

March 15, 2002 Issue

Small Towns, Big Cities



I awoke this morning to the chirp of a robin outside my window. I have been so busy in my studio the past couple of weeks, that I hardly noticed the subtle changes occurring in the big beautiful world outside. True, most of those days were grey and wet; and we DID have snow. Yet, somehow the cherry trees unfolded their delicate pink blossoms. The daffodils and tulips stretched up out of the rich dark soil. Pussy willow catkins popped out their silvery heads on trees along busy streets and quiet paths. There is a freshness in the air as people look forward to warmer, longer days. Sparrows perform aerial acrobatics and robins trill their cheerful tunes to each other. A grey squirrel hops merrily from tree to bush searching for the goodies it buried last fall. If I am not mistaken, this scene is repeating itself everywhere in small towns and big cities around the world (If not yet, then soon.). Ah, yes. Spring has sprung! I'm just waiting for the calendar to catch up with the bursting of life in my yard. Once again I see the opportunity to paint what lies before me. And, by the way, "Happy Easter everyone!"

Next Issue: Flowers Everywhere

I will admit, reluctantly, that I am not a world traveler. I haven't been to Paris, London, Rome, Cairo, or Moscow. (Perhaps one day it will be so.) But, what I have seen in my life is quite a variety of small towns and big cities throughout the United States. Enough to fill canvas and paper for years to come. I celebrate in oil and gouache, watercolor and pastel the accomplishments of man (and woman), from Miami with its

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tall ocean front towers and bustling seaside energy, to Milwaukee in the snow, with glowing street lamps parading in orderly regimentation as passers-by crunch the frosty white sidewalks. Las Vegas glitters day and night, inviting sightseers to stay and play. San Francisco and Los Angeles seem to be beehives of non-stop activity. And, oh!, the appeal of rainy streets in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. I visit railroad yards with acres of automobiles in rainbow colors waiting to be carried across the nation for distribution in small towns and big cities. I have driven back roads and lingered in small towns with intriguing names that cause reflection upon those who lived there so long ago and why they n a m e d i t thus. Twisp? Mist? Drain? Pe

Elle? What about Lebam?, or Olalla? or Liberal? The homes and farm buildings bear witness to hardy folks who loved the land. They still do. From ranches and general stores to old fashioned gas stations (where an attendant will wash your windows as he pumps the gas for you), Americans show care and pride and the same spirit as those who carved out the foundations for the skyscrapers, and tilled the soil to plant great fields of grain. Can you blame me for wanting to paint these communities?

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I crave to capture moments when children play on swings in concrete playgrounds or hide-and-seek around haystacks; as fathers mount their trucks and tractors, and mothers hang laundry on sagging clotheslines to dry in the warm open air, or carrying baskets of freshly cleaned clothes from the mid-town Laundromat. I will paint the men and women of small towns and big cities who are going about their lives, weaving the unfinished tapestry of this great nation.

*Carol Thompson*

## Featured Artwork

**Aberdeen Industrial (pastel)**



"On a grey rainy day that seems to hold even the plume from the stack of a distant paper mill on a horizontal level, the activity of an Aberdeen, Washington industrial area continues at a bustling pace."

**Windmill (gouache)**



"South of Eureka, California, U.S.A., on a golden summer day, an old windmill stands sedately. It seems to be patiently waiting for the wind to pick up so it can get back to the work it has been doing for so long."

**Nightstreet (gouache)**



"Bright street lights, stop lights and the headlights and taillights of cars and trucks, all glow and reflect in this scene of a 'night street' in the rain; any town anywhere!"