

## WEST HILLS ART LEAGUE

### Minutes for Meeting of February 16, 2017

Cindy Gilberti Presiding

**Minutes** for our 11/17/16 meeting, having been posted on line, were accepted with the proviso that anyone with corrections or additions should feel free to submit them.

Audra Zampogna submitted her current **Treasurer's report** which shows a current balance of \$6,201.36. The report was approved.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration:** Debbie Tobin reported that our May 13 Celebration party will feature finger foods, a coffee and wine bar and a cellist, as well as some "surprises" she's reserving for the big night.

**Annual Exhibit:** Cindy reiterated dates for our juried show at Robin Hill – DropOff on May 1 (Volunteers for hanging are needed), opening on Mother's Day, May 14 (Members are asked to bring food and beverages), judge's commentary and pickup on May 18, our last meeting for the season. Member created bookmarks will be a feature again this year. Measurements are 2 ¼ X 7 inches. Submissions are requested no later than our April 20 meeting, so that Janine has time to insert them into their sleeves.

**Earth Day:** On April 23, Moon Twp Parks & Recreation will sponsor an Earth Day at Robin Hill. WHAL members are invited to participate by offering nature-related art work for sale (no commission) and pursuing plein air painting on the grounds. One special opportunity is for a painting of an antique oil well on the property, based on how the well looked when it was operating (picture reference available from the Parks office). The painting would be featured at a kiosk which will be erected for the event.

**Gilberti Gallery:** Cindy reported a highly successful opening for her new gallery and studio at 1030 Fifth Ave. in Coraopolis. She invites one and all to come visit, and notes that in addition to hanging art, Diane Bauman will be the Resident Artist, and there will be classes and workshops listed.

**North Hills Art Show:** The North Hills Art League will have a non-juried art show opening March 11 with an animal theme. Drop off is scheduled during office hours in the last week of February.

**Demonstrator:** Our guest presenter was Katie Koenig who works mostly in acrylics. She has been drawing and painting her whole life, selling her first drawing at the age of sixteen. She wanted to make what she thought was a stable career out of her passion by pursuing illustration. After earning a BFA in Illustration from Savannah College of Art and Design, however, Katie realized painting was her true calling. She settled in the suburbs of Pittsburgh where she began to paint images of the places and objects that have impacted her the most. Katie now focuses on dramatic, yet simple still life paintings of objects and foods she has a great fondness for or a nostalgic connection to.

**Demonstration Painting:** Katie brought along a finished painting of olives, which she says are one of her favorite subjects. For her demonstration, she brought a painting of grapes (another

favorite subject) for which she had already done the background and the foreground table. While she talked, she worked on one of the grapes.

**Subject Matter:** Katie started out painting landscapes but now does still lifes almost exclusively. Besides grapes and olives, she likes pears and sandwiches – especially peanut butter and jelly. She has recently been working on a donut series. In addition, she has done pet portraits and says she would like to do more human portraits.

**Support:** She works on canvas, although she has tried wood panels in the past. (She finds them too textured, though, or else too smooth. Canvas seems to be the perfect medium.) The canvas she was working on was about 16 X 24. The olive painting was a little longer. She used to work smaller but has gradually gone to bigger sizes. Her Primanti Sandwich painting is about 30 X 40. While not her usual medium, she has painted murals. She has converted a bedroom in her house into a studio. Her principal lighting is a standard desk lamp with a regular lightbulb.

**Palette:** She doesn't use a large selection of colors. She listed a blue, a yellow ochre, a wine and a magenta as well as black and white. She comments that she is not afraid to use black despite all the critics who abhor it. For her very dark background on the demonstration painting, she used a mix of blue and green. While she tries to literally represent the colors of her featured objects, her backgrounds are often a combination of photo reality and her own judgment.

**Brushes:** Her only large brush is a one inch bright, which she uses for backgrounds. Otherwise, her brushes are small rounds.

**Style:** Katie favors a realistic style, and cites modern realists as her inspiration. She thinks that what distinguishes her work is her attention to color temperatures and negative space. Despite the simple-looking subject matter in most of her paintings, she says it takes her three or four days to complete a work. The Primanti sandwich took her three weeks to complete. (And she spent the whole of her one-hour demonstration working on one grape.) She says she will sometimes pause and walk away from a painting overnight to refresh her perspective or to decide on a detail, and she says she often has several paintings going at once.

**Method:** Surprisingly, Katie doesn't paint her subjects directly. Instead, she sets up a still life and takes myriad pictures of it – then paints from the photos. She transfers photo images to canvas using a grid system and starts by painting backgrounds and foreground surfaces first, finally centering on the featured objects, doing them one at a time rather than skipping back and forth to different areas of the painting. She says she paints every day, usually in the morning.

**Finish:** She usually sprays her finished work with a matte varnish.

**Selling Her Work:** Katie says most of her sales are at fairs and festivals, although she also sells online through her own website and the Etsy gift site. Besides original paintings, she also offers prints, note cards and objects like coasters. For a festival, she will usually take along about 25 paintings and will often paint while minding her booth. She admits to having difficulty pricing her art, but bases prices for originals on the square inch size of a work.

**Next Meeting:** Our next meeting will be on March 16, when the demonstrator will be Leslie Fehling on Journaling - "Everyday Artist Brings Art to Life."

Respectfully submitted,

Will White

