

■ Upcoming

March 1 and March 15

Live Model Drawing

The Artful Place, A Fine Art Studio • 6–8 p.m.

The model, easels and drawing boards are provided and the cost is \$10. Reserve your spot by emailing diana@creekmorelaw.com.

March 4

Reception, Alexander Black House Blacksburg • 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Come view “9 Yards of Beach” featuring the photography of Susan Hensley. She will give an art talk prior to the reception.

March 13

BRAA Monthly Lunch

Famous Anthony’s, Blacksburg • 11:30 a.m.

Come join fellow members for lunch, information sharing and this month’s art spot featuring Kim Snider, manager of Habitat for Humanities’ ReStore.

March 17, 19, 20

Robin Poteet Workshop

Christiansburg Presbyterian Church

Robin returns in spring! This time she will be exploring pouring techniques with water media. For more information, contact Sue Farrar by email at director@montgomerymuseum.org.

March 30

Reception for Susan Hensley

Virginia Tech Women’s Center • 4:15 – 5:45 p.m.

Artist Susan Hensley’s exhibit is themed “Hope.” Works will display until mid-April.

April 15–21

BRAA Event Week

Virginia Tech Center for the Arts

Color theory, decorative arts, photography, metal-working and insights from P. Buckley Moss are some of the fun events scheduled for this week. See the President’s Report on page 3 for more information.

May 21–23

Palette Knife Oil Painting Workshop

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By photograph and footpath

By Melissa Philen

From across the room, he can deliver you a smile and wave, which feels warm and friendly. I knew this about Matt Gentry, before conducting this month’s interview. I also knew that he made photographs for *The Roanoke Times* and is a member of the Blacksburg Regional Art Association.

Leading up to this interview, those who knew Gentry remarked, “You are in for a real treat.” An hour with Gentry verified my presumptions. Beneath the press hat and sunglasses, he revealed a determined, multifaceted gentleman full of humor and a deeply-rooted love of his community.

Gentry began by speaking about the art through which he garnered a name for himself — photography. As a teenager, Gentry delivered local newspapers, including *The Roanoke Times* and *The News Messenger*. Perusing through the dailies, he admired the stories’ images more than anything. These images impressed upon him the essence of his community, and called him into the newspaper business.

Thirty-five years ago, Gentry obtained his first camera, an Olympus 1. The moment he picked up the camera, he felt, “Photography was clearly what I wanted to do.” From delivering papers to being a copy clerk, Gentry worked his way through the ranks of newspapers including *The Roanoke Times*.

He listened to a scanner and chased ambulances. At last, he began supplementing stories with his work. His first front-page picture was of a fire in Pulaski. From then, he was determined to make his passion a career.



Melissa Philen

Photographer Matt Gentry uses his creativity and photography skills to tell the story of his community.

For the past 16 years, Gentry has been a photographer with the *Roanoke Times*. Knowing the competitive nature of photojournalism, I asked, “How did you achieve this position?” He imparted a career of hard work and determination. It started with a conviction to make photographs.

After getting his feet wet in the Roanoke area, Gentry moved to Charlottesville, Va. There he worked for *The Daily Progress*.

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Upcoming continued from page 1

Unitarian Universalist Meeting House • Blacksburg

Contemporary impressionist painter Sally Shisler uses knives to create lively, engaging, color-rich paintings. If you desire more excitement in your work, don't miss this workshop! Visit the events tab at www.blacksburgart.org for more information.

September 25–27

Camp Alta Mons Retreat Camp Alta Mons • Shawsville

Mark your calendar for a fun weekend of art and fellowship. Watch for more information in future issues of this newsletter.

New secretary of the board needed

Due to the recent resignation of Fred Jones, the BRAA board is in need of a new secretary. Duties include attending periodic board meetings (not every month), taking notes, writing the minutes and passing them to the president of the board for finalizing. Board meetings usually last about two hours. Requires computer, email and Microsoft Word proficiency.

Anyone interested in this position should contact younggerri@gmail.com.

Thanks to Fred Jones for his service since November 2013.

Kudos

Congratulations to the following BRAA members who won awards at the "Art Through the Eras" Whet Your Palette event at The Artful Lawyer, A Fine Art Gallery. Winners were **Shaun White-side** (1st Place, Abstract Expressionism), **Robi Sallee** (3rd Place, Impressionism) and **Ava Howard** (People's Choice, Cubism). The works will be on display until April 9.

"Go and make interesting mistakes, make amazing mistakes, make glorious and fantastic mistakes. Break rules. Leave the world more interesting for your being here. Make. Good. Art."

~ Neil Gaiman

By Photograph and Footpath continued from page 1

While in the area, Gentry had the opportunity to make the acquaintance of National Geographic Magazine photographers Sam Abell, Bill Allen, and Michael "Nick" Nichols. Gentry admired their work. They influenced Gentry's craft.

After moving back to Blacksburg, Gentry met and married his wife, Colleen. She currently teaches special education at Prices Fork Elementary. Gentry gushes about his wife, "She is my biggest fan." Upon returning to the area, Gentry also reconnected with his original and most influential mentor, Gene Dalton, of The Roanoke Times.



Gentry's sketchbook includes his contemplations of the words of a conservationist, prominent Native American figure, and poet.



Recording an historic perspective during a hike in the Shenandoah.

"Mr. Dalton made photographs that spoke about people and life in our area. He recorded a way of life that no longer exists," said Gentry. Like his mentor, Gentry aspires to make photographs imbued with the spirit of our region. "I hope that people who see my photographs sense my love of community. I want this to come across through my images."

Gentry described the various skills he developed over time: knowledge regarding his tools and techniques, an inquisitive nature, intuition, and the instinct to capture short-lived moments.

These skills served him well as a professional photographer. More remarkably, these skills made a statement about Gentry's perspective. "I am a seeker," he said. Gentry went on to describe himself, "My love of nature and the community meld with a constant seeking mode." This search led Gentry to embark on what he calls, "The Great American Adventure." He beamed with pride as he stated, "In 2014, after section hiking for 33 years, I completed the entire length of the Appalachian Trail."

"Hiking the A.T. was the most inspiring, influential and formative experience in my life," Gentry declared. He spoke enthusiastically about his sensory experiences along the trail. "The sun, wind, sounds of birds, and shades of green — it is very spiritual. It awakens your senses." Out of his bag, he presented a thick, well-worn sketchbook. "In this book," Gentry stated, "I recorded my journey along the Appalachian Trail." Glancing at the sketches, I saw an earnest desire to assemble meaningful drawings. Each page featured a collage of sketches peppered with quotes, ideas, and historic details.

■ President's Report

Things are moving right along for new and exciting happenings in 2015.

A big hand goes to **Lois Stephens** for her efforts in arranging for **Sally Shisler** of Florida to teach a May 21-23 BRAA-sponsored workshop. The class will feature palette knife painting of landscape, still life and portrait of a live model. By the time you read this, the marketing package for this class will be posted on our web and Facebook page. Go to www.sallyshisler.com for information about this teacher.

Our planning for the week at the Center for the Arts is well underway. April 15-21, BRAA will be holding events in the upper gallery of the Center. Details about exact dates and times of the following events will be coming out soon. All are open to the public. Some will require registering and the **Darcy Meeker** workshop will require a fee.

- **Betsy White**, art historian and author of "Great Road Style: the Decorative Arts Legacy of Southwest Virginia," and "Backcountry Makers," will speak about decorative arts in southwest Virginia. White is provided to BRAA through our partnership with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.
- **Danie Janov**, ED. D., and BRAA member, will teach two sessions on color theory. Attendees will take home a color reference book they create in the sessions.
- **Darcy Meeker**, well-known local artist, sculptor and BRAA member, will teach a two-day metal class.
- **Riley Chan**, photographer and BRAA member, has gathered a group of photographers from the local area for an afternoon forum featuring himself and **Anne Hammond-Tooke** of BRAA, **Kirk Carter** of NRV Exposure/BRAA, **Tom Cerul** and **Art Sellers** of Exposure Roanoke, and **Matt Gentry** of Roanoke Times/BRAA.
- **P. Buckley Moss**, well-known Virginia artist and owner of the new Moss Gallery in Blacksburg, will speak on her art and life.

These events are being organized by **Charlotte Chan**, **Riley Chan** and myself.

Jeanette Bowker is hosting Betsy White. Closer to the week in April, some volunteers from BRAA will be needed to help with pulling off this busy week. If you are interested in assisting, please email me at younggerri@gmail.com.

Your partner in art,



By Photograph and Footpath continued from page 2

Gentry expressed, "The experience on the trail is all you make of it. Through deprivation, you learn to appreciate the most simple of things. Through perseverance, you can accomplish your goal." Gentry practiced these life's lessons along the trail and also as he pursued an artist's life.

Gentry admits that his final chapter in his career as a visual artist has yet to be written. Remaining in a self-described "seeking mode," he participates in several local interest groups: The BRAA, Photography Club, NRV Birding Club, and Roanoke Appalachian Hiking Club. He is a trail maintainer with the Appalachian Trail Club and co-overseer for a Giles County section of the A.T. His essay and selected pages from his sketchbook were published this month in The A.T. Conservancy's magazine, A.T. Journey's.

In April, Gentry will take part in a digital photography workshop in the Moss Arts Center. His photographs have been published via the Associated Press in Newsweek, ESPN, USA Today and the Washington Post. His current work can be seen in what he calls, "the daily miracle," The Roanoke Times.

Be on the lookout for Matt Gentry's photography and sketches. Perhaps while hiking the Appalachian Trail in Giles County, you will suddenly feel an understated sense of care. A simple wooden step, perfectly placed, to ease your way to a higher elevation, a stand of native flora, or a tidy shelter. You could be sensing Gentry's experiential design.

To the aspiring photographer, Gentry shared his advice: "Follow your dream. Be determined." A point he made for all of us to contemplate. ■

■ Now Showing

January 15 – April 15

(except where indicated otherwise)

Jennifer Carpenter, Chuck Mathena Center, Princeton, West Va. (Jan. 12 – Feb. 27)

Kirk Carter, Salem Museum (until March 14)

Charlotte Chan, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg, and Chuck Mathena Center, Princeton, West Va. (Jan. 12 – Feb. 27)

Marie Collier, Gillies, Blacksburg, and Chuck Mathena Center, Princeton, West Va. (Jan. 12 – Feb. 27)

Susan Hensley, Virginia Tech Women's Center, Blacksburg

Ruth Lefko, Zeppoli's, Blacksburg

Carole McNamee, ICTAS, Virginia Tech Campus (until mid-May)

Larry Mitchell, ICTAS, Virginia Tech Campus (until mid-May)

Sally Mook, Montgomery Museum, Christiansburg (through Feb.) and Art Pannonia (through Mar.)

Mary Ratliff, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

Joy Rosenthal, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg

Robi Sallee, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg and Community Arts Information Office (CAIO), Blacksburg (Feb.)

Lois Stephens, Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Blacksburg (through Feb.)

Lisabeth Weisband, Chuck Mathena Center, Princeton, West Va. (Jan. 12 – Feb. 27)

Tom Wilkinson, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg; the Artful Lawyer, A Fine Art Gallery (until Apr. 8); and the Jacksonville Center for the Arts (until Mar. 27)

Norma Woodward, VTLS, Corporate Research Center, Blacksburg

Gerri Young, Holtzman Alumni Center, Virginia Tech Campus (Jan. 17 – May 5)

■ Exhibit Opportunities

Sutherlin Art and Wine Show

May 16 • 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Grounds of the Sutherlin Mansion • Danville

Sponsored by the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History, this outdoor event features art, jazz music and wine tastings. Booth applications are due **April 15**. For fees and other information, email cara@danvillemuseum.org.

Taubman Museum of Art's Annual Sidewalk Art Show

May 30–31 • 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Downtown Roanoke

Each year this juried show attracts thousands of visitors to the downtown streets near the Taubman Museum. Entry deadline is **March 15**. Prospectus and application available online at zapplication.org.

■ Other Opportunities

Artists Wanted

The Montgomery County Quilt Trail is seeking artists to create quilt blocks for display on the sides of barns, businesses and homes. The quilt block must be weatherproof and conform to the guidelines developed by the quilt trail committee under the auspices of the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Art Center. Artists will be compensated. For more information contact Sue Farrar at director@montgomerymuseum.org or Paula Golden at paulacgolden@comcast.net.

Artist Coordinator Wanted

Newport Community Celebration Art Show
Saturday, May 2 • 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

If you have a passion for promoting the arts and helping a small community keep an old building alive by embracing the arts, your volunteer help is needed. Coordinating a small show and helping a non-profit organization promote the arts can look good on a resume and help you learn more about promoting and exhibiting art in a relatively low pressure setting.

Duties include:

- Work with the BRAA and the Giles Arts Council (GAC) to recruit local artists to participate in the show. Artists may enter 1 to 5 pieces, free of charge and

in lieu of commission can opt to donate a portion of their sales to the Newport Community Action Committee to support the Newport Village Library and artistic endeavors at the Newport Recreation Center. Artists do not have to belong to the BRAA or GAC, but membership is encouraged.

- Create and maintain an online registration form for the artists which will produce a compiled inventory and participant list for oversight and planning of the exhibit. (This is a very simple process which will make your life easier. We can show you how!)
- Arrange drop off and pick up times for artworks.
- Recruit volunteers from BRAA, GAC and friends to help set up/tear down display systems, hang the show and monitor the show for sales, as well as promote BRAA and GAC membership/activities. The artists were very willing to help last year and it was fun for everyone.
- Hang out and enjoy lunch, live music, the art show, and meet and greet a wonderful community of people who love art.
- Have volunteers move the art show from the cafeteria of the Newport Rec Center to a smaller secured room for an additional 30-day show, and planning art work pick up times for the conclusion of the long term show.

Please consider helping Newport, the GAC, and the BRAA in this way. You will be surprised at how much you enjoy the process and helping artists all over the New River Valley. If you are interested, please contact Ava Howard at 540-641-3642, ahoward@vt.edu, or Gerri Young at 540-629-1208, younggerri@gmail.com.



The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Evolve #1" (left, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36") by Tom Wilkinson. This and more of his work can be viewed at Pointe West Management in Blacksburg until mid-April.



BRAA Officers

Gerri Young, president
Charlotte Chan, co-vice president
Teri Hoover, co-vice president
Jeanette Bowker, treasurer
Vacant, secretary
Nancy Norton, membership
Robi Sallee, past president



<http://www.blacksburgart.org/>



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Gerri Young at
younggerri@googlemail.com
 or **Teri Hoover**
 at crystalirisphotos@gmail.com

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Send news, photos, comments, or newsletter suggestions to Lois Stephens (stephens1@pemt.net)

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