

HARLINGEN ART FORUM

Issue: Sept 2007

Tuesday, September 18, 2007

Installation of New Officers Highlites September Meeting

The September meeting of the Harlingen Art Forum features a number of important activities for the coming year. Foremost among them will be the installation of the new slate of officers elected last May. Lifetime Member and Gallery Director Emeritus Bernice Coleman will be officiating as all members welcome the new officers and wish them a productive and artful 2008 Gallery Year.

The major item of the meeting will be a presentation by Marge Ford on the unique paper techniques used in many of her wildfowl portraits and other works.

Perhaps the most important item on the agenda will be the renewal of dues. The Harlingen Art Forum year runs October to September. Member dues are \$35 for single, \$50 for family and \$10 for students.

The September meeting will be held at D'Arte Centre on Monday September 24th at 6 p.m.

ART Walk with a Difference

Ben and I have been traveling in Canada during August and September and we have encountered a unique take on the Art Walk. Most of our time has been spent East of Toronto in the beautiful countryside north of Lake Ontario. It is farther east than I tend to think of it. Traveling up through Indiana and crossing the border at the Ambassador Bridge between Detroit MI and Windsor Ontario I tend to think of myself as "across the lake from Cleveland." For a few minutes we had the distinct pleasure of looking North into the United States. While that's a relatively normal view from Mexico it seems as out of place as palm trees at Christmas when we are in Canada. I'm getting used to palm trees at Christmas however and do plan on keeping that viewpoint for many years to come.

Driving along the 401 eastward we zip through classic prairie turned breadbasket and then cross the dramatic Niagara Escarpment before we hit the traffic jam the locals quaintly call Toronto.

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Beachcombers Treasure Trove

The 48th Annual Beachcombers Fine Art Show is over the horizon and has sailed from view. What a remarkable weekend, visitors from all over North America and artists from Northern Texas to Central Mexico had an incredible time.

Thank you Thank You THANK YOU to all the HAF Members and others who came to the show and volunteered to sit booths, man the entrance desk, work the HAF booth, supervise the Hospitality Room, distribute flyers, help stuff mailers, assist with loading or unloading, man the Sponsor's booth, and just generally do what ever needed to be done.

Beachcomber's could not possibly be the hugely successful show that it is with your unstinting support and assistance.

Next year Beachcomber's 49 Annual Fine Arts Show will be held on July 26th and 27th. Plan now to have your own booth or share with another artist or to present you best work at the HAF Booth.

Oh, and the Treasure Trove Winner? Susan Tarrant! Congratulations!

Harlingen Art Forum

2005-2007

President: Lewis Levine
Past President: Marge Ford
Vice President: Patty Withington
Secretary: Myrilla Sparhawk
Treasurer: Linda Shreeve
Member at Large: Peg Kendall

2007-2009

President: Myrilla Sparhawk
Past President: Lewis Levine
Vice President: Duane Beard
Secretary: Robin Cate
Treasurer: Linda Shreeve
Member At Large: Ann Moncus

Art Walk

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Having waded through that mess we skirt the edges of the Canadian Shield and the terminal moraines of the last glaciers. The countryside alternates between apple orchards, timber and corn with the ever present bulk of Lake Ontario rising and falling relative to the elevation of the roadway off to the South. That big glow I see at night isn't really Cleveland, as I'm reminded by every Country Inn we pass. Although steeped in Revolutionary War sentiment they don't proclaim that George Washington Slept Here, but rather that the Loyalists preserved the area from the deprivations and the incursions of the rebels. And don't forget that "we" won in 1812 and burned the quaint little building called the White House before "we" decided Washington was far too warm and headed back home north of "our" lakes.

Oh, and during the early 20th century "we" were pleased to be the playground and summer retreat for the well to do of New York, which hovers below that glowing southern horizon and is known as Rochester. Some of the earliest Land/Polaroid portraits and Eastman/Kodak moments surely recorded these northern Ontario shores.

Anyway, back to the present.

Artists in this area definitely benefit from the proximity of Toronto as artists in the Texas Hill Country benefit from the denizens of Austin and San Antonio. Don't we Rio Granders wish that Mexico was known for sending us wealthy vacationers instead of being the local place to buy anything and everything cheap!

While the visual arts are probably no more celebrated here than anywhere else, the sheer number of well to do, if not downright filthy rich "summerers" insures that along the lake shore communities there are as many artsy and foodsy places of today as there are timber and mill towns of the past.

In the Quinte Bay area we are probably at the eastern edge of the current vacationers, but that means that the locality is still fresh and inviting as opposed to some of the closer in communities that if they weren't completely overrun and made into commuters' bedroom towns at least have become old and tired and more full of discount chains and Chinese imports than art.

This brings me to the real point of this travelogue, the three "counties" around us each have latched onto and encourage and publicize the Artists Studio Tour.

Started by informal groupings of artists and gallery owners the local economic commissions have joined hands and these semi annual weekend events are slickly publicized and effectively marketed along with all the other "lifestyle" events that "people in the area" don't want to miss.

South of the cities of Trenton and Belleville is an almost island one tenth the size of New York's Long Island. Rural and still mostly natural it shares many of the geologic and meteorologic aspects of western New York, ergo, boating and vinting, ergo tourists and cash.

The Prince Edward County Studio and Gallery Tour entails stops at 4 galleries and 35 individual artist studios. We have visited all

the galleries and have found them comparable in size or smaller than our D'Arte Centre, but inevitably representing far fewer artists.

The individual studios are a wild mix from home workshop to well situated roadside gallery and workshop. We have stopped and talked with a potter well up to her elbows in clay and painters besplattered with oils and acrylics. We have meet well coiffed and bejeweled sculptors and artists with hands smooth enough to think of handling and dyeing silk. What has been almost universal is that they are as interested in meeting people and talking with strangers as having the opportunity to show and sell their works.

What makes the whole thing so remarkable is that the clients, the vacationers, etc. are driving from rural house to rural house with short stops in little hamlets for a more traditionally "art walk" to five or six venues before heading off again to drive from hill to dale. If you attended our recent Beachcombers Fine Art Show, think of it as the front fourth of the hall artists displaying among the business along Harlingen's Jackson Street, the next fourth of the hall artists spread out one by one between Weslaco and Port Isabel and the restaurants of South Padre Island plopped down higgledy piggledy in between.

Amazing, and the attendance is extraordinary!

ONLINE see the Prince Edward County Studio and Gallery Tour 2007 information at

www.pecstudiotour.com

Many participating artists also have their own websites that you should be sure and visit.