

August is the month of shooting stars. As a girl in Wisconsin, I learned that from my Mom. We would walk out into the mellow evenings, after the mosquito threat had simmered down, and gaze up into the deep midnight-blue heavens. The stars glittered as sequins on a velvet evening gown. "See those three stars in a row?" Mom would say, pointing up into the southern sky. "That is Orion's belt." Turning to the northern view, she indicated the Big Dipper, and how the outermost star on it's "bowl" always pointed directly to the North Star. "The Little Dipper pours into the Big Dipper." was her explanation of the position of the familiar constellations. On really dark moonless nights in the country, I came to know how the Milky Way got it's name. It is a band of stars so distant and so innumerable that at first glance it looks like a large bucket of milk had been sloshed from north to south across the zenith in the summer night. I saw Cassiopeia's Chair and The Seven Sisters. And, Oh!, the glory of the shooting stars. We would find a place in the tall soft grass and lie on our backs watching. My eyes would burn with the looking. I dared barely blink for fear of missing any one of them. "Oooh, did you see that one?" "Look at that one!" The silvery and golden slashes of brightly burning globes, trailing rapidly fading tails, was worth the long wait. In memory, this experience equaled the fourth of July fireworks. One August night, however, stands out as clearly as a photograph in full color. I was eight, maybe nine years old. Mom had been washing clothes and hanging them to dry on the clothesline in the back yard. It was well after dark when the last of the load was dry and ready to be taken in. As I helped Mom put the clean fragrant laundry into the basket, I looked up at the night sky, like I always did. Suddenly from east to west in the southern sky, a brilliant ball of luminescent glowing green, fell across my vision as if in slow motion. I can't tell you how long it lasted. I don't recall if Mom saw it. It froze in my memory like a special gift. Since becoming an adult, I have learned that shooting stars have a VERY scientific explanation. The Perseid meteors are due to small fragments of comet debris that the earth passes through each year in the month of August. The different colors are due to various minerals in the rocks that burn up in the Earth's atmosphere. Some give off a visible green glow. And the shooting stars? They are still shooting stars. Always were, always will be.

Next Issue: Diamond Head: A Lighthouse Trek

August 15, 2002

Gone Global

It has been my dream as long as I can remember to be a "famous artist". How one becomes such, is the challenge and reward this life has given me. I knew the first thing I had to do was to perfect my craft. I chose oil painting as my media, and the ocean as my subject. I then set about to learn from the very best teachers, all that I could absorb. (see previous ezines for more detailed information). Once the skills had been developed, the next step was to let people know about me. I learned to meet the public at mall shows, outdoor arts and craft fairs, and through private get-togethers in the homes of friends who sponsored showings of my latest works. Soon it became apparent that to reach a larger audience, I would need to do national advertising. I chose publications that were appropriate to the media; Southwest Art, Stepping Out, American West, and several other nationally published magazines. I arranged for radio and television interviews regionally.

"Soon it became apparent that to reach a larger audience, I would need to do national advertising."

These efforts resulted in the sale of my originals not only in the United States, but in various locations around the world. The occasion presented itself to travel and participate in showings in Florida, Nevada, California, and Oregon, to name a few, and to see Oahu, Hawaii, where the water is such a beautiful aqua that it took my breath away. (The sunsets are glorious!) My artwork went to Japan, China, The United Kingdom, and Europe. By then I had begun to have limited editions made. That was a wise decision because more people could enjoy my images of the sea at a reasonable price. (And, my name would become known by a greater scope of the world's population.)

Then one day a wonderful thing happened. The internet exploded onto the scene. My husband, who had been in the computer business all of his career, recognized the vast potential for an artist with this media. He immediately set about to build a website for my work. We

invested in increased computer power, a scanner, printer, and digital camera. Within a year's time the site was ready to be launched. On my birthday, July 5th, 1997, Carol Thompson went global. There was, however, no time to sit back and wait for the results to roll in. The site required fine tuning, continual updating and refining. I continued to paint new canvases which were added, along with any newly published prints. The first statistics to come in showed a remarkably diverse sampling of the visitors to my website. Countries I had only read about in geography books were represented. There were military groups, (the U.S. Coast Guard; presumably looking at the lighthouse pages) universities, non profit organizations, and government employees checking out my site.

"The first statistics to come in showed a remarkably diverse sampling of the visitors to my website."

As the information super highway grew, so did the opportunities for expanding my global horizons. We discovered a new venue for selling art. It is called eBay. EBay is an auction site that is open to almost any product at any price anywhere around the world. Besides being an excellent place to market the artwork, it is an ideal way to advertise. For a minimal amount of outlay, I can reach a world wide market of people interested in specifically what I have to offer. In the past two plus years, I have shipped prints all over the world. Folks who live in isolated areas, or small towns, can shop via the internet and within a week or less, receive a Carol Thompson print, ready to frame any way they choose. The response has been phenomenal. I am still awed and, of course, grateful for the technology that enables me to see my girlhood dreams coming to fruition.



Featured Artwork

What A Sunset!



"What a sunset! The sky is a glorious glow of low clouds catching the last rays of light, as a rolling breaker crashes into unyielding rocks."

Mendocino Pines



"Early morning light creates silvery edges on the deep green silhouettes of 'Mendocino pines; a familiar sight to travelers on the California coast."

Starting Line (Palomar)



"The tugboat Palomar, on Puget Sound in Olympia, Washington, U.S.A., heads for the 'starting line' to participate in the annual Labor Day weekend tugboat races."