

August 1, 2002 Issue

It's Only Fair

Sometimes it seems overwhelming. The amount of work it takes to be a professional working artist making a living selling my art can be daunting. The conception and creation of a work of art is just the beginning. Then comes the photographing or scanning, the color correction, and the numerous proofs to make sure the color of the print will EXACTLY match the original. Then there is the inspection for quality, the signing and numbering. The prints are packaged on foam board and include a brochure and certificate of authenticity on the back. They are shrink-wrapped and priced and boxed to be distributed to the shops according to the regional subjects. Since I am self published, there is no staff to handle these steps. Don't get me wrong, I love to do it. It is a matter of control. My belief is that no one knows my work better than me. No outsider has such a profound interest in the accuracy of color, and perfection in the handling of the finished product. With over 45 locations (gift shops and galleries and frame shops) carrying my prints on the West coast, I have to keep the inventory well stocked and up to date. Internet sales are another major portion of my art business. Besides the previous steps, secure packaging for shipping is a top priority. The prints must arrive in a timely manner and undamaged. My husband, Ed and I have developed a system to perform these tasks in the most efficient (and beneficial) manner. Yes, it is a lot of work and time consuming, but when the prints are delivered and the packages sent off via U.S.P.S, there is time to relax in the shade of the dogwood, sip a lemonade, and get ready for the next go-around.

Next Issue: Gone Global

It is that time of year! It is the time for the local, regional and state fairs. The excitement is building for the senior citizens who have spent time and energy perfecting that certain recipe, or honing their whittling skills. It is the time for the folks whose hobbies have consumed them to show off the collection of rare memorabilia. Quilting, canning, crafts, and sewing skills from the hands of children and grandparents will be on display. It is time for the young people of the Future Farmers of America to groom the livestock that they so lovingly care for throughout the year, to present them for all in the community to admire. AND it is time to be rewarded for those skills. Blue ribbons are sought after. Red or white ribbons gladly accepted. .

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For an artist, not only is the opportunity there for entering artwork in the Fair, and competing for top honors, but the atmosphere of excitement and the color of the crowded midways, offer outstanding subject matter for new paintings. For the animal artist there are the chickens, horses, cattle and sheep; rabbits and pigs et al; each the most outstanding example of the breed. For the still life enthusiast, there are row upon row of colorful canned goods and the biggest and best from fruit trees and vegetable gardens. Floral displays are fresh and uniquely enchanting. People painters should find a continual source of delightful subjects from child to venerable elder. If abstract art is your genre, what could be more enticing than the whirl of activity amidst the colorful background of banners, balloons and brightly painted vendor booths?

Some fairs offer entertainment in the form of carnival rides. Some cap off the duration of the fair with a breathtaking fireworks display. (Picture that!) Most of them feature musical acts from local to internationally known performers. Each community has its own identity wrapped up in their fair. If fields of level farmland surround the area, the theme is different than a setting amidst towering trees or bordering crystal lakes or streams. The unifying factor is the talent and hard work of the staff, participants and volunteers. The locale of the fair will be reflected in the fine art displayed.

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Our Thurston County Fair opens Wednesday, the 31st of July and continues through Sunday the 4th of August. I was one of four judges who awarded ribbons in the fine art show just yesterday, the 29th of July, and I am eager to see the fair in it's entirety. I plan to be there, digital camera and sketch book in hand to record my impressions of the event. I can imagine (and am already painting in my head) the people, animals and scenes to be observed.

On August 11th, I will be judging the Lewis County Fair fine art exhibit. September is the month for the biggest and longest of the fairs, the Puyallup Fair. (No, I am not going to be a judge there). It has a marvelous fine art division and, of course, very much worth the time to see.

So support your local, county and state fairs. After all, it's only Fair.



Featured Artwork

A Pair O' Piglets



"As the warm summer sun pokes through the barn doors, 'a pair o' piglets' prepares to settle down for an afternoon nap. One more twist of the tail and it's siesta!"

Garden Harvest



"The 'garden harvest' is set out waiting to be taken in and prepared for the table. With rich colors of gold and green, accented by shiny red and plum, this is a pleasing display for the senses."

Baa, Baa



"Two black sheep graze in a grassy meadow. Does this bring to mind an old nursery rhyme that begins; 'Baa, baa, black sheep...?'"