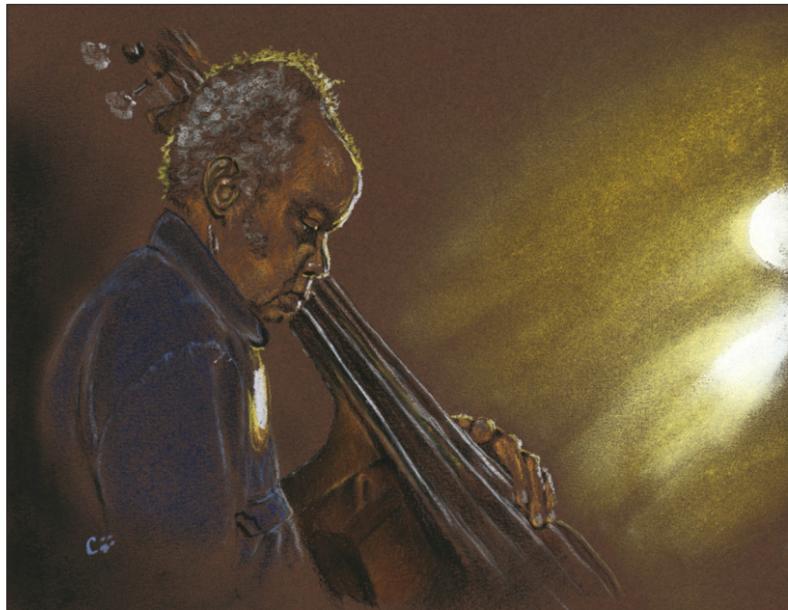
"Our dream is definitely that at some point we will sell this business or retire from it, and Chad will be the person who does my logistics while I do the art side of it in the same way that I've been supporting him for website stuff," she said. "That's the plan."

Denby's first piece was of a boxer and she still has that.

"I stepped back and said this is the best work I've ever done," she said. "This is just natural, it just happened."

Denby first started drawing using graphite, which is a crystalline form of carbon with a dull metallic grey color.

"I was very nervous and reluctant about colors, so I figured the safest jump was to jump into col-



ored pencil," she said. "I don't like standard colored pencil because it's waxy and it's fine, I just find that it's sort of flat and for me it loses some nuance. So I picked up pastel pencils and loved it."

Denby has done some watercolor artwork, as well, but not as much.

"I do like watercolor, but I'm an extremely impatient artist," she said. "I like the pastel because you can pick it up and you can put it down. I have the kind of life where I have to get up and open the door for a dog every five minutes, so I didn't want to be worried about whether the pages are drying."

Denby is also a member of the Art Guild of Greene County.

"It's good to be a part of a community of artists," she said. "If

nothing else, it gives you someone to talk to and kind of figure out if something isn't working what other option is there. I think it gives you a lot more opportunities."

For information, visit her website at artbycatonline.com or her Facebook page at <https://bit.ly/2N9F1d9>. There is a slight waiting list for her commissioned pieces, and she recommends people have lead time before they need the pieces back.

Denby will also be showing her work at New Dominion Books Shop on the Charlottesville Downtown Mall August-September and will be at the Fall Crozet Arts Festival Oct. 10-11.

Weaving on the farm: meet Ann Vonnegut

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff



During a time of pandemic, it's good to be able to both work and practice creativity from the comfort of your home. Especially if that home is a sheep farm in Greene County.

Local resident Ann Vonnegut, owner of Autumn Vista Farm in Dyke, makes her living selling yarn and fleece created from the wool of her Leicester Longwool sheep. But her passion is for creating woven artwork from the same materials.

"I find that working on a sheep farm pulls me away from my art, especially during lambing season," Vonnegut said of the balance between work and play. "I also have been busy with putting in a vegetable and flower garden."

Vonnegut first became interested in owning her

own farm after working with the National Park Service at a farm in Maryland, where she learned how to spin wool.

"I learned how to spin while I was there, and then the spinning went to dyeing, and then from dyeing I got into wanting to have a flock of sheep," she said. "I wanted to raise a rare breed of sheep and so I did some research on the Leicester Longwool; there aren't that many breeders that raise this particular kind of sheep."

The Leicester Longwool, popular during the colonial period in America, was developed by agriculturist Robert Bakewell in Leicestershire,



FILE PHOTO

Ann Vonnegut weaves in a cabin on her sheep farm.

England in the late 1700s to be both a producer of long, coarse wool and high-quality meat.

"It has long, lustrous wool for spinning, and

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it's great for dyeing and it has good meat on it," said Vonnegut of the breed. "It did go out of favor over time with the American Sheep Association because it wasn't as fast-growing as the Suffolks, which is the more common around here."

Compared to a Suffolk sheep, which is all white except for a black face and legs, the Leicester Longwool has very long, slow-growing dense wool that grows into curls and are very docile, according to the Livestock Conservancy website, which lists the Longwool's status as "threatened" and a priority for conservation.

The breed was brought back from near extinction in the early 1900s and was brought to Virginia by Colonial Williamsburg, which is where Vonnegut first heard of them. Their wool is very strong and especially good for tapestries or outer garments, as opposed to the baby-soft merino wool.

"It's good to have a diversity of different genes," she said. "If we all ate just one type of meat, whether it was beef or one type of breed of chicken ... it's important for breeders to get into the different breeds of animals for livestock. Different breeds of sheep have different traits for their wool."

When she is not taking care of her sheep or working in the garden, Vonnegut spins, dyes wool, and weaves on a large loom in her barn studio located on the property.

Along with members of a local tapestry group in

Charlottesville, Vonnegut has displayed her weaving at Noon Whistle Pottery in Stanardsville, City Space in Charlottesville, a theater in Waynesboro and a small art studio in Berryville. She also sells yarn, roving and fleece at the Fall Fiber Festival and Montpelier Sheep Dog Trials every October and at the Powhatan Festival of Fiber (currently canceled for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

According to Vonnegut, shearing sheep to produce good-quality wool takes a certain set of skills.

"I started trying to shear myself and then I realized that it is a skill, like anything else," she said. "In order to be really good at it, you need to do hundreds of sheep a year to be very proficient, and I didn't want to spend my whole time learning that particular skill."

After taking a class in sheep shearing, Vonnegut hired the instructor, Kevin Ford, to shear her sheep annually so she can focus on the spinning and weaving of the wool.

"If you're a spinner, it's important not to get second cuts," Vonnegut said. Second cuts are when the shearer cuts the wool short and then trims the rest in a second shear, which creates shorter, less uniform wool for spinning.

Ford travels annually from Massachusetts down along the eastern seaboard to a number of small sheep farms, where he hand-shears with old-fashioned blades as opposed to electronic clippers.

Autumn Vista Farm, which normally boasts a flock of 30 Leicester Longwool sheep, currently only has twelve sheep, including one 13-year-old

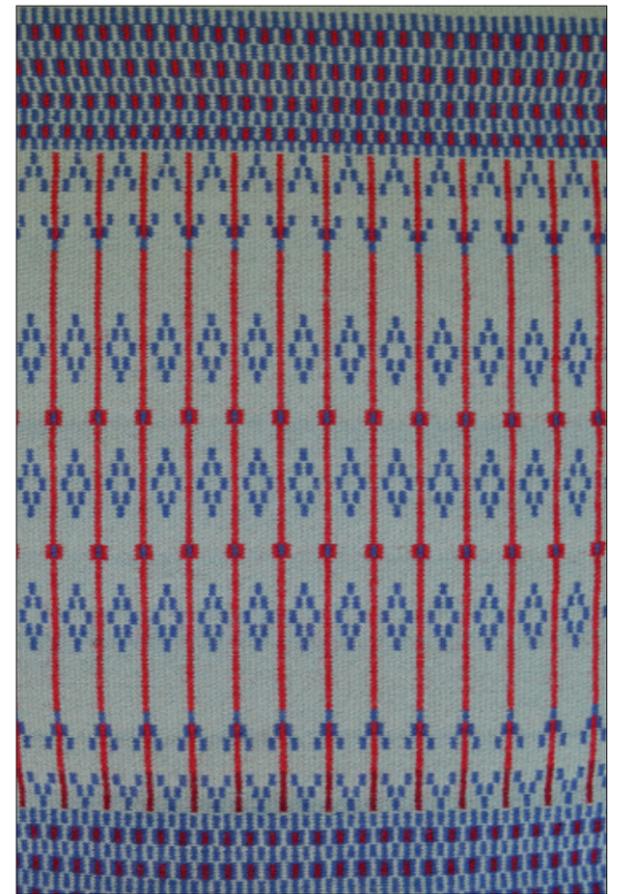


ewe who Vonnegut did not have the heart to take to market.

"I can't breed her. She's too old—she was born in 2007, so she's over 10 years old—that is very old for a sheep, but I just can't put her down," Vonnegut said. "But you just can't keep all the rams ... as a farmer, you do have to make those decisions and they're not always the easiest."

As for how the current pandemic has affected her artwork, Vonnegut considers herself one of the lucky ones.

"I feel very fortunate to have a job where I can be home and I don't have to go out that much," Vonnegut said. "Because both of us are retired and we live on a farm, I can go outside and nobody's around. Creatively, I am doing more exploring on creating my own designs,



COURTESY PHOTOS

Top, Ann Vonnegut's weaved creations. Above, Vonnegut looks through recently sheared sheep wool before cleaning it.

especially in the tapestries with a floor loom." Between variations on weight and thickness of the thread, colors and

patterns in the physical weaving to create different variations and textures, there is a lot for an artist like Vonnegut to

explore.

For more information on Montpelier's fall fiber festival, visit fallfiberfestival.org.

Art as my refuge: meet oil painter Charlene Swartley

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

Reclusive by nature, the coronavirus pandemic shut-downs have not been too difficult for painter Charlene Swartley of Stanardsville.

"I'm so fortunate to have art as my refuge," said Swartley, who uses oils as her medium. "I'm not inferring I'm burying my head in the sand, but art allows me a place to escape to and to use my creativity to find peace and healing. When I'm painting, music playing, I'm in my own world—I'm in the painting. There's very little that can distract me and I never bring a telephone into my studio."

Swartley's light-filled studio is attached to her recently built home near Haneytown and she tries to paint every day. She took a little bit of a hiatus to sell



a home, design this home and to live in a temporary location while it was being built.

"Art is expressed in architecture, as well," she said. "I'm very happy with the results; if I left something out, I haven't realized it yet."

As Swartley has begun to unpack unfinished works from her storage unit, she has had the chance to reimagine them a bit.

She points to a painting underway of a barn with a rusted fence with morning glories climbing it and the Blue Ridge

Mountains behind it.

"This is the Amicus Road barn. There used to be two of them," she said. "The mountains do go like that and there is the fence. When I got it out of storage there were these blots on it and I thought to myself, 'What was I thinking?' Then the light bulb went on—morning glories."

Swartley said she grew up wanting to be a famous artist and knew they all painted in oils so she learned to do that, as well, even though it takes longer to dry.

"I'm meticulous or as my friends would say, I'm detail oriented," she said. "When I'm done, it won't be good enough. So, my motto is once I sign it, I never go back."

In a different barn painting, Swartley had originally paint-

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PHOTO BY TERRY BEIGIE/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Local painter Charlene Swartley shares a painting of a barn on Amicus Road with morning glories climbing the rusted fence. Swartley says painting gives her an escape from the stressors of everyday life during a pandemic.

Swartley

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ed turkeys in front in tall grass but then she decided it needed something different. She removed the turkeys using turpentine.

"I may put some deer crossing in front of it," she said.

Swartley does commissioned work from clients, too, where she follows the customer's specifications for details.

"My last commission was interesting," she said. "I was asked to paint a spinning wheel on a tire cover for the person's Jeep."

Growing up in rural Nebraska, Swartley loves the country.

"My favorite subject will always be the rural scenes with an old barn, cumulus sky, rolling hills or the Blue Ridge Mountains and fields of grass, wheat or hay—it represents serenity," she said.

Her favorite painting she's created—also a barn—is framed and hanging on the wall above the sofa in her home.

"I won an award in a big juried art show and barns usually never win awards. I actually ended up winning several awards," she said. "But it's my favorite because it's my first. I told my daughter if nobody wants it in the family to bury it with me when I die."

Swartley said she feels a



PHOTO BY TERRY BEIGIE/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Charlene Swartley's favorite painting won several awards at local art shows and currently hangs on a wall above the couch in her home. Swartley says she's told her daughter to have the painting buried with her when she passes away if nobody else in the family wants it.

connectedness to Greene County.

"There are so many wonderful artists here and not just painters but craftsmen, jewelry makers, woodworking artists, potters and it's nice to talk to them; it's nice to be surrounded by like people," she said. "I think it's a very spiritual area; I don't know why I feel that way, but I do."

Sometimes Swartley isn't privy to who purchased a painting and where it is going, but there are two she was told: one is of a friend's charming Victorian and it was purchased by someone in Georgia and one is of a barn with a melt-

ing snow scene and was purchased by someone in Louisiana.

"It's such an affirmation that my subject matter is what some people love as well," she said. "Maybe they feel the snow and maybe they know what it is to walk through that snow and smell the freshness in the air. And I'm hoping that's what they get out of it. I have a certain style and not everybody will like my style; I paint and hope that someone else enjoys it."

Right now Swartley is mainly working on

completing new paintings, but she does have some on display for sale at the Coin and Gift Shop in Harrisonburg. It's unclear if the usual art shows of the fall will continue to be held due to the coronavirus pandemic, but once she has some new artwork she says she'll figure out marketing them.

Swartley is a member of the Art Guild of Greene County. She is still accepting commissions via phone at (434) 985-9810.

Finding whimsy in strange times: meet painter Trish Crowe

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

The coronavirus pandemic has offered artist Trish Crowe something she isn't always afforded: the time to paint. Crowe is more than an artist; she's the founder of the Firnew Farm Artist Circle, named for her farm; she is secretary of the Montpelier Foundation; she's program director of the Central Virginia Watercolor Guild; and is a past president of the Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy—to name a few.

"I've been painting like a crazy person and the reason of it is that I have a lot more time," Crowe laughs. "I'm responsible for so many groups, which I love but it takes time."



And with that extra time, Crowe began to paint with a bit of whimsy with her "Chicken Trot in the Time of Quarantine" piece, among others.

"We each have an opportunity to look deep within our hearts and our souls and our own personal experiences (to be creative)," she said. "It's been interesting to go into that and realize I have a choice to paint that happy place and spiritual place that I really wanted. It was fun to keep posting (to

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COURTESY PHOTOS

Above, Trish Crowe works on one of her paintings in her studio on Firnew Farm, her home in Madison County.



"Chicken Trot in the Time of Quarantine"

Crowe

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Facebook) and realize there were people who were happy to see somebody being creative."

Crowe spent time as an illustrator and graphic artist before moving to an old farm along the Conway River, just over the county line in Madison.

The house was in such bad shape that numerous architects said they wouldn't touch it. The old milking parlor behind the house was worn down, as well. The milking parlor consists of concrete floors with two rooms on the main floor, as well as a small kitchenette and bathroom and an overhead loft space. Crowe said she lived there while work was done on the main house.

"My husband came up here and said, 'There's not another more beautiful piece of property, anywhere,'" Crowe said.

They've lived there for almost 20 years and it was nearly 18 years ago that she began Firnew Farm Artist Circle to give artists a place to create and support one another. Not having the usual Thursday meetups was difficult in the beginning of the pandemic crisis, though they began hosting virtual Facebook critiques. The group was offered the chance for weekly outdoor creative time on the grounds of

Montpelier throughout the summer to afford social distancing opportunity.

"Artists don't stop creating works and people have told me that what has happened at Firnew is the energy and love of each other fed their creation of new work," she said. "Thursdays are about doing new work—even if what you do is come with a drawing and we talk about that. I think that's really where my spirit is; it's in the process. It's not the product, I mean I love when I get something right, but that's not really the part that I live in; I live in the process and thinking about it and coming up with new ideas."

Crowe's paintings are full of bold color and include city scenes to rural scenes.

Crowe uses pigments that are more than 100 years old. Pigments are created from different substances, such as minerals, and are usually pulverized and then suspended in a liquid vehicle—such as gum arabic—to become paint or ink.

"(Fellow artist) Janice Rosenberg's father was a famous artist and I have all of his original pigment. So, I am grinding my own," Crowe said. "That's one of the reasons why the colors don't look like anybody else's."

As a former graphic designer, Crowe notes her primary goal is

always communication and she includes these messages in her paintings.

Two of her dogs are featured in "Pink Gin Tea Party" and she even painted a reflection of herself in the tea pot. "Sebastian's Mad Hatter Tea Party" features the farm's Great Pyrenees as the Mad Hatter from "Alice in Wonderland," along with the goats on the farm and the door that hangs in the field at the farm.

"So, then when I got ready to do "Chicken Trot in the Time of Quarantine" I started off thinking I wanted to do cabaret, but the cabaret was really World War II and I just thought that was too dark," she said. "That's when I decided to do the Roaring 20s, but that was worrying, too. The more I kept researching I thought, no, this was the whole suffragette movement; this was when women cut their hair, decided they didn't want to wear all these clothes. This was a time that they really let loose, and also the men have gone to war so they had jobs and in a way it was really fascinating; this is really an exuberant period of people taking ownership."

One of the messages in that painting can be seen on the drum of the Jazz band playing in the background—noting the band's name and the location it's from: Hood, VA. Coincidentally, that's



"Sebastian's Mad Hatter Tea Party"

where Firnew Farm is located.

Crowe said artists have continued to produce noteworthy creations throughout numerous difficult periods of history.

"As an artist or a writer there is nothing and then there's some-

thing—it all comes out of the imagination. It really is the life of the mind and if you don't do it, you go crazy," Crowe said. "There's a story to be told about what happens when people are sort of forced inward to really explore those dark places and historically

artists have had to do that, but for me it was so fun to do all this whimsical work."

Visit the artist's circle on Facebook at www.facebook.com/firnewfarmartistscircle.

Jackie Pamenter makes cozy creations in her studio

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

Born in the south of England, Jackie Pamenter retired to Stanardsville 20 years ago with her husband, Don. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, she's found new ways to reconnect with old quilting friends from her former home in New York and across the country.

"I started my first quilt in 1972, finished it 10 years, four countries and two

continents later, and it is still my husband's favorite of mine," Pamenter said. "Over the years I've made many, and also gained an understanding of the ways quilts have been made over the years and the textiles that went into them."

Greene County's Visitor Center has featured a historic quilt display since 2003 and Pamenter's first quilt was among the first to be displayed. She also spent many years writing the descriptions that

go along with the display, which is rotated monthly. Photos of each entry and the accompanying descriptions are kept in a book near the current display at the new visitor's center on U.S. Route 29.

That first quilt used a technique called "English Paper Piecing" by which the artist must accurately cut many hexagons of thick paper or card stock to use as templates for the fabric, which is then pieced together by hand.



"They must be accurate and you must use a template," Pamenter explained. "In this quilt the overall pattern is called Grandmother's Flower Garden, where a central

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PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Jackie Pamenter adapted this house pattern from her quilting friend in New York into a baby quilt for her niece, now almost 2 years old.

Artist

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hexagon is surrounded by six to form the flower. The quilt is tied rather than quilted; that is to say, embroidery thread is used to make small knots across the surface of the fabric. I've never made another quilt using this technique."

Pamenter has participated in quilt documentation days and enjoys learning the history along with the techniques of the craft.

"Partly because of my interest in quilts that goes back decades, I've acquired a number of quilting history books and big books of patterns as well as histories of textiles," Pamenter said. "One of my treasures is a fabric dating guide that includes actual pieces of fabrics to illustrate different designs in different time periods. That must have been a labor of love, and it is very useful."

In their own home, the Pamenters often use a "summer-weight" quilt for their bed that they acquired many years ago in the Shenandoah Valley.

"It is probably almost 100 years old," she said. "It is a Flying Geese pattern, with a number of shades of plain blue. Some pieces have faded, some are still almost as they were originally, so they look like completely different colors. (The quilter) surely had no idea that this would happen ... I'm always interested in trying to figure out why a quilt-maker did what she did."

But Pamenter's love of history is not limited to textiles.

When the Pamenters moved to Stanardsville

20 years ago, their house came with a broken-down old building that was once the home of Forest Hill Academy boarding school in 1870. Given to Greene County in 1876 as one of the first single-room schoolhouses in the county, this was also the site where four Stanardsville women registered to vote when women were first given that right in 1920.

Jackie Pamenter renovated the building into a livable guest house in January 2000, and since the pandemic, has turned the space into her own personal quilting studio. A binder of historical photos and research on the building's history adorns the coffee table in front of a comfortable couch, and her sewing machine and other materials occupy a table in front of the large front windows, overlooking the carefully tended garden. An old fruit tree takes up much of the space between the studio and the main house.

"I had not really done much quilting for years until I made a baby quilt for my niece two years ago," Pamenter said. "I had migrated all my stuff to a room above the kitchen but when we had some work done I had to empty it and I thought, this is a wonderful place to sew."

Pamenter received an email from a friend back in Westchester, N.Y., where they had been part of a weekly sewing group together many years ago. Mary Cannizzaro now runs a quilting company called Cannizzaro Creations (www.canquilt.com), and teaches classes as well as quilting on commission.

"And Mary wanted to know if I remembered

a picture of a quilt," Pamenter said. She found the picture in question and then Mary surprised her with an invitation. "And she said, 'We're still meeting; do you want to meet with us? Why don't you come back to the fold?'"

The New York quilt group of decades ago was now meeting virtually via Zoom, and they would have members come and go every Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. until around 4 p.m. Friends who used to meet on Wednesdays in the old fire hall in South Salem, N.Y., now live in Connecticut and New Orleans and even Stanardsville, but thanks to the internet they can all be together weekly to encourage each other on new projects.

"We catch up on what we're doing and then (Mary) said she was quilting houses, and she shared the pattern," Pamenter said. "And since I needed to make a quilt for my niece, I decided to make a house quilt using the pattern. And then she taught us a technique ... so we've been learning while we've been chatting."

With a laptop in her studio, Pamenter is able to drop in on the weekly group meetings and catch up with friends while she works. She considers herself fortunate to be retired and to have easy access to a lot of books and plans to spend the rest of quarantine catching up with old friends and sewing.

Preserving history in a flash: meet Patricia Temples

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI

Record Staff

"Photography is a way of feeling, of touching, of loving. What you have caught on film is captured forever... it remembers little things, long after you have forgotten everything."

—Aaron Siskind (1903-1991)

The art of photography is in capturing a moment in time that will never come again, and Ruckersville's Patricia Temples loves to tell stories through her photography.

A full-time resident of Greene County for 17 years, Temples and her husband used to spend weekends here relaxing and golfing in the 90s and built their current home in Stanardsville in 2003 after she retired from her career as an educator for Albemarle and Chesterfield counties.

"When we came back here in 2003, I volunteered different places trying to get an idea of what I wanted to do in retire-

ment," Temples said. "I was playing golf and I hurt my shoulder. I couldn't play for several months, so I took my camera out on the golf course and started taking pictures ... I had always had a camera ever since I was a kid."

Encouraged by her father as a child to learn how to use her first camera, it was her husband who finally encouraged Temples to take up photography as a serious pursuit.

"I remember my husband said to me one day when I came home from being on the golf course, and he had been playing someone along the way, he said, 'I think you're having more fun than the rest of us are,'" Temples recalled. "So I started taking some classes from local professional photographers."

In the past 17 years, Temples has taken classes, attended workshops, joined a camera club in Charlottesville and is now part of the Firnew Farm Artists'



PHOTO BY TERRY BEIGIE/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Photographer Pat Temples poses in front of one of her photographs, several of which were turned into murals on the walls of William Monroe High School as part of the renovations last year. "It's pretty special to me that I have those photographs there because I was an educator," said Temples, who was stunned to see her images blown up to this scale during a tour of the building in July 2019.

Temples

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Circle (featured in the *Record* on June 11), which has art shows twice a year. She also has a series of local photos on display at Jacks Shop Kitchen in Ruckersville and was a part of the "Voices of the Land" photo documentary project in 2013, which showcased some of her local farm photography along with interviews of the Fairview Farm owners.

Last year, Temples was approached by Greene County Public Schools Superintendent Andrea Whitmarsh about utilizing some of her photos for a series of murals in the middle and high school redesign.

"I met with her and I'm thinking okay, I can print some photos and put them in a frame ... and I get in there and she shows me the architectural renderings and they're murals—are you kidding me?" Temples said. "The first thing I said to her was, I'm not sure I'm going to have the resolution for them to blow them up that big."

Many of Temples' photographs were utilized to make wall-sized murals throughout the middle and high school buildings, with more to be unveiled at the start of the 2020 school year.

One of the photos that was turned into a mural in the school was of a large tree on the old Parrott Farm, which is now Virginia Grassfed Beef.

"The Parrott and Early families put up a one-room schoolhouse at the site where this tree is located in the photo and other children came to join them," Temples said of the photograph. "The schoolhouse is gone and

now so is the tree. Three months after I took the photo, a big wind storm came through and it fell to the ground ... the locals still refer to this as the schoolhouse field." Ironically, the image as it is used in the Imagination mural in the high school's digital media lab cropped out the tree to focus on the sunset over the mountains.

Photography can be used to document history in many ways. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Temples has been spending time photographing family heirlooms and recording the history of each item and its former owner, a project she hopes will be meaningful to her family in the future.

"I'm 70 years old, so I've been wanting to start documenting things that I want my family to inherit," she said. "I decided to take photographs of the pieces of furniture, jewelry, lamps or whatever, to document those things and who owned them. I thought the fun thing to do would be to write a piece about each of the family members who owned those things, and it turned into just great fun. I feel like if (my niece and nephew) have that information, the pieces might be more meaningful to them."

While Temples said she would not want to spend time on a project that reflects the emotional climate of the ongoing pandemic, she believes that art can be a great distraction from the stresses we face daily. "To see the beauty that's still out there, even though we are in the situation that we're in ... all of a sudden I've got all this time, and this is what I chose to do. It's been a really fun endeavor."

To view more of Temples' work, visit her blog at patriciatemples-photography.com.



PHOTOS COURTESY PATRICIA TEMPLES

Above, on the Parrott Farm, now Virginia Grassfed Beef, the Parrot and Early families put up a one-room schoolhouse at the site where this tree is located in the photo. Children from other nearby locations came to join them. The schoolhouse is gone and now so is the tree. "Three months after I took the photo, a big wind storm came through and it fell to the ground," photographer Patricia Temples said. "The locals still refer to this as the schoolhouse field."

Right, this photo of a tree at Westover United Methodist Church on Fredericksburg Road holds a special historical significance to the church. According to a plaque positioned nearby, "on September 17, 1913, Miss L. Pearle Kirtley married Mr. J. Horace Brown. This was the first wedding held at Westover Methodist Church. Miss Kirtley took a sprig of hemlock from her bouquet and placed it in the ground, hence growing the Old Hemlock Tree."



Artist: Creating gourd art with local Kathy Kelley

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

Since the cancellation of so many local art shows and other events during the COVID-19 pandemic, local artist Kathy Kelley has had a lot of time to work on her passion for decorative gourds.

"The pandemic caused all of the craft shows, festivals and gourd classes to be canceled, but that has allowed me to spend much more time with some more intensive gourd projects," Kelley said.

Kelley, who has been growing and creating with gourds for about 15 years, enjoys spending her retirement decorating and selling gourds at various shows and festivals throughout the



area. She also serves as secretary of the Art Guild of Greene. Because she is not currently doing many commissioned pieces for sale, she has dedicated her time to honing her carving skills.

"Most of my gourds have a wood burned design with color added, usually with transparent acrylics," Kelley said. "Solid colors are usually spray painted with detail added in outdoor acrylic paint."

Besides the intricate carvings on many decorative gourds, Kelley also makes birdhouses and vases out of the gourds, which she has recently begun growing in her own garden in Greene County.

"Knowing my love for gardening, years ago some dear friends presented me with a few gourd seeds and a large, beautiful, unfurnished birdhouse gourd that they had found while traveling," Kelley says in her website's introduction. "This was the beginning of my passion for everything gourds. Each year my gourd garden grows a little larger and I find new uses and methods for crafting them."

According to her website,

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COURTESY PHOTO

Local artist Kathy Kelley created these gourd vases during the COVID-19 pandemic this year. Her work is for sale on her website and usually at art shows.

Artist

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gourds must be planted in late spring, about a foot apart, and they really take off in June when hot weather hits.

"If there is adequate rainfall, the vines can grow a foot a day or more," she said. "The blossoms appear at dusk and bloom for one night. By late July or early August, I begin to remove the new blossoms so that the plants put more energy into the existing gourds, which seems to result in thicker shells. Before the first hard frost, I cut the mature gourds and put them in a protected outdoor location to cure during the winter."

Growing her own "canvas" for use in creating art gives Kelley the freedom to customize each and every creation.

"Each finished gourd is the result of over a year of patient tending and love," she said, adding that she always brings seeds along to the craft shows for those who may be interested in growing their own decorative gourds.

One popular product of the gourds is her small birdhouses, which are ideal homes for small songbirds such as house wrens, bluebirds, sparrows or chickadees.

"The natural shape of



COURTESY PHOTO

Local artist Kathy Kelley works on a gourd.

the gourd provides a safe haven from the weather and predators such as larger birds or cats," Kelley said. "It's great fun to watch as they fill their nesting place with sticks, moss, horsehair, leaves and grass or hay."

Besides the birdhouses, Kelley showcases candleholders, luminaries, flower vases, decorative bowls, Christmas ornaments and Easter eggs, and whatever else she can come up with

to create from a gourd.

The Art Guild of Greene, which would normally have a vendor booth at the weekly Greene County Farmers Market, has sold Kelley's gourds as part of their booth in previous years. Currently, Kelley is selling via her website, windyhillgourdcraft.com. She takes custom orders and will deliver locally or meet for a pickup if requested.

At home in the artist's studio: meet local painter Sue Stover

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

During a nationwide pandemic, some citizens are lucky enough to shelter in a home with its own cozy art studio. Sue Stover of Ruckersville is one such artist.

"I have found the pandemic and sheltering in place to be very off-putting," Stover said in an email in late May. "I have been able to complete a few small projects and am just beginning to start paint-

ing more. It is nice to not feel a deadline looming and to have more time to dedicate to my art; not just creating it but also reading art books and taking some online classes to expand my knowledge."

The *Greene County Record* caught up with Stover last week at her home in Ruckersville, where she graciously shared some of her newest paintings and told some of the stories behind her wide variety of work.

"When we first moved down



here (in 2009) we had the house built and my husband said, 'you can have that top floor; whatever you want to do with it,' I thought this would make a

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COURTESY PHOTO

"Quilting the Land" is unique because it combines artist Sue Stover's skill as a painter with her quilting experience. Most of the bottom two rows are actually quilted fabric squares, over which the quilter's arm was painted and cut to overlay the quilt as it blends seamlessly into a painted pastoral backdrop.

Artist

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beautiful art area, thinking it'd take forever to get it filled up," Stover said. "Well that was not right—it's just full to busting now."

Desks, shelves and tables are filled with every sort of supply for painting, as well as piles of books and a sewing machine. A well-loved easel sits by the windows with a half-finished work in place, while finished paintings are framed on nearly every wall in the comfortable loft of her home.

Stover, who loved creating art even as a child, attended the Art Institute of Pittsburgh after graduating high school. An intensive 18 month program, Stover says she hoped to find a career after graduation but that marrying her husband changed her plans and kept her busy for many years.

"I followed him around the world," she said. "He was in the Army at that time and then joined government so we traveled all around the world and had kids and I painted for fun when I could. Once you have kids, you don't have time to sit and paint, or at least I didn't."

Even as the couple traveled throughout much of Asia and Europe, including Norway, Finland, Scotland, England and Ireland, Stover still found time to utilize her artistic talents in between entertaining military families and raising her children.

"When we were living in Japan, they had a children's ward at the hospital on base, so I painted cartoons and stuff in there for them and I did illustrations for their newsletter," Stover said. "And then once the kids were grown and gone, I could sort of dedicate myself to painting. It's been about 15 years now."

Stover experiments with several mediums but especially enjoys watercolors, acrylics and oils as well as colored pencils. Her subjects range from landscapes to pet

portraits, floral still lifes and images from her many travels around the world.

One special painting is "Monet's Garden," painted in oils from a photograph taken during a very unique trip to France eight years ago.

Les Amis de la Grande Vigne is a program set up by French artist Yvonne Jean-Haffen upon her death. Each month, the trust arranges for a different artist to come and stay in Jean-Haffen's atelier (art cottage) and to do paintings of the surrounding area in Dinan, France. At the end of the month, the directors host a wine and cheese evening to view all the paintings and select one of the artist's pieces to keep in a private museum.

Stover was selected as artist of the month for the program in October 2012.

"I had no dreams that I would get chosen," said Stover of her acceptance into the program. "It was such a surprise when I got the letter."

For the first week of the residency, Stover's husband accompanied her to help her get settled. Speaking no French, it was difficult at first to find her way around via train and to find the way to the tiny cottage in Dinan (part of Normandy), but she absolutely loved the opportunity and still has many of her paintings from that trip on the walls in her studio.

"It was a really quaint little place and where I lived was at the base of the hill," Stover recalled. "Her house was above us and her painting studio had this staircase that was so narrow and steep it was almost like a ladder ... it would get really lonely in the evenings and thank God there were a couple little cafes down the street."

It was during this trip that Stover and her husband had the opportunity to visit Giverny, the famous town home to French impressionist Claude Monet and scene of his waterlily paintings. While standing on the bridge featured in so many of Monet's

works, Stover took the photo that would be the inspiration for her own "Monet's Garden" oil painting.

Prior to the pandemic, Stover was active in the Art Guild of Greene, Firnew Farm Artists' Circle and the Charlottesville Watercolor Guild, and sold many of her works through various art shows. One summer, the Firnew Farm Artists' Circle did a "Living the Land" exhibition through which Stover created her "Quilting the Land" piece using a unique blend of quilting and painting.

"Quilting and homesteading is a real part of this area, so I wanted to make it look like she was quilting and as it went back it turned into the land," Stover explained. "This piece is actually quilted [the bottom two rows], I quilted it and then sewed it onto the painting. It was really tricky, cutting the painting so her hand could be underneath... it was a real challenge."

Since the pandemic shut down most of the year's art shows, Stover has been busy-ing herself with painting and has also sewn masks for her daughter and grandchildren as a distraction from the constant barrage of news updates.

"I have a hard enough time worrying about what's around me," Stover said. "When it comes to world (news), I'm going to be an ostrich and just sort of ignore it. I'll come up here and paint for eight hours straight if I don't make myself get up and walk."

When she's not painting or sewing, Stover spends her time reading art books, taking online classes and exercising with the help of a new exercise mirror she and her husband bought themselves to stay active during their time stuck at home.

Color and texture captured on film with Bobie Burwell

BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI
Record Staff

"There is no blue without yellow and without orange." —Vincent Van Gogh

Photographer Bobie Burwell, of Stanardsville, has a passion for color and texture, just like her favorite artist, Vincent Van Gogh.

Born in Louisiana and with a degree in fine arts from the University of Southern Mississippi, this self-proclaimed "Southern Belle" credits her grandmother for her love of art

and nature.

"My grandmother was a fabulous gardener—my mother's mother—and I got the love of gardening from her, and the love of flowers," Burwell said. "And what better source of color, texture, shape than flowers? So that's really where I began and then it's kind of morphed into other things, but I'm drawn by the color and texture of things and how they relate to their surroundings."

With large framed images throughout her



Stanardsville home ranging from landscapes and flowers to industrial scenes, coastlines and a close-up of an antique car engine, Burwell's love of color is evident, as is her passion for travel.

A career in banking as a sales manager and later

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PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BORRELLI/GREENE COUNTY RECORD

Photographer Bobie Burwell in front of some of her printed works in Stanardsville.

Artist

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a second career as a personal trainer may not have inspired Burwell's artwork, but they certainly helped to finance the travels that led to many of her favorite pieces.

"My career as a personal trainer has been my fun job," she said. "Banking was not my fun job, and it was all-consuming, so when I could get home and get away on the weekends or go traveling—which we've traveled all over the world and I've got pictures from everywhere—it was my escape into a whole new world; leave all that banking and stress behind."

Burwell got her first "serious" camera in college but said she prefers to plan her photography excursions as she does not like to carry her camera everywhere and prefers not to leave it in the car. If she is out running errands and happens across something photo-worthy, she will make a note to return with camera in tow to capture the image later.

"My first digital camera was a Konika Minolta, which don't make cameras anymore," she said. "And then I went to the Daikon; that was a big step up in both price and megapixels... most of my images that you will see have been taken with that camera. And then last year (my husband) and I went on a Danube cruise and I said, 'I'm not carrying that big Daikon camera' ... so I bought a little cigarette-box-sized camera."

Burwell retired from banking in 2014, which is when she and her husband made the decision to relocate to Virginia.

"We were living in New Jersey and we knew retirement was fast approaching, so we had many conversations about what it would look like and decided it would either be near the beach or in the mountains," Burwell said.

With family nearby in Virginia Beach and two nieces attending James Madison University in Harrisonburg, the couple visited many times before deciding on just the per-

fect spot to build their modern home off of Route 810 with views of the mountains.

With her background in classical art, Burwell was hesitant at first to try her hand at digital photography.

"Of course, my first camera was film and I loved it—absolutely loved it," she said. "I went to digital kicking and screaming; I thought no photographer worth their weight in salt is going to shoot digital, right? Well, finally I just kind of had to and it was a revelation. It was almost a totally different art style. Film photography is one thing and digital photography is quite another."

One of the main differences in digital photography is the ability to take as many photos as you like and pick and choose the best ones later. With film, you can never quite know how an image is going to turn out until the film is developed, and taking multiple shots requires a great deal of film, which can be expensive and time-consuming.

"I did take a photography class in college and at that point, it was all in black and white," Burwell said. "That was very interesting, and you got some time in the darkroom; I really enjoyed that, which is probably why I love digital today. Because the digital darkroom of course is a computer, and you can do all kinds of amazing things after you've captured your image. You can destroy the image and still call it photography—just really distort it and all kinds of stuff, but you can also keep the image true and still do some incredible things."

The ongoing pandemic has canceled Burwell's summer travel plans for 2020, but has also given her added time to work on sorting through images and digitally editing some of her previous work.

"We were supposed to be in Scotland end of May early June this year and of course we were not, so [COVID-19] has hampered my photography because I didn't get to take the pictures of Scotland," said Burwell, who hopes to reschedule the trip for

2021. "But it gave me time as I said to sit in front of the computer and go through some of the more recent images that I have taken that I hadn't had a chance to deal with."

Earlier this year, Burwell was in Birmingham, Ala., where she visited the Sloss Furnace. A national historic landmark, the furnace was once the largest manufacturer of pig iron in the world and stands as a monument to the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century.

"The furnace is incredible and I took hundreds of pictures," Burwell said. "So while I've been home having lots of time on my hands, I went through all of those images and picked out the ones that I thought were good and wanted to do something with and got them the way that I liked them, and then I had one printed."

While early in the pandemic, Burwell was part of a local effort to make masks for Greene Family Medicine, Greene Care Clinic, Jefferson Area Board for Aging, the Lafayette Inn and many family and friends (she has made more than 175 so far), she has also been keeping busy with painting, colored pencil doodles and building projects out of Legos including a replica of the London Bridge.

Burwell will officially be retiring from her second career in September, and she looks forward to continuing to explore the riot of color and texture in the world around her, and to being able to travel again in the future.

Burwell sells her photography online and through art shows and has also sold to businesses and interior designers over the years.

You can view more of Burwell's work at bgburwell-photography.com.

Cecilia Schultz: an artist's journey to find herself

BY TERRY BEIGIE
Record Editor

Artist Cecilia Schultz was born and raised in Stockholm, Sweden. She always had a creative eye and when she came to New York City at 18 years old she put that to good use.

"I just fell in love with New York," Schultz said. "I did a bit of back and forth, finishing university in Stockholm and then started working in advertising in New York City as a photo stylist and photographer and thought I'd never leave New York."

But when she met her husband to be in New York—who was living in Tokyo at that time—she took the plunge and moved there with him. They moved back to the United States and lived in Florida while their boys were growing up.

"I had always painted, but when we started hav-

ing a family, it went on the back burner," she said. "Me being Swedish and my husband being from Philadelphia, we started to miss the seasons. Florida was beautiful, especially when the kids were small. I just wanted a little more sort of old culture. So, we decided to take a leap of faith and move to Virginia when the boys were in high school."

The oldest has graduated college and her youngest went back to college last week for the start of the new semester.

"Here I am in Stanardsville and I just fell in love with this place," she said. "I don't think I would have lived here when I was younger. There's a reason for everything that happens in your life. I love the landscape. I love the people. Virginia is an amazing state. Greene County is very special and I just get very inspired."

Schultz said once here,

she felt like it was time to get back into painting and photography. The inspiration she felt here helped her get connected with Firnew Farm Artist's Circle and Trish Crowe.

Schultz has participated with Firnew Farm Artist's Circle's plein air art programs this summer at Montpelier that Crowe helped secure. This has helped the group get together with one another for meaningful critique and inspiration.

"Who would have known we have such amazing artists in this region?" Schultz asked. "Trish is just fantastic; she has really taken me in and is just wonderful. I've learned a tremendous amount from these artists. These artists are just so accomplished and skilled and I'm a little wilder."

Schultz said she's learned it's important for

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COURTESY PHOTO

"Lucky in Hebron Valley" posted to Cecilia Schultz's Instagram on July 28.

Artist

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any creative person to be fearless.

"You have to be bold to discover and be who you are," she said. "They have really brought that out in me. You can't be shy. You have to find your inner voice and just try to put that out. I feel very grateful; I have just embraced it. I can't think of a better place."

She noted she's really gotten to know herself through her artwork.

"I know it sounds weird, but when you're busy with life you don't always look inside," she said. "It's a little bit of an analysis. And it brings appreciation. I think we should appreciate that we can live in Stanardsville and not a small apartment and have to be locked up. Art helps me really appreciate what I have and what I have around me that I didn't always see when I was younger. I guess it's a maturing. It opens up a lot more than just the actual creating for me, you become more sensitive to what's around you."

One local area that Schultz loves to photograph is Hebron Valley in Madison County.

"You drive down the road and it's just beautiful," she said.

Schultz prefers to paint with acrylics because oils take so long to dry.

"I'm a pretty emotional painter," she said. "For a couple of weeks at the beginning of the pandemic I couldn't paint because it just affected all of us. And I only paint when I'm

happy, which I am 99% of the time."

She said she's looking forward to cooler weather, even winter.

"I love winter here because I can just see things I don't normally," she said.

Schultz said she's noticed her paintings already adjusting to the coming autumn with her choosing purple and darker green hues.

Schultz is also passionate about land conservation. Her home off Octonia Road was already in conservation when her family moved there in 2017, but since moving to the area she has become involved with the Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy.

"It's so important to conserve our land here and not let huge developments come in," she said. "We try to really inform people about the importance."

Schultz said she loves everything about painting, except the setting up.

"I pick the colors and then just go to town and don't think and go with the moment," she said. "I'm a pretty emotional person and I think that shows in my work. I usually paint about an hour and step back. Sometimes if I don't like it, I'll put it in a closet and go back and see what I need to fix. I can't force it, though."

Even with the bump in her artwork at the beginning of the pandemic, Schultz is still positive.

"Because the Firnew Farm Artist's Circle couldn't be in Crowe's studio because it's a small room, Crowe has us paint-

ing at Montpelier," she said. "She believes strongly that you can turn something like this into a positive. You may walk down a path you didn't know was possible because you were forced to do it, but you might come upon something that, wow, you just didn't expect."

Schultz "opened" her art show at Revelation Vineyards in Madison on Tuesday, Sept. 1. It will run until Oct. 31. The vineyard is not doing traditional openings right now because of the coronavirus pandemic. Schultz will have photography of area landscapes as well as some of her paintings on display and for purchase during that time.

Before the coronavirus pandemic earlier this year Schultz had a show at Annie Gould Gallery in Gordonsville and some of her work is still for sale there. The gallery is operating by appointment right now because of COVID-19. For more information on the gallery, visit anniegouldgallery.com or on Facebook @anniegould-gallery.

Schultz does not have a website or Facebook page, but updates her Instagram accounts regularly. Her paintings are @ceccischultz and she displays her photography on @southriver_photography.



COURTESY PHOTOS

"Start Me Up" posted on Cecilia Schultz's Instagram on April 8.



"View from the Pavilion" posted on Cecilia Schultz's Instagram on Aug. 17.