



Happy Saint Valentine's Day!

The days are getting longer and the robins have begun to return to Olympia. The frosty days are giving way to rain and warmer nights. The middle of February brings my FAVORITE holiday. It is not "officially" recognized as a day off work. There are no parades or fireworks. We don't exchange gifts or decorate with lights and baubles. But, romance is in the air. Couples gaze at each other in a new (or renewed) manner. Secret smiles are flashed between husband and wife. A bouquet of spring flowers delights a young maiden. Special meals are prepared or a romantic candlelight dinner is arranged at a secluded restaurant. AND.... I received a special hand made valentine from my granddaughter. One day a year that is dedicated to love. How wonderful! Hold onto that feeling. Keep love in your heart all the year through.

Next Issue: The Lure Of Water

I grew up on a small farm in north central Wisconsin. It was a great experience for a "potential" artist. I was around farm animals and the equipment needed to plow the ground, plant the seeds and harvest the crop. I observed the people of the farming community, going about their chores, and their camaraderie at a quilting bee or barn raising.

“I drew and painted animals from dogs and cats to cows and horses.”

With these images locked in my memory, one might expect they would become subjects for my art. We raised sheep, pigs and chickens, future fodder for my fertile mind. I drew and painted animals from dogs and cats to cows and horses. My mom hung freshly washed laundry on the outdoor clothesline. She pumped water from the well. Together we made a vegetable garden and tended it, harvested, and canned the fruits of the season. Again, more ideas to paint.

When I became a professional artist, the subject I chose was the ocean. Though I built my career on the sea in all its many moods, I never got tired of observing the farms and fields I drove passed on my way to the coast. As I saw the farms, fields and old buildings on acres and acres of wheat, grass, corn or pasture, the lure of the land digged deeply into my subconscious. When, a few years ago I discovered pastel and gouache, I made a decision to

paint these images that I had long stored and felt so passionately about. So I painted the land. I painted the grand sky. I studied the barns and sheds and fences of the West, as I had done the upper Mid-west. I put the scenes onto paper. My excitement grew as my research grew. I have painted roosters, sheep, and piglets. Wild creatures and domestic animals have now become part of my painting routine.

I call this Americana. I hold a reverence for the people who pioneered the land and built the towns and cities and farms and ranches that make America what it is today.

“A barn that warmly housed the hard working family horse”

I like to find the symbols of this dedication. A tumbling down gas station along the old state highway; a barn that warmly housed the hard working family horse; trucks and tractors that have seen better days, and the animals linking past to present. Maybe it is my way to take that walk down memory lane. When I paint an Americana scene, I am transported in my mind back to the days of my youth. Perhaps by seeing these paintings, your memory is pleasantly stimulated too.

Carol Thompson

Featured Artwork

Cat Nap (pastel)



"On a lazy summer afternoon the time is perfect (as is any time) for a 'cat nap'. But note! One eye is almost open and the ears are always alert."

Storage (pastel)



"The fields have been harvested and the granaries are full to bursting. It has been a good season and the bounty in 'storage' will keep for the long cold winter season."

Out To Pasture (pastel)



"When a farm animal is old and in need of a well earned rest, the farmer will put it 'out to pasture'. When an old farm truck has seen better days, it too, will be turned out to pasture."