

WEST HILLS ART LEAGUE

Minutes for Meeting of March 16, 2017

Cindy Gilberti Presiding

Minutes for our 2/16/17 meeting will be posted on line. Anyone with corrections or additions should feel free to submit them. Approval will be on next month's agenda.

Audra Zampogna submitted her current **Treasurer's report** which shows a current balance of \$6076.96. The report was approved.

Membership: Janine reported that we have 58 paid-up members. She reminded everybody that you must have paid your annual dues in order to participate in the upcoming Annual Show.

Program Schedule: Starr Hull confirmed that next month's demonstrator would be Connie Clutter and "Portraits of the Past."

Website: Amy Short announced that April's Artist of the Month would be Kim Freithaler. Besides being an accomplished artist, Kim is President of the North Hills Art Center.

Newsletter: Cindy reminded us that the newsletter is now being issued every other month.

50th Anniversary Celebration: Cindy had hoped invitations would be available at tonight's meeting but is sure we'll have them at next month's meeting.

North Hills Art Center: Kim Freithaler said that the Art Center's Animal Show would be up Mondays through Fridays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., through May. They have 103 pieces on display, "the most we've ever had in an exhibit." So far, they've sold 11 works

Annual Exhibit: Drop-off May 1, 10 a.m. to Noon. Reception May 14, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Members are asked to arrive early and bring snacks or beverages. Pickup Thursday night, May 18, when the Judge will discuss prize winners. (Participants are asked to leave their art up until the end of the meeting.) Entry fee: \$5 per piece, two pieces maximum. 20% commission to WHAL for any art sold at the show.

Members are invited to create **bookmarks** for giveaways to mothers attending the show. Hopefully, each artist will submit four bookmarks by next month's meeting. Dimensions are 2 ¼ X 7. Janine will insert them into plastic sleeves with tassels. Artists are asked to sign each bookmark. A WHAL sticker will be put on the backs.

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 (with business-card-sized labels for title/artist/price info). There are no commissions. Drop-off is April 19. Pickup is at the end of the day, April 23.

Brewhaa: Moon Township's Second Annual Brewhaha fundraiser is scheduled for one day on Saturday, March 25. Artists are invited to donate work which can be auctioned off. For more info, call 412-264-5354.

Gilberti Gallery: Cindy announced that Kim McAninch, who recently demonstrated knife painting for us, will be opening a show at the gallery on March 25 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The exhibit will be up through May. Cindy added that the gallery is offering an extensive schedule of classes in oils, watercolors, printing and drawing.

In addition, Cindy has offered the gallery as a venue for WHAL member sales during December, beginning 12/2/17. She suggested this as an alternative to the Holiday Festival at Robin Hill, since our space at that event has been reduced, but another option would be to display at both venues. A vote on this will take place at a later meeting.

Amy Short Sculpture Class: Amy is offering a class in sculpting the human figure at Sweetwater. There will be a live model, and students will have stands that they can roll around the model. There will be eight classes, starting April 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Demonstrator: Our guest presenter was **Leslie Fehling**, a painter who also enjoys sewing, cooking, gardening, and travel. She calls herself an “Everyday Artist”, inspired by the world around her. She loves “blue skies and hydrangeas, good books and dark chocolate, porch swings, my family, and lace curtains blowing in the breeze.” She says she tries to remember that this life is a gift, each moment a wonder, and that we really do need to stop and smell the roses.

Her presentation was about **Sketchbook Journaling**, and she brought along a large collection of her sketchbooks to illustrate her talk.

She has been at it for seven years and has been able to devote full time to it over the past two to three years. It has followed a stint as a commercial artist, bringing up three girls, and starting a business making custom draperies and quilts.

In a nutshell, the activity consists of writing and art inspired by one’s own daily life. Leslie, who majored in art, said that earlier activities “put pressure” on her. From the time she drew pictures as a child through the demands of art school and later, the marketing of art at festivals and competitions, her perfectionism drove her to limits that left her wondering if the standards of other people was the best way to satisfy her own yearning.

The Appeal: She hit upon journaling as an ideal way to find greater happiness with art. Among its attractions, she listed (1) It’s personal, focused on your own life, and leaves you free to experiment without worrying about criticism, (2) It’s compact and portable. You need minimum supplies, (3) It’s not digital. It gets you out of the house, (4) It’s a gateway to other creative endeavors, and (5) A “themed” sketchbook, while it may have many individual pieces, is together a work of art in itself.

What to Sketch: Scenes from her travels are an obvious source for sketches, but Leslie’s themes also range from recipes (she has pages that accompany the written recipe with a sketch of the finished dish) – to flowers in her garden, seashells by the shore, and scenes from plans for her daughter’s wedding.

Besides its ability to help you relive times in your life, the sketchbook can be therapeutic. When she lost a beloved dog, she did pages devoted to the dog and their relationship.

She likes quotes, and besides writing down favorites she has found, she adds a sketch in keeping with the sentiment.

Inspiration: Leslie cited two books that were especially helpful in getting her started: “Creative License” by Daniel Gregory and “The Artist’s Way” by Julia Cameron.

Method: She always has a small sketchbook with her, ready to draw something that intrigues her. She’s drawn stores where she shops and pictures of her husband watching TV. Away from home, she often does a quick sketch on the spot and finishes up at home. If there are lots of details that she doesn’t have time to record, she sometimes takes a photo as a reminder. She doesn’t like drawing from photos, but she will sometimes use them as reference. When traveling, she has a small kit for her tools and takes along five or six sketchbooks.

Books: She likes books with paper heavy enough to take watercolor. This usually means pages of 140# watercolor paper like Hand Book (brand) Watercolor Journal, but she has found a Stillman & Birns Beta Series that offers paper with a smoother texture than w/c paper, that while providing some tooth, still allows the artist to write words without “gaps.” She showed us an example that folded out flat, despite not being spiral bound, which allows the artist to do double-spread drawings. She also shared her discovery that the binding in spiral bound books can often be undone, allowing you to extract a single sheet for working on or displaying – and returning it later to the book.

Watercolor Paints: She likes Windsor-Newton, Daniel Smith and Holbein colors, although most of the time she uses Cheap Joe’s American Journey paints.

Brushes: She prefers synthetic brushes to sables. She showed us a little set of brushes from Cheap Joe’s.

Pens: Leslie often draws in pencil and then finishes her sketches in ink. She likes Pigma Micron pens and a special pen she found on Amazon called a platinum carbon desk pen. She draws in pen first and adds watercolor later, because drawing over the w/c makes the lines too strong – i.e. she likes the softening effect of the w/c over the pen strokes.

Easel: Leslie showed us the compact laptop easel she had designed herself, with features like a drill bit or knitting needle gauge to hold her brushes, a magnet to hold a collapsible cup for water, a travel-size palette and a Velcro-attached sponge. She also told us that she had designed a more elaborate traveling easel that Cheap Joe’s was helping her to develop as a commercial product. (One feature is folding legs that allow you to use it as a table on which to place tools while sketching.)

Classes: Leslie offers classes in the basement of her home in Waynesburg (see website below). Besides helping her students get into the activity of journaling, she assists them with specific lessons on how to draw and paint different subject matter. At the beginning of each class, instead of a single sheet of required supplies, she gives each student a 45-page booklet with notes on different aspects of journaling.

She had taught classes at Cheap Joe’s and internationally in France and Italy. (She admits she is very pleased to have been finally able to “get paid for my travels.”)

Sales: She uses www.blurb.com to sell prints of her work.

Website: www.lesliefehling.com

Our next meeting will be on April 20.

Respectfully submitted,

Will White

