



The Central New York Watercolor Society NEWSLETTER

August 2008

President's Message

It is with some sadness and relief that I sit down to write this, my final President's Message. The years have flown by and somehow have added up to six years as your President. The Presidency of CNYWS has been an office which I have been proud to hold. The Society and the people who make up the membership are a credit to the watercolor world.

I realize that I have not been able to accomplish this task alone. Many individual members of the Society have tutored me, offered advice, lent a helping hand and a kind and listening ear. I want to thank all of them and ask that they continue their full support with my successor. I have tried to be a President of all of our members, so some of the decisions I have made and some of the positions I have taken are the result of my belief that an organization must try to meet the needs of all of its members and not just a select few.

During the time of my Presidency our membership numbers have grown. We have developed and improved the Newsletter. We have moved into the electronic age with the development of the website and a greater reliance on email for communications among our members. The addition of the secure Member's Area of the website will improve communication among our members. Our Annual Meeting activities have expanded with the addition of Demo Night. We have updated our Constitution.

We have managed to accomplish these activities while holding our expenditures in check by cutting our publishing and postage costs. At the same time we have been able to get top-notch artists such as Carlton Plummer, Diane Maxey, Fred Graff and John Salminen as the featured artists for our Annual Meeting weekends.

John Salminen is our Featured Artist for the Annual Meeting and Workshop this Year. John is clearly one of the top watercolor artists in the country at the moment. The meeting will be held at Dibble's Inn in Vernon, NY, on Sept. 12 and 13. The event is a little earlier than usual this year, so the registration forms may already be in your hands by the time you get this edition of the Newsletter. Please note that there is a change in the program this year.

The Workshop on Friday will be given at Dibble's Inn. The Friday night demonstrations will be held at the Barrett Gallery at Utica College, which is about a fifteen-minute drive from Dibble's. This location was chosen because we are holding our Annual Juried Show at the Barrett Gallery. The Demo Night program will be held in the foyer outside of the Gallery, and the Gallery will be open so all attending may view the show. The opening reception for the Juried Show will be held

at the same time. The Annual Meeting program with John Salminen and the business meeting will be held at Dibble's Inn on Saturday.

On a final note, even though I will no longer be President I intend to continue on the Board of Directors for at least a year as Immediate Past President. I also plan to continue as the Webmaster for the website and to remain active in CNYWS wherever I can be useful.

Thank you all for your support.
Keep Painting
Carl Crittenden

Romeling Trust Award Received

The Central New York Watercolor Society has been fortunate again to receive a \$300 award from the W.B. Romeling Memorial Educational and Charitable Trust to be used for our Annual Meeting. "Bus" Romeling was a mentor to many members of the Society and was generous in sharing his talents with any who sought him out. He was a talented painter and some of his paintings as well as other information about him may be found at the website: www.romeling.com.

The Memorial Fund promotes and perpetuates the ideals and philosophy of W.B. Romeling.



Patrice Centore
at the Delavan Gallery.

See the "Featured Artist"
on page 3.

2008 Officers

President

Carlton R. Crittenden, Jr 315-633-2817

President Elect

Roland Stevens III 315-589-9351

Corresponding Secretary

Catherine Blind 315-457-1029

Recording Secretary

Sandy Plumb 315-865-8301

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Jean Madden 315-672-9644

2008 Board of Directors

Heather G. Abrams	Drayton Jones
Catherine Miceli Bennett	Katherine Kernan
Martha Deming	Lorraine Van Hatten
William S. Elkins	

2008 Committees

Annual Meeting	Carlton Crittenden
Annual Meeting Demo Night	Heather G. Abrams and Martha Deming
Annual Meeting Registration	- open -
Annual Meeting Hospitality	Drayton Jones
Annual Meeting Raffles	Roland E. Stevens III
Annual Meeting Slides	William S. Elkins
Annual Meeting Publicity	Heather G. Abrams
Annual Workshop	Catherine Miceli Bennett and Martha Deming
Door Prizes	Kathy Kernan and Catherine Miceli Bennett
Exhibition Committee	Catherine Miceli Bennett and William S. Elkins
Constitution	Carl Crittenden and Jean Madden
Guest Artists	Martha Deming and William S. Elkins
Newsletter Editor (Acting)	Jean Madden
Publisher	Lorraine Van Hatten
Jury of Selection	William S. Elkins
Membership	Catherine Blind
Website	Carlton Crittenden
Other Events	Roland E. Stevens III

Show Committee Chairs

Utica College, Utica, NY
Catherine Blind, Kathy Kernan

Stone Quarry Art Park, Cazenovia, NY
Carl Crittenden, Catherine Bennett, Bill Elkins

Earlville Opera House
Catherine Bennett, Bill Elkins

Book Review *By Martha Deming*

"Mastering Composition"

by Ian Roberts

ISBN-13: 978-1-58180-924-4

ISBN-10: 1-58180-924-7

North Light 2008

Whether you are a beginner or advanced or somewhere in between, this is a book not to be missed. Composition is the defining feature of all good art work, whatever medium, whatever subject, whatever style... whatever. Composition is at the core.

Ian Roberts has created a flawless guide to understanding and practicing the skills and thinking processes that will result in strong compositions. He presents the information in a sensible, well thought out and sequential manner. His writing style is down to earth and shows touches of humor that keep a serious subject fun. The book is generously illustrated with frequent diagrams, tips and suggested exercises to guide, assist and inspire the reader.

Chapters include discussion of basic compositional armatures, how to think in terms of value masses, seeking abstract shapes, effective use of a viewfinder, the benefit of doing thumbnails and value sketches, aspects of color, edge variety and control, ways to use contrast and create visual flow. These and other topics are useful tools in creating our own compositions. A DVD is included with the book. Add this excellent book to your own collection or borrow it from your local library to read more about them.

Taking Roberts' suggestions to heart can't help but lead us further along the path toward excellence in our work. In the introduction Roberts states, "The great thing about painting is that you can do it all your life and still be getting major revelations and ideas of where you want to go next." For example, he recommends a "composition-a-day" drawing and says, "If you do one a day for a year you'll be in a different league as an artist. You will be producing design-driven rather than subject-driven compositions." What a great goal to strive for! And he shows us how. This book opens the door. Step through and become a better painter.

Notice of Proposed Amendments to the CNYWS Constitution and By-Laws

The Board has recommended some minor refinements to the Constitution to remove contradictions, clarify meaning and conform the document to actual operating conditions. These amendments will be brought to the membership for a vote at the Annual Meeting. Once they have been adopted, copies of the updated Constitution and By-Laws will be distributed to all members.

A Notice of Proposed Amendments has been mailed to all members with the Workshop and Annual Meeting registration forms.

Featured member...

Patrice Centore

I feel very honored to have been chosen as a featured artist. Being a Signature Member of the Central New York Watercolor Society has also been an honor and has provided me with wonderful friends and affirmation of my talents. The workshops held in conjunction with our Annual Meetings have given me inspiration to improve my work. It is a wonderful organization.

Like most artists, I knew from a very early age that art was my passion. As a child, drawing faces was my favorite pastime -- I drew faces on every blank piece of paper available except for my homework. I frustrated many a teacher with my constant doodling while they were teaching. Christmas was a particularly wonderful time for me, because I was allowed to decorate the classroom blackboards with innumerable cherubs drawn with colored chalk. My first job was as a sales clerk at a children's shop in Scranton, PA, where I grew up. The owners encouraged me to paint the windows for Christmas. I wish I had a picture of the results, even though I know it would make me cringe now.

Fashion was my second passion. My mother had always dreamed of being a fashion illustrator and I decided to make that my career. There were many talented illustrators represented in magazines and newspapers in those days and especially in the New York Times. Dorothy Hood, the illustrator for Saks Fifth Avenue, was my idol. To this day, I remember her elegant and beautiful watercolor illustrations.



My parents were very supportive of my decision and allowed me to attend Traphagen School of Fashion in New York City after I completed high school. Of course, I had to live in a residence run by nuns. I studied fashion illustration at Traphagen for two years, and that was my introduction to watercolor. Most illustrations for newspaper ads were done in watercolor and ink, but there was no color involved.

After completing my education, I applied for a temporary job in the advertising department at E. W. Edwards Department Store in Syracuse. Later I was offered a permanent position at Dey Brothers as a "basement artist." I painted many girdles, bras, housedresses, men's socks and underwear, and stacks of shirts -- a far cry from my dream job.

Finally I had an opportunity to do fashion work at Chappell's and Flah's. I have submitted one of the fashion drawings that I did for Chappell's -- a gorgeous hat and muff by the designer "Emme." And yes, they did sell hats like that back then. Marriage and children interrupted my career, but I still created ads and artwork for my husband's business, Centore's Menshop, and also did free-lance work for Dey Brother's.

In the mid '80s, I signed up with a friend for a watercolor class with Susan Spencer. That was the beginning of my fascination with what I call serious painting. Still life, landscapes and people are my favorite subjects. Shadow, light and glowing transparent color are important aspects of my paintings. There is no other medium that can provide the spontaneity of transparent watercolor. It surprises, delights -- and sometimes horrifies. I feel very blessed to have my talent. I love painting and I'm never going to retire.

Above left top: *Toward Evening on Monhegan*, bottom: *Henry's "Isle del Encanto"* both watercolors by Patrice Centore.
Above right: Fashion drawing by Patrice Centore.

Workshop and Annual Meeting Schedule for 2008

Friday Sept. 12, 2008 **Watercolor Workshop****

John Salminen, AWS, NWS

Dibble's Inn, Rt. 5, Vernon, NY

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Registration	Foyer
9:00 a.m. – noon	Session One	Gold Room
Noon – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch	Empire Room
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Session Two	Gold Room

Demonstrations by CNYWS Signature Members (Open to the Public)

Artist's Reception and Awards, Annual Juried Show

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Edith Barrett Gallery, Utica College

Saturday Sept. 13, 2008 **Annual Meeting****

Dibble's Inn, Rt. 5, Vernon, NY

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Registration	Foyer
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Welcome	Gold Room
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Speaker, John Salminen, AWS, NWS	Gold Room
10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Annual Business Meeting	Gold Room
11:15 am – Noon	Break	
Noon – 1:30 p.m.	Annual Luncheon	Lower Garden Room
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Demonstration John Salminen, AWS, NWS	Gold Room
3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Break	
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Individual Critique by John Salminen, AWS, NWS	Gold Room

*** Preregistration required to attend the workshop and Annual Meeting.*

Friday evening demonstrations and Juried Show Reception are open to the public and free.

Signature Member Participation Down

From the beginning of CNYWS, Signature Members have been an integral part of our activities. Currently, they comprise about forty-five percent of our membership. Over the past few years it seems that fewer and fewer of our Signature Members attend the Annual Meeting. Also the number submitting work to our Signature Shows has declined.

This year we have staged two Signature Shows and in both cases have had to send out second notices and make phone calls to get enough paintings to fill the gallery space available. Our first show, at the Stone Quarry Hill Art Park in Cazenovia, had eighteen artists displaying 25 paintings. But when the entry deadline passed there were only ten paintings entered. It took several phone calls to get enough artwork to fill the space.

For our second show, at the Earlville Opera House in Earlville, we had a similar problem. When the deadline for

entries came there were only five paintings committed to the show. After many personal contacts we finally had 20 paintings to fill the gallery.

Signature status confers the opportunity to display work in our two Signature Shows as well as the Annual Juried Show. We are concerned as to why more of you are not taking advantage of these opportunities. Before the Board adopts any measures to improve the situation, we are asking for your input as to why more of you have not been participating in CNYWS activities.

You can help by sending a note to Carl Crittenden, 974 Route 31, Bridgeport, NY 13030 - or by sending an e-mail to robertscrittenden@verizon.net - expressing your thoughts and concerns. We are interested in your general ideas and suggestions as well as any specific problems you may be encountering, such as health, expense, distance, etc.

Members in the News ...

Ann Pember has received some awards in 2008 for her paintings, one from the Watercolor Society of Alabama in their Annual Exhibition and the Missouri Watercolor Society's Annual Exhibition as well. She also had a painting selected for inclusion in the Adirondacks National Exhibition of American Watercolors in Old Forge August 2008. Ann has produced a new book in CD format for viewing on a computer: *Make Dynamic Paintings In Watercolor*. It is available through her website, www.annpember.com.

Joanne C. Resch is the recipient of a 2008 Individual Artist Grant administered by the Tri-County Arts Council as part of the Decentralization Regrant Program funded by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). This program funds artists in Schoharie, Montgomery and Fulton counties. Only two such grants are awarded annually. Joanne's grant project entitled *Journaling Along The Mohawk, Sketches & Memoirs of the Central Mohawk Valley*, is a compilation of her watercolor sketches inspired by historical sites throughout the Mohawk Valley, complemented with historical notations and quotes from Valley residents in journal form. Also, Resch was recently commissioned to paint a "welcome sign" for the Fort Plain Free Library through funding from the NYS Canal Greenway Grant and a NYS Library Public Library Construction Grant. *Nostalgic Reflections Of The Mohawk River At Fort Plain* is a 3 ft.x 4 ft. acrylic painting, completed on a mahogany panel, which welcomes the community and visitors into the newly restored and renovated public library. To view the image, visit www.dutchmastersjoinery.com.

Jody Primoff won an Award of Excellence at the 60th Annual Juried Show of the Chestertown Arts League, in Chestertown, MD, and the Burchan Award given at the Mansion Regional Art Show sponsored by the Upper Catskill Community Council of the Arts. (UCCCA).

Lucy Suhr was awarded Juror's Choice at Sunday with the Artists Show in November '07 and First Prize in Art in the Park in March '08 at the Flagler County Art League in Palm Coast, Florida.

Splash 10 is out and includes work by **Martha Deming**. Her painting "Woodsy Napping" was accepted and appears on page 109. CNYWS Signature members **Rob O'Brien** and **Tom Yacovella** are also in the *Splash 10* collection. Guest artist for 2008, **John Salminen** has two works included on pages 86 and 87. It is truly an honor to be included in a book with so many other fine artists. **Martha Deming** taught a three day workshop for all media at the Arts Center in Old Forge in June. The topic was techniques for using photo references without copying, something of interest to most of us who work in the Northeast with its sometimes inclement weather and climate or try to paint flowers that wilt, animals that move, light that changes. All 15 participants enthusiastically tackled the ten assignments and felt they learned a lot that they could then integrate into their own work. This past spring and early summer Martha taught two 4 week classes on value based composition, one for the Remsen Central School Community

Education program and one for a Utica watercolor group. She will be teaching a 6 week beginner level watercolor class in Remsen in the fall. Call 315-831-3797 to sign up. Martha recently achieved Juried Associate level membership in the Pastel Society of America. Signature level membership is the next goal. She will also be judging the regional show at the Mohawk Valley Center For The Arts in August.

Dick English's painting, "Ballina Barn" was accepted for the Hudson Valley Art Association's 77th Annual Exhibition. This will be held at the Lyme Art Association's Gallery in Old Lyme, Connecticut, June 27 to August 2. Dick is a Signature Member of the HVAA.

One of **Roland (Chip) Stevens'** paintings is being published in a centennial book by the Masters of Foxhounds of America. It will be featured in one of seven sections. Four of his watercolors were juried into the Genesee Valley Plein Air Painters six-month exhibition at the Genesee County Museum in Mumfordsville. He received a Best of Show and a merit award in the Pittsford Art Group spring show. In a different vein, Chip was involved in the discovery of a long-lost British warship that sank in a storm on Lake Ontario in 1780. He did a pen and ink sketch of the brig sloop in a storm and the sketch was published along with the write-up on API.

Kathy Kernan had her painting *Awaiting Spring* accepted in the 2008 Adirondacks National Exhibition of American Watercolors, August 23- October 5 in Old Forge, NY and *The Market, Old Jerusalem* accepted in The National Juried Art Exhibition 2008, July 19- August 22 in Cooperstown, NY. In addition she had an exhibit of paintings during July at the Breakwater Art Gallery in Cape Vincent, NY.

Bud Bolte presented two workshops - "Watercolor On A Sealed Surface" - this past winter at the Mount Dora, FL Art Center. He was also pleased to receive several awards this past year - 'Best of Show' (Mount Dora Art League) and 'Award of Distinction', (Leesburg, FL Art Association's Spring Exhibition). Additionally, Bud has been fortunate to be juried into this summer's Adirondack National Exhibition of American Watercolor in Old Forge. He was also selected as a participating artist for the "Art in the Air" banner project in Mount Dora, Florida.

Debbie Rosato will have an exhibit in September at SUNYIT and another in October at the New Hartford Library. **Steve Ryan** has been selected as one of four artists out of hundreds of applicants to receive a One-Man Show at Le Moyne College. The dates of the show are September 15-October 10th in the Falcone Library at Le Moyne. Also he was asked to be one of the Judges at this year's New York State Fair Art Competition.

Susan Murphy won an Award of Excellence for her watercolor "Beach Bones" at the OAG Spring Members Juried show at Hospice in Liverpool, NY (and won \$20!)

Catherine Bennett has been awarded Best of Show in the Syracuse City School District's "On My Own Time" Exhibit, and her watercolor "Italia Spectra" was selected for inclu-

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Website News

If you have logged onto our website lately and gone to the Member page, you may have seen a selection on the left side called **Member Area**. In the past if you tried to click on this link nothing happened. We are pleased to announce that this area is now accessible. This is a secure area open only to members of CNYWS where you can find the names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of other members. The purpose of this feature of the website is to make this information available to our members without it being open to the public.

When you log in for the first time you will be asked to create a profile, which is your user name and a password. Open the website centralnewyorkwatercolorociety.org and click on the Member page, then click on **Member Area** near the bottom of the left side. A new page will open with two boxes where you can type in your user name and password. Your user name is the **e-mail address** you have provided to CNYWS. If you have not established a password, click on the **reset password** button. You will receive an automatic e-mail which will give you a temporary password to allow you access. The first time you login using this password, you should reset your password - which will allow you to choose your own for future use.

Once you have an established password, type it in the password box and click on Login. This will open the page where the members' names are listed alphabetically. Click on

the listings at the left to switch from Signature to Associate or Honorary. Click on a name to show additional information, such as the office that member currently holds or committees on which he/she serves.

Once you are in the secure area you have several options. Clicking on **my profile** allows you to view and change the information displayed. If any of the information is incorrect or needs to be updated, you may make the change here. If you have a winter and summer address, you can specify when you want mail sent where. You will not be able to change information about any other member. Please note that if you change your e-mail address you will need to reset your password to work with the new e-mail address.

If you need to download a list of names, etc., click on **export** and select a file of names and other information you specify. This will allow you to print out your own list on your computer.

If you have any questions or would like to receive a copy of the **Member User's Manual**, send an e-mail to robertscrittenden@verizon.net and I will send you a pdf file which you can read on your computer or use to print your own copy.

It is time to post some new paintings on the website. If any of you would like to send new images, please e-mail them in jpg format to robertscrittenden@verizon.net and I will use as many as possible.

Carl Crittenden, Webmaster

Member News

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sion in the Everson Museum. Her artwork "*Eternal Spirit*" was shown in the Members' National Watercolor Society Show in San Pedro, California this past Spring.

Pamela Walker Hart's "InsideOut Works" Solo Exhibit of Watermedia and Mixed Media Works opened on July 11th at the Rome Art & Community Center and will continue through July 30. In August, Pam teaches her "CREATIVITY InsideOut Class" at the Rome Art & Community Center on Tuesday afternoons; call the RACC at 336-1040 for registration information or visit Pam's website at www.pwalkerhart.com for more information. Pam juried the 8th Annual Regional Art Exhibit for Adults & Teens at the Ava Dorfman Senior Center, Rome, NY. This year, Hart participated in Invitational Exhibits by the Society of New Music, Cazenovia, NY; Davis Art Center, Naples, FL; and Corinthian Club, Syracuse, NY.

Linda Kollar was selected into the 73rd Cooperstown Art Assoc. National Exhibition which opens July 18th with the

preview party. This is the second year in a row that she has been selected for this show.

Evelyn S. Dankovich, a watercolor artist who also paints in oils, has been awarded the Grand Prize at the Cooperstown Art Association 73rd Annual National Exhibition for her oil painting "*River View*".

Sally Clark's water media was included in the Adirondack Theme Exhibition "All in the Family" at the Arts Center/Old Forge, which opened in June. She also has had work selected for the Arts Center's permanent collection.

Many members won awards at the Central Adirondack Show in Old Forge. **Celia Clark** won the Catherine Evans Memorial Award (Best In Show), 1st in Watercolor. **Carol Saggese** won the Miriam Kashiwa Award. **Catherine P. O'Neill** won a Honorable Mention in the Masters Division. **Loretta Lepkowski** placed 2nd in Mixed Media. **Martha Deming** won 3rd in Watercolor. **Evelyn Dankovich** had a 3rd place in Acrylic. Celia, Catherine, Loretta, Martha and Evelyn had work juried into the Masters Division. There were a total of 203 entries in the 2008 Central Adirondack Show.

Slide Review Schedule

The deadline for submission of slides for the next slide review will be September 20, 2008. Applications for Signature Member status are available from Kitty Blind or from our website at www.centralnewyorkwatercolorociety.org. They should be mailed to William S. Elkins, 203 Scott Ave., Syracuse, NY 13224.

Newsletter Schedule

The deadline for submitting material for the February 2009 CNYWS Newsletter will be January 20, 2008. For those members who have e-mail addresses, an e-mail reminder will be sent out in early January. If possible, please send your items by e-mail to make re-typing unnecessary to jmadden@netscape.com. Jean Madden is kindly acting as a temporary editor until we have a permanent replacement.

Newsletter Forum....

We invited members of the Board to describe their approach to creating artwork. In addition, Bud Bolte was asked to contribute his views on the process. We hope that these discussions will provide useful insights -- as well as an interesting glimpse into the personalities of the artists. If you have a subject that you would like to see discussed in a future Newsletter please submit it to any current Officer or Board member.

Here is the question: What elements do you use to create a strong composition in your paintings? Does your approach vary depending on subject, and do you always consciously include a focal point?

Dick English replied, "My paintings are mostly landscapes. I think that finding something in the landscape to act as a focal point for the viewer is the most important way to engage the viewer's interest. The focal point might be something as obvious as some buildings, a figure, a boat or a tree. Or it could be subtler, such as the end of a row of trees blocking some of the view. For a strong composition, other elements in the landscape must also be designed to bring the viewer's eye on a path leading through the painting to the focal point. These elements might include a road, a creek or a shadow. And strong value contrasts in the painting will help. Alternatively, placing the focal point at the vertex of a triangle of elements in the landscape and sky can provide a subtle way to guide the eye.

Placement of the focal point in the painting is a very important factor in making a strong composition. A well-known rule is to divide the painting's height and width into thirds. The placement of the focal point should be near one of the four resulting intersections. It should never be in the center. Actually, the "rule of thirds" is an approximation for using the Golden Mean to establish the four intersections. The Golden Mean is an ancient Greek approach for defining the most pleasing ratio of the short to the long side of a rectangle. The Golden Mean ratio of the short to long side is 0.618 or 61.8%.

I always develop my composition from a sketch using the Golden Mean approach, placing the two dividing lines up 38.2% and 61.8% from the bottom and across the width. (Dividing in thirds places the lines up 33.3% and 66.7% from the bottom or across the width -- almost the same, but simpler.) When the focal point is near the horizon of a landscape, I always place the horizon either at the lower or upper horizontal line on the sketch, depending on the subject. The focal point would be placed at the intersection with one of the vertical lines on the sketch. This usually makes a strong composition. If one examines outstanding paintings in magazines or museums, whether they are portraits, landscapes or a still life, one will usually find that the focal point is located near one of these intersections."

Martha Deming responded, "The primary element, the foundation, of my composition approach is value. But, as Skip Lawrence says, "People don't get in busses and go to Vermont

to see the fall values." Color can't be overlooked, but it also can't really be separated from value. Every color has its own inherent value and any time you use a color, you're using a value.

Other factors for me include variety within repetition; dominance of color, value, intensity, shape and line; directional movement; balance; unity; unequal intervals; varied edges and transitions -- all are important to design. Composition is like juggling a hundred balls all at once and trying not to drop a single one, there are so many things to keep in mind while composing and painting.

I consider composition and design as synonymous. The design process must be thought through before picking up a brush, hence, the emphasis on thumbnails and value sketches. A balance must be struck between pre-planning and flexibility. You need both. As John Salminen says, "Solve your design problems before you start to paint" and "Make every decision a design-driven decision." At the heart of design, to me, is value."

Lorraine Van Hatten said, "I do try to start a painting by compositionally thinking of where my focal point is going to be placed. This is where I will place the darkest and lightest values of the painting. I sometimes work out a color plan, as I try to use a limited palette for color unity. I may do a few studies before I have something I am happy with. The focal point area is where there will be the most detail and hard edges. It can sometimes have a bold color accent placed there. All the design elements: value, color, edge control, etc., help to direct the eye to the center of interest.

One idea that has proven important to me is the quote: "If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail." Even though I am always in a hurry to put paint to paper, I sometimes have to force myself to think about the composition first.

The rest of the area of the painting will tend to be softer-edged, with lost edges and a mid-tone value range. I try to alternate light against dark, and dark against light. I place emphasis on the eye path to draw the viewer into the painting. This can be done in many ways: with negative shapes, directional lines, or dry-brush strokes on the surface."

Chip Stevens added, "I think a focal point adds a lot of interest and strength in any painting. I find it disappointing to look at a well-executed painting and wonder why it was painted -- sort of like looking at a pastoral landscape without cows, sheep, horses, farmers, farmhouse or machinery.

To me, the basic visual elements of a composition include line, shape, form, space, color, value and texture, all of which must be compatible. I try to use these to form a cohesive, unified design.

Regardless of subject matter, my approach is usually the same -- but I keep my focal point flexible to take advantage of unusual problems or opportunities created by the media."

Bud Bolte responded, "I am a devotee of the watercolorist Edgar Whitney. In his book he describes fifteen or so principles and elements that are basic for a successful painting. I've

Newsletter Forum

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selected three principles that, to me, are the most fundamental for my work: composition, value and color.

I would say that I first address composition, since it seems to be the substantive issue for any painting I might have in mind. With few exceptions, I start a piece from a pencil or pen sketch which might come from an on-site drawing, a photograph or just from my imagination. The advantage of a sketch is that you can move a tree or rock from its actual on-site location, eliminate a dog and fire hydrant from a photograph, or rearrange what your mind created.

Regarding the focal point, I most often apply the "rule of thirds" [as described by Dick English, above] which has been a common practice of many of the artists I have studied under -- including Tony Couch early on, and Don Getz over the past few years. Any of the four intersections can be selected as the spot where the most important part of your painting is displayed. It is where you would hope a viewer would be most captivated with your piece. But, as you know, rules are meant to be broken.

The value aspect of a painting is readily associated with composition and focal point. It is at the focal point where you will generally find the darkest values interfacing with the lightest values. Such an interaction will most often present (as Tony Couch would say) the "star of the show."

For my own personal satisfaction, I try to render a painting that is 50% mid-value, 30% dark value, and 20% light value, or with the dark and light percentages reversed. If one were to believe that I mathematically play with these percentages -- wrong.

Color is a very personal choice, with emotions and sentiments involved. I am particularly fond of strong and bold colors, but that's me. What you might want to find at the focal point would be complementary colors, or warm and cool colors, always with the dark and light values.

Lastly, whenever I teach a workshop, I encourage the painters to visit art museums where work of the past two or three centuries is displayed, or good art exhibitions. I ask them to look at the composition, the value scheme, the focal point and color combinations. When we do this, we are far more likely to produce work that is appealing and rewarding."

Bill Elkins said, "While I know that having a good, strong focal point is a fundamental rule for creating an engaging painting, I quite often forget to pay appropriate attention to my focal point.

I work predominantly from photographs. My former teacher and mentor, Nicora Gangi, assured me that working from photos was not only acceptable, but would make me a better photographer. After recently returning from an "art-for-travel, travel-for-art" vacation, I found that I had taken 1,100 photos. In reviewing these photos at home, I see that there is a reasonably strong focal point in most of them. So, when selecting an image from my photo collection, I find myself drawn to the ones with a strong composition. Thus, my photos seem to be driving my paintings, rather than me creating a strong painting from a mediocre photo. As I'm

painting, I often find myself laboring over technique, rather than constantly checking my composition.

I do find that I am drawn to photograph a subject because I may see a strong "L"-shaped composition, or a meandering "S" leading in to a scene. I'm usually conscious, with the camera, not to get my horizon dead center in the frame. However, I'm usually not thinking so much about these things once the painting is underway.

What I need is someone to stand over me and rap my knuckles with a ruler once in a while to remind me, again, of the fundamentals!"

Catherine Bennett replied with ... "Ten Top Tips of Composition:

1. Focus - The focal point should attract the viewer's eye to it. Place the main subject on an intersection of the four lines created using the "rule of thirds" [as described by Dick English, above]. This provides the artist with a choice of four good areas to position their focal point. Definitely avoid the center because it's too stagnant.
2. Viewfinder - Isolate the key subject in a scene or photo by using a viewfinder. .
3. Vary Your Values - Draw a thumbnail sketch in three values: light (the white of the paper), medium (grey marker), and dark (black marker). Then analyze to compare how much space each value occupies. A strong composition uses all three in unequal amounts.
4. Odd Numbers - Create an odd number of elements in the painting -- in this case three's company, not two.
5. Throw a Curve ball - Try to vary your paintings so they are not repetitive with the same focal point, the same format, or the same horizon line. Try different choices in your design decisions.
6. Keep Your Edges To Yourself - Elements or objects in the painting should NOT begin or end with the same shared line or edge. Ask yourself ... which is in front? and ... which is behind? If the objects look like they're right next to each other, then change it -- move one object to be in front of the other.
7. Nice Negative Shapes - Keep your negative spaces interesting by using a special effects texture or a graduated wash.
8. Heat It Up or Cool It Down - Select a predominant color temperature for your work -- either warm or cool. Then add a small splash of the opposite somewhere for interest.
9. United We Stand - Under- and over-glazing help unify the artwork. Starting with a transparent under-glaze will tie future layers together, and a final light over-glaze of a dominant hue will blend the overall finished look. This keeps the watercolor unified.
10. Map Quest - Plan compositional decisions prior to painting in a organized thumbnail map. Use an arrow to symbolize which direction the light source is coming from, plot your values, dictate your palette and map your contour lines. The more you decide ahead of time, the less you'll take a wild guess at later.

Demo Night 2008 and Show Opening at Utica College

As Co-chairs for the 2008 Demo Night, Heather G. Abrams and Martha Deming have accepted the challenge to meet the high standards set by last year's Chair, Angela Wilson. The 2008 event will be held in the Utica College Library Concourse in conjunction with the Artists' Reception for the Annual All Member Juried Show which will be hung in the adjacent Barrett Gallery.

From 6 to 8 P.M. our eight Demo Night artists will demonstrate their magic, usually performed in their studios at home, in person, right here for all of us to enjoy, CNYWS members and the public as well. You will be able to meet and chat with Signature members Catherine Bennett, Polly Blunk, Bud Bolte, Drayton Jones, Kathy Kernan, Sandra Schick,

Lorraine Van Hatten and Angela Wilson, all representatives of the best CNYWS has to offer.

Delicious seasonal refreshments will also be served so add this exciting evening to your calendar, bring your family and all your art friends to join us for an inspiring art evening. CNYWS members and the public are all invited and the event is free.

For directions see the article below, or view the website.

Also, directions are available for handicapped persons, please call Utica College.

CNYWS Annual Juried Show at Utica College

The CNYWS's Annual Juried Show will be held from August 26 through Sept. 26, 2008, in the Edith Barrett Gallery downstairs in the Utica College Library concourse. The juror for this exhibit is Carolynne Whitefeather, the Edith Barrett Fine Arts Gallery Director.

All work will be juried. Each artist member, Signature or Associate, may submit two works. The CNYWS Medal will be awarded to the painting selected as best in show. Other ribbon prizes will be awarded.

We encourage all our members to enter in our the 2008 Annual Juried Exhibition. It showcases who we are as Central New York Watercolor Society members.

The Annual show's reception will be held on Friday, September 12th, from 6 to 8 P.M., in conjunction with Demo Night. This gives us a unique opportunity to show our work to family, friends and neighbors. Also, we hope to have new Signature Members show slides of their work at this time.

Utica College has been most supportive of us in the past and is looking forward to our returning to their gallery. The normal gallery hours for the Edith Barrett Gallery are Monday through Saturday, 1 to 4 P.M.

Directions for Demo Night and Show Reception at the Utica College Campus in the Library Concourse

From Route 12:

- Take the *Burrstone Road West* exit.
- At the top of the exit ramp, turn *left* at the light onto Burrstone Road West.
- Watch for a large green sign saying "Utica College", then another, smaller green sign saying Utica College, then the official campus sign saying Utica College, all signs on your *right* as you drive.
- Turn *right* onto the campus road and drive straight ahead to the first stop sign.
- At this stop sign, turn *left*.
- Go through the next three stop signs as the road gently curves around the buildings.
- On the far left you'll see St. Luke's Hospital with a big sign on the side of it that says, "The Birthplace".
- *On your right* you'll see a building with tall, square pillars on the end. *This is the Library.*

To park your car and go to the concourse on foot, go just past the Library. There is a Centro bus stop shelter on your right.

- Just across from the bus stop, turn *left* into the parking lot there.
- Walk in on the sidewalk adjacent to the bus stop. You'll see the "Strebel Student Center" ahead toward the left.
- Bear to the *right* on the sidewalk as you approach the Student Center toward Rocco DePerno Hall.
- The Library entrance will be on your *right*. Enter the *right* hand door.
- Take the stairs immediately to your *right*.
- Bear *left* at the foot of the stairs into the Concourse and Gallery. The Concourse is where Demo Night event will be. The Gallery is where our all member juried show will be.

For workshop participants:

It takes only 15 minutes to drive to Utica College from Dibbles. Just turn left as you leave Dibble's parking lot onto Route 5 East, which joins Route 12 at Utica and watch for the Burrstone Road West exit. Then follow the above directions. We hope you will all join us for an outstanding event.

CNYWS Workshop 2008

On September 12, 2008 CNYWS is delighted to offer its members a one day workshop with John Salminen, NWS, AWS-DF, a water media artist noted for his urban landscapes and striking abstractions. John specializes in helping artists develop a stronger sense of design to apply toward improved compositions in their own work. In one intense but fun day we will explore abstraction as a means of increasing design awareness. John's workshop presentations are always well organized in a sequential step-by-step manner that makes such ventures in design "user friendly" and definitely non-threatening. He allows us to focus on design without the distraction of subject matter. Interesting results are a given. Artists at all levels of experience can benefit. (This writer participated in one of John's 5 day workshops in 2005 which was reviewed in the February 2006 CNYWS Newsletter. Several of our members also enjoyed John's 5 day workshop at the Old Forge Arts Center in 2007.)

Whatever your favorite subject matter, painting style or preferred medium (we hope it's watercolor!), you will leave the workshop armed with new ways to approach composition through invigorated seeing and thinking skills which will give you an invaluable step forward in all your future work. It may even spark the desire to take a full 5 day workshop from John in the future. (See his website: www.johnsalminen.com for a complete listing). In one day, we can get a delicious, thought provoking taste of design driven painting, but as in all painting, the fun has just begun. Take the day's lessons home and integrate them into your own work and watch your compositions improve. Our workshop will be mainly a large group instruction day with much to include in limited time. John's down to earth approach and great sense of humor keep the workshop exciting and the learning enjoyable.

The registration form will be available for download on our website and hard copies mailed to non-computerized members. Watch the website and watch your mail. Sign up promptly. The workshop is sure to fill quickly. You'll receive your materials list and further instructions upon registration.

For Those Attending the Workshop and Annual Meeting, Sept. 12 and 13

Room Reservations

Call the Hotel at Vernon Downs 315-829-2201 for room availability. Rooms there will be \$89.00 plus tax. The Hotel is on the grounds of Vernon Downs approximately 1 mile from Dibble's Inn. Rooms accommodate 2 or 4 guests. Mention the "Watercolor Society" for these rates. **Reservations must be made by August 10th to get the \$89 rate.**

Directions to Dibble's Inn and Vernon Downs

From the Thruway - Exit the thruway at Verona and turn right onto Route 365. At the first traffic light, turn right onto Route 31 and drive to the next traffic light, which will be the intersection of Route 5 in Vernon. Turn left on Route 5 and **Dibble's Inn** will be on the left approximately 1/4 mile.

To reach the Hotel at Vernon Downs, continue east on Route 5 to the next traffic light and turn right. **Vernon Downs** will be on the right approximately 1/2 mile from the corner.

From the east on Route 5, as you come into Vernon turn left at the first traffic light. **Vernon Downs** will be on the right approximately 1/2 mile from the turn. To get to **Dibble's Inn** stay on Route 5 for about 3/4 mile from the traffic light. Dibble's Inn will be on the right.

From Dibble's Inn to Vernon Downs, exit the parking lot and turn left onto Route 5. At the first traffic light turn right. **Vernon Downs** will be on the right side approximately 1/2 mile from the traffic light.

Membership

Please direct all membership questions to Kitty Blind, our Corresponding Secretary and Membership Chairman at kitsacct@hotmail.com.

In Memoriam

We are saddened to report the recent loss of two of our very accomplished Signature Members, who will be sorely missed.

Lloyd Schafer was a Charter Member of CNYWS and was very active in the group through the many years that he and his wife, Jayne (who also passed away in June), resided in Old Forge, NY. He remained a loyal member even after their move to Silver Springs, FL, a few years ago. Lloyd began painting later in life, but he completed and sold over 4,000 watercolors from his Singing Waters Studio in Old Forge. The Arts Center there has dedicated their 56th Annual Central Adirondack Art Show in his honor.

Murray Wentworth, along with his wife Elaine (also a Signature Member), had a summer gallery on Cape Cod in the 1960's until they established their own watercolor workshop in Port Clyde, ME. There they had the rare opportunity to meet Andrew Wyeth and visit his home studio for a critique of his work. In 1984, North Lights published the Wentworths' book, "Watercolor for All Seasons." The couple joined CNYWS as Signature Members in 2004, after they had settled in the Oneonta, NY, area.

Murray was a Dolphin Fellow of the American Watercolor Society and an Honorary Member of Allied Artists of America, National Academy of Design, New England Watercolor Society, The Guild of Boston Artists, and the Hudson Valley Art Association.

He had been on the faculty of The Art Institute of Boston, and had exhibited at the Boston Museum, The Metropolitan Museum, Grand Central Art Galleries in NYC, as well as many other venues.

Guest Artist

John Salminen, NWS, AWS-DF

Presently from the Duluth, Minnesota area, John Salminen was born and raised in St. Paul. He earned his bachelor's degree and master's degree from the University of Minnesota where, among other things, he was one of the first students in noted artist, Cheng Khee Chee's evening class. John's career included teaching high school art for many years, all the while maintaining and building his own painting skills.

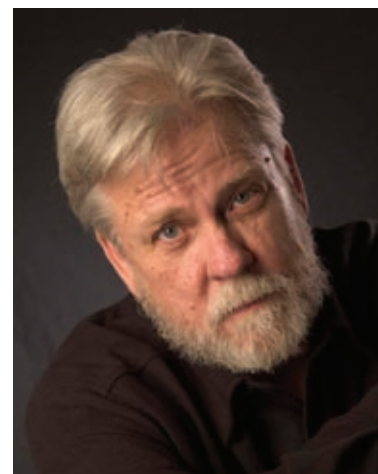
He has earned signature membership in many national and regional watercolor societies, including the American Watercolor Society and the National Watercolor Society and been honored with 'master' status in several of these societies.

John has won more than 150 awards in national and international exhibitions, including the American Watercolor Society Gold Medal and the National Watercolor Society Silver Star First Place Award. His work has been exhibited in the National Academy in New York. He has served as a Juror of Selection and as an Awards Judge for the American Watercolor Society and as a Juror of Selection for the National Watercolor Society. He was Juror of Selection for the Adirondack National Exhibition of American Watercolors (ANEAW), held annually in Old Forge, NY in 2007. Previous to 2007, we have been privileged to enjoy several of John's originals that had been accepted into ANEAW. Also in 2007 several of our members participated in a five day workshop that John taught at the Old Forge Arts Center. This year immediately following his presentation to CNYWS, he will be teaching a five day workshop at the Hudson River Valley Art Workshops program in Greenville, NY. John teaches all over the United States and a complete listing of his scheduled workshops can be found on his website, www.johnsalminen.com.

John's work has been featured in many national and international magazines, including The Artist's Magazine, The Artist, Watercolor Magic, American Artist, Watercolor and International Artist and in several books. John shares his knowl-

edge through articles, too, often teaming with his wife, Kathy, an expert writer, editor and photographer. Works have been included in *Splash 6* and *Splash 10* in the series published by North Light. He was recently included in *Who's Who In American Art*.

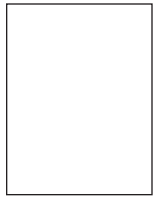
Known for his urban landscapes and his mixed media abstracts, John uses his camera as a primary tool for resource collection and design. He will spend at least a week of intense immersion in the design and painting process as he completes each painting. Early in his art career, John was influenced in part by the work of artist Morris Shubin. He finds inspiration in the work and teachings of Cheng Khee Chee, Ed Whitney, Frank Webb, Hans Hoffman, H. C. Dodd and Arne Westerman among others. John's teaching is focused on design taught through abstraction, free of the distractions of subject matter. His instruction is down to earth, straight forward and filled with anecdotes. He brings to us a clear way of thinking about design as the basis for our paintings and opens the door to an enticing path to improvement. The essentials of his five day workshop are available on DVD. See his website for more information. A new DVD, currently in production, on the topics of his urban landscapes and painting reflective surfaces will be available by mid-winter. Stay tuned to John's website for more information. We are honored to welcome John Salminen as CNYWS's 2008 Guest Artist.



Top: John Salminen. Above left to right: "Three Farmers", cropped, and "Brighton Beach Trio" watercolors.

Central New York Watercolor Society

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CNYWS NEWSLETTER

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Right top: Patrice Centore's *Pot of Gold*.

Bottom right: John Salminen's *Tollway*.

Images were supplied by the artists.

