



Scruggs talks about photography

BY PAGE H. GIFFORD
CORRESPONDENT

It would seem to those who know Horace Scruggs, that there isn't anything he won't try and master. It's probably due to his meticulous character and willingness to explore and learn something new. Artists know that part of learning new skills and techniques is the ability to use curiosity to its full advantage and explore their medium without being afraid or limiting themselves. As a musician and a filmmaker, Scruggs understands this. But now he has added photography to his list of artistic endeavors.

Scruggs is the choral teacher at the Fluvanna County High School and a former musical director of the Fluvanna Community Singers. Now retired, he continues to record and play music with his band but is also turning to the visual arts.

He became interested in photography right after college but it wasn't until recently that he has been able to study the art form, gain the skills, and have the funds to purchase an appropriate camera and lenses.

"In learning the craft makes my interest grow even more. At one point I was wondering why the shot didn't come out the way I planned now I'm learning how to control the camera to get the shot I want."

Primarily a landscape photographer, he speaks modestly about his work, which is breathtaking, with photos of sweeping panoramic views and rich color. Scruggs has learned early to manipulate light to capture nature's drama - the key to all good photography.

"I've been involved in adventure-oriented sports such as cycling, hiking, and water-skiing for many years. In those activities your surroundings are passing by quickly," he said. "However, in photography, I'm focusing on the surroundings that creation provides and not what I'm doing in those spaces. It's bringing what is normally in the background to the foreground."

Though Scruggs has not made an in-depth study of any particular photographer that he draws inspiration

from, the one remembers most is the one all landscape photographers recognize - Ansel Adams.

"There are two Ansel Adams quotes that I think of often. I am paraphrasing but the first simply says "become an expert at photographing what's in your back yard" and "a good photograph is knowing where to stand." Some of my favorite photographs are from places right here in Fluvanna County and especially Pleasant Grove. And some are literally in my backyard. I took a macro-photograph of a frog that was sitting on our patio table that I love. Those words encourage me to look for amazing photographs that are close to where I live."

Adams had many quotes regarding seeing, thinking, and exploration of a subject before deciding on an angle. An angle and light make all the difference in photography. It captures the essence and mood of its subject.

"I'm intrigued by the moment a photograph happens in a constantly changing environment. Great landscape photography is very fleeting. Not every sunrise and sunset is going to be beautiful so being there when they are, and having your camera ready is special. And sometimes you have to wait until the light is just right or until the clouds part or the fog lifts. So, you do have to be pretty in tune with the weather, changing seasons, and clouds formations," said Scruggs. "Case in point, earlier this fall we had several days of hard rain so I knew the waterfalls in the Shenandoah National Park would be full of water. So, I took the day and hiked nine miles to catch some of the biggest falls in the park and came back with some great photographs. If I had waited two or three days, I would have missed my opportunity. Landscape is so much in the moment."

He said that there are many intriguing photos right here in Fluvanna; it is just knowing how to get that elusive one that makes the difference.

"I do enjoy driving around Central Virginia and finding the perfect vantage point. There's one photograph I shot at Carysbrook. I was heading north on 15 when I noticed

a line of storm clouds to the north. Knowing that Carysbrook Road has a steep hill I drove down and waited for the moment to present itself. A huge thunderhead rolled up with a very visible rain shaft. It was such a great moment. And as I said, fleeting. I also enjoy anywhere in the Blue Ridge Mountains. This past summer we went to the Grand Canyon and I took lots of shots there."

Scruggs explains his technique and what makes his work unlike others.

"I think framing a shot is so important and a lot of that is "where you stand." So, I move the camera around a lot making sure there is both breadth and depth in the shot. Meaning I look at both sides, front and back while looking through the lens. So much of the color I achieve is in post-production. I try and bring out the subtleties of cloud formations, leaves, or waterfalls. Occasionally I'll do a little computer magic just to enhance a blank sky but it all goes back to framing the shot and subject matter." Scruggs added that he is also using drone photography as a way of getting new perspective on landscapes.

Photography is a highly technical art and medium and it used to include fiddling with film, filters, and f-stops as the only way to create any magic but in the computer/digital age, photographers are only limited by their imagination.

"I love clouds, skies, mountains, and waterfalls, and the occasional wildlife. I also enjoy macro photography with closeups of flowers, small animals, and insects," he said. "On one hand you have the massiveness and grandeur of creation and on the other, it's these small intricate details. And part of the enjoyment in all of these subjects is the chance, exploration, and the moment it all comes together."

For more information on Horace Scruggs' photography visit HoraceScruggsPhotography.instaproofs.com or contact him at horace@horacescruggsmusic.com.



Photo by Marieke Henry

Chipping away at the storm debris

CONTRIBUTED BY MIKE FEAZEL

The pile of debris generated by the Jan. 3 snowstorm at Lake Monticello is nearly overwhelming the Lake Monticello Owners Association maintenance yard, but a chipper has begun chipping away at the pile.

To date, the LMOA maintenance department has cleared debris from roadsides in three sections of the Lake, with nine more to go, plus Jefferson Drive. The pile from the three sections covers an area equal to more than half a football field, several feet high. The

rented chipper began working Feb. 2 and the wood chips will be part of LMOA's Earth Day Free Wood Chip giveaway to residents in April, with the rest transported to a paper mill.

Cleanup is expected to continue into May, and cost about \$100,000. LMOA considered hiring outside companies to help speed the process, but decided against spending the extra estimated \$400,000, LMOA officials said. LMOA said it does have openings for seasonal workers, and is welcoming volunteers who would like

to help clear debris on the weekends. Contact dflynn@lmoa.org for more information. LMOA said it will work with residents to make removing leaning or dangerous pines on their property easier. They can email the Environmental Control & Compliance Administrator Carol Cavanaugh at ccavanaugh@lmoa.org. She will in many cases grant permission to have the trees removed without a permit.

Library gives out test kits and more

BY PAGE H. GIFFORD
CORRESPONDENT

"Libraries across the U.S. have been pressed into action," according to a Jan. 18 Washington Post article. Library workers were compared with front-line workers handing out supplies of free COVID test kits and ending up exhausted and overwhelmed. Is Fluvanna any different?

Library Director Cyndi Hoffman of the Fluvanna County Public Library has always taken a calm, methodical, and positive approach to activities, programs, and changes at the library and has transformed it into a community within itself; a hub of information, and entertainment. Hoffman has always been willing to be of service to the community and saw giving out test kits as an opportunity to do just that.

"The COVID tests were very popular. They were free as part of a program with the Virginia Department of Health. We started mid-November and had kits through mid-January and we gave out over 3300 kits during

that time." Kits are currently out of stock but Hoffman is hopeful she will get more but is uncertain when that may be.

"The program is still active but there are supply chain issues. We are telling everyone to keep an eye on our web page or Facebook page and we will update those when we get more."

COVID has been challenging for Hoffman and her staff. Whereas other libraries may have experienced some intense moments with test kits, Hoffman and her staff are always organized and things run smoothly. But she said there have been adjustments in the last year.

"COVID initially changed a lot for the library. Back in March 2020, we had to close to the public for a while - we closed then opened with curbside delivery services the next day. Eventually, we were able to start computers and browsing by appointment," she said. This time for her and her staff was perhaps the busiest without people in the library, having to do the work for those who normally peruse the aisles of books themselves.

"We were busier than ever. Lots of phone

calls and pulling materials for people in the community. We even had people emailing us things to print and we had delivery curbside and offered new cards over the phone."

If that were not enough, they started a new program, offering "Grab n Go craft/activity kits for preschool children, kids, teens, and adults and we added the Spice of the Month Club." In case anyone wonders, the Spice of the Month Club encourages cooking with various spices and learning about them. For example, October was cardamom and the kit includes recipes, ideas, and more regarding cooking with cardamom. This is a great way to use a library's resources and to learn something new and experiment for all ages now that cooking at home has become popular again.

This meant that not only did they put the kits together but during this time all items had to be cleaned and quarantined before they could be checked out again. She says they are still cleaning and wiping things down more often until we no longer have to quarantine.

"Things are much more like pre-COVID times now - which cycles depending on active

cases. We are still limited with in-person programs but hopefully, everything is getting better. We are concentrating on Grab n Go and small in person programs instead of our larger programs," she said.

Hoffman is trying to return things to normal as much as possible and this year everyone believes that it is more likely to happen.

"We are currently working on the Summer Reading Program and are very excited to hopefully have a more normal summer program with programs and workshops." She added that the Grab n Go craft kits and Spice of the Month are very popular and are continuing.

Grab n Go kits are available on the 2nd Saturday of the month and Spice of the Month Club is available on the 4th Saturday. They are also planning a Grab n Go Tiny Art Show Kit pick up for ages 10 and older on Wednesday, Feb. 16 starting at 3 p.m.

For more information, contact the Fluvanna County Public Library at (434) 589-1400 or visit their website at <https://www2.yousee-more.com/fluvanna/>.



Photo by Mimi Moring

Fluvanna Faces: Blair Carter

BY HARVEY J. SORUM
CORRESPONDENT

living in Ohio and North Carolina for 12 years, I've always lived here. I live in Southern Albemarle County now, and I only have to travel a couple of miles to catch Rt. 53 and head for court.

Many attorneys choose an area of the law in which to concentrate their practice - which area of the law did you choose and why?

Family/juvenile law is my main focus now. I chose to practice in that area of the law because it interested me most and I enjoy going to court. I most often serve as a Guardian ad litem for children who are in the midst of custody and visitation disputes, foster care, abuse and neglect, and truancy as well as for those children who are in front of the court for various delinquency matters. I also do some mediation and no-fault divorces.

Why and when would the court encourage the parties to try mediation to resolve their differences?

Mediation is an option for just about any matter that comes through the court. In family law cases, rather than having a stranger who gets to know you and your family for usually just a day deciding what happens until your kids are 18, using mediation lets the people who know their children best come up with the best, or better, solution. I was first trained in

mediation in 1985, and it can be a much less stressful way to settle the case. It also helps the parents be more likely to be able to work with each other in the best interests of their child(ren) when the case is over rather than come out of court bitter enemies.

Is the coronavirus having an impact on your business?

COVID certainly affected my practice as the courts were practically shut down for months, except for emergency cases handled through virtual and appearing by phone. We're still wearing masks in court and social distancing as much as we can. I was lucky to be able to go back to work as much as I wanted to compared to the people who were losing their jobs, homes, health insurance and even their lives.

Why are you in Fluvanna so much?

I really enjoy spending time in Fluvanna County because it's a lot like Charlottesville used to be - you still can get to know your neighbors and it is not (yet) chock full of people or development. The green spaces, access to the Rivanna River, Pleasant Grove and the trails are real bonuses. I try to support Fluvanna activities financially, which has included sponsoring a girls' softball team, having an ad for the Fluvanna County SPCA in the Fluvanna Review since 2011, giving monthly to Caring for Creatures, and contributing at least once a year to the Rose Deborah Altschull Endowment for Youth since it was established in 2008.

The Fluvanna Review is my local source for news about the county and I read it faithfully.

Do you have last words for the readers?

First there are two rules of thumb: 1. Don't assume; and, 2. It never hurts to ask.

Then, always keep in mind: You never know what rocks another person may have in her shoe, so first, be kind.

Finally, when needed, refer back to 1 and 2.

What did you do before you started practicing law?

Before I began practicing law, I worked as a telephone operator, a receptionist in my dad's law office, a summer camp counselor and a child social services worker. Once I graduated from law school in 1984, that's all I've done since. I've cut back to 20-30 hours each week now, and I appear almost exclusively in the Fluvanna Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Why did you decide to become an attorney?

My becoming an attorney was practically predestined. My father and two brothers were also attorneys, and I joined their office in 1985. My poor mother endured endless years of being cross-examined at the dinner table! I practiced with my family and then in other offices since I returned to the area.

Why did you decide to start your practice in Charlottesville?

I was born and raised in Charlottesville. Except for

Fluco boys open post season play by trouncing Rustburg 75-50

BY DUNCAN NIXON
CORRESPONDENT



Tipoff. Photo by Deborah Nixon.

The Flying Flucos boys basketball team was too quick and too athletic for the Rustburg High Red Devils who they hosted on Feb. 19 in the opening round of the Virginia High School League post season. They broke to an early lead and were never seriously challenged. Senior point guard Kobe Edmonds had his long ball working for the Flucos as he drained six from beyond the arc. Three of these came in the third quarter when the

Flucos blew the game open, running to a 22-point lead.

The Flucos jumped to a big lead early, scoring the first 11 points of the game. Rustburg was getting some decent opportunities but could not convert early. The Red Devils finally got on the board at the end of the quarter to trail 13-6 at the buzzer. Edmonds had seven and junior guard Bobby Gardner had four.

The outcome of the game was never

really in doubt as the Flucos stretched their lead at halftime to 33-14. In the second quarter, Edmonds had seven again and Gardner contributed six. Junior forward Blaise Silverman had two baskets, one on a nice pass from Edmonds.

In the third quarter, the Flucos sank four threes, three by Edmonds and one by junior guard Lance Bruce. In mid-quarter, Junior forward Kenyon Smith came out of nowhere for a thunderous block of a lay-up that the Rustburg player probably thought was going to be uncontested.

In the fourth quarter, Coach Heath Bralley was able to give his reserves some valuable playing time. In the post season, back-ups often don't get much court time. However, Bralley was not reluctant to make the move, even though he noted that "those three guards (Edmonds, Gardner and Bruce) are hard to take out." He further noted that he believes that his team "has a lot of depth." In the fourth quarter, freshman forward Ben Denby, sophomore guard Chazz Barksdale-White and junior forward Mason Blackburn all got into the scoring column.

Edmonds had one of those games

where the opposition hardly knows how to handle him. He slipped in and out of defenses and suddenly there he was open at the arc, and getting his shot off quickly. He led the scoring for the Flucos with a steady, almost surprising 32 points. Gardner is more flamboyant. When he is open on the break a powerful dunk makes for oohs and aahs from the crowd. He contributed 12 and Bruce chipped in with eleven. Silverman had six. Smith was the leading rebounder with 8 and the Flucos continued to dominate on defense, forcing 19 turnovers and scoring 23 off those turnovers.

Despite the ease with which the Flucos won this game, Bralley was not entirely happy after the game. He said he told his players that, as they move on, they may not be able to get away with some of the defensive lapses he saw against the Red Devils. It was clear that the Red Devils were basically not in the Fluco's league. They were a last team in type of opponent. On Feb. 22, the Flucos traveled to the valley to take on Wilson Memorial High.