

■ Upcoming

October 18

Fall Plein Air Day

Mt. Vale Vineyards, Galax • 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Artists may begin painting at 8 a.m. and the public is invited to watch. The event culminates with a wine and cheese reception, art show and wet paint auction beginning at 3:30 p.m. The \$20 registration fee for artists includes lunch and a glass of wine. For more information, visit [facebook.com/events/528448750623899/](https://www.facebook.com/events/528448750623899/).

October 20–26

The Greenbrier Fine Arts Week

White Sulphur Springs, WV

Established artists from across the country will be painting en plein air and providing free demonstrations. The event is coordinated by the Walls Fine Art Gallery and more information is available at www.greenbrier.com/art.

October 25–26

Botetourt Artists' Studio Tour

Sat., Oct. 25 • 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sun., Oct. 26 • 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Ten Botetourt artists have joined with the Botetourt County Office of Tourism for the fourth annual self-guided driving tour of artists' working studios. For more information, visit www.openstudiosbotetourt.com.

October 26

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.

November 2

BRAA Annual Meeting

Blacksburg Public Library • 1:30–3:30 p.m.

Mark your calendar for this afternoon featuring Anne Kenny-Urban who will be presenting "Stranger Than Fiction: Great Art Heists in History," sponsored by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts'

continued on page 2

A life as collage

By Fred Jones • Photos by Teri Hoover

On Thursday, Nov. 6, BRAA member Christy Mackie will open a two-month show at the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Art Center. When asked what viewers can expect, Mackie muses, "It has been said that I need to focus more, which is true because I am all over the place. But collages have given this show a focus that I didn't know was coming." Collage is an appropriate theme as it is a suitable metaphor for this artist's life. It is a life with many varied and colorful pieces. Some have jagged, torn edges and others fit together neatly.

Mackie was born in Chicago, but her father's stint in the Navy and subsequent pursuit of a position in academia as a history professor resulted in multiple family relocations during her early childhood. However, by the time she started first grade her family settled in Blacksburg where she remained until completing high school. This was to be one of the most stable periods in her life.

At age 10 Mackie describes what she calls an "ah ha" moment when she sketched her cousin watching television. "Instead of drawing a little stick figure, suddenly I could draw her realistically," she recalls. Her mother soon found a teacher who could nurture her talent. The man she hired was Bill O'Neill, a graphic designer at Virginia Tech. Mackie states, "He gave me a kick start. He knew how to teach and he knew how to help us grow."

Mackie chose to attend Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois. Jacksonville was like a second home to her since her grandparents lived there and her family visited there at least twice every year. "I just went to college as a naïve, young, open to the world, 'I'm sure whatever I'm supposed to do will come to me' kind of person," she remembers.

By her second year she realized she wanted to major in art. Illinois College did not offer that major so Mackie transferred to Virginia Tech. Upon graduation in 1975 with

continued on page 2



Christy Mackie relaxes in her spacious studio in the Newport Recreation Center.

Upcoming continued from page 1

Statewide Partners program. The annual report will be presented, the board of directors elected, and refreshments provided.

November 7

First Friday Reception, Floyd Artists Assoc.
203 S. Locust Street, Floyd • 5–8 p.m.

Friday nights in Floyd are a celebration of country music, and on the first Friday of every month the Floyd Artists Association adds to the festivities by featuring a guest artist. This month's reception features the work of Lois Stephens.

November 14

BRAA Monthly Luncheon and Art Spot
Famous Anthony's, Blacksburg • 11:30 a.m.

This month's Art Spot will be presented by Rhonda Morgan, executive director of the Alexander Black House and Cultural Center.

January 24–25

Vera Dickerson Workshop
Hahn Horticulture Garden Pavilion, Virginia Tech Campus

Artist Vera Dickerson, founding member of the Studio School and renowned teacher, will be leading this BRAA-sponsored water media workshop. Mark your calendar and watch for more information in next month's newsletter.

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.com.

Interested in an oil painting workshop?

A nationally-known instructor will be sought and the class would require the use of odorless solvents. If interested, please email stephens1@pemtel.net.

"The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls."

~ Pablo Picasso

Collage continued from page 1

a degree in studio art, she remained another year to obtain a teaching certificate. "I had some experience as a volunteer teaching art classes and workshops for children and I liked it." Then with a sense of foreboding she adds, "Of course I was only helping someone else."

Her first teaching assignment was in the coalfields of southwest Virginia. She remembers, "Everyone had coal dust in their nostrils, coal dust everywhere. It was an enriching experience in so many ways and I learned so much and felt valued. But I struggled with discipline issues." In 1978 a flood washed away a portion of the school and it took a month to reopen.

For her third year of teaching Mackie sought a change and took a job at an intermediate school on the other side of the state near the Rappahannock River. She says, "I was uncomfortable with the older kids. Three times each week I had to teach art to older kids who were slow learners. I was pulling out my hair!" The best part of her time there was the experience of living in an old, converted four-story tall water tower. She adds, "I still have dreams about that place."

During Christmas break Mackie lost her grandfather and made the decision to quit her job and help her grandmother. She explains, "We nursed each other through the winter and I stayed in Jacksonville for another couple of years." She took some classes at MacMurray College in Jacksonville and landed a job there in the graphic design department. Additionally, she fell back on her art training, doing commissions for pet, house and people portraits.

Mackie still aspired for a teaching career and entered a master's program in art education at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Three weeks into the program she realized it was not for her. Surprisingly, she chose to remain in Richmond and stayed there for the next 18 years. When her marriage of four years ended in 1991 she got into the habit of going for walks in her neighborhood. This led to her first fine art series. It featured, of all things, sewer covers. She explains, "I was fascinated by how they all started the same, but over time with weather and the various things that fall on them, each one is amazingly different. I took rolls and rolls of film."

Mackie was doing work with historical sites at the time and made a connection with the grid patterns of the gardens at Shirley Plantation in Charles City, Va., and the grid pattern on the sewer covers. She began incorporating bits of nature onto her colored pencil drawings of sewer covers. She describes, "It was the first series I ever produced. That to me was so spiritual. I never could have come up with that. It was just a gift."

Returning to Blacksburg in 2000 Mackie continued to work with historical museums in this region until retiring in 2011. She now devotes her time to creating art and recently strengthened that commitment by renting a studio in the Newport Recreation Center. She comments, "For the first time in my life I have a dedicated space for creating art. There are too many things I want to do. I want to keep on learning and do my own stuff." Even her hairdresser noted a change in her, commenting that she is "blossoming."

There is a distinct sense of order in Mackie's studio unlike that of many artists. "Attention to detail has always been one of my strong points," she comments. Featured prominently on one of her walls is a large painting of a collage that dates to her days as a Virginia Tech student, indicating that collage has long been a part of her repertoire. Although colored pencil and watercolor have been primary mediums for Mackie, her focus on collage for her upcoming show has allowed her to combine those mediums and more.

In viewing the events of Mackie's life as parts of a collage, many of the pieces are likely not as she expected, while some of the parts she planned for failed to be included on the canvas. Still a work in progress, it is shaping up to be a thing of beauty.

Meet the artist and see her latest work on Thursday, Nov. 6, from 5-7 p.m. at the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Art Center at 300 Pepper Street SE in Christiansburg. ■



Teri Hoover Photography

■ President's Report

On Nov. 2, the BRAA annual meeting will take place at the Blacksburg Library. This is the biggest membership meeting of the year and is important for several reasons.

This is the time for members to have a say in their leadership. This year, your current members of the board of directors have all agreed to run again as follows and a vote is required to confirm them. That vote will take place at the meeting or possibly by computer before hand, if I can figure out how to efficiently do that! Electable board members, their board position and other duties are:

President – **Gerri Young**, Facebook administrator, Webmaster, writer

Vice President – **Charlotte Chan**, Gallery Committee and event planner

Vice President – **Teri Hoover**, Facebook administrator, event marketer/planner, photographer

Treasurer – **Jeanette Bowker**, gallery committee, and theme show organizer

Secretary – **Fred Jones**, feature writer

Write-in candidates are welcome as well as candidates from the floor during the meeting.

Other board advisors (volunteers) are:

Membership – **Nancy Norton**

Newsletter editor – **Lois Stephens**, who also manages the luncheon scheduling

Other members who routinely help out when needed are **Past President Robi Sallee** who often takes care of refreshments and **Marie Collier** who does a wonderful job on award certificates and ribbons for us on several occasions in the year.

Gallery chairs for 2014 were: **Fred Jones, David Pearce, Delbert Jones, Jennifer Carpenter, Pam Congrove, Patricia Bevan, Joy Rosenthal, Marie Collier, Maxine Lyons** and **Frances Frederick**. For 2015, **Fred Jones** will be replaced by **Anne Hammond-Tooke**.

We are currently looking for new volunteers as follows:

Jeanette Bowker would like to leave the gallery committee so a replacement is needed for her. Jeanette will also be replaced as Theme Show chairman by Robi Sallee.

Lois Stephens has already accepted Robi Sallee's offer to take over managing the monthly luncheon.

If you have skills you are willing to offer for the good of the association, please let me know. Feature writing and the photography to support it can certainly be shared by more than Fred and Teri. I do appreciate **Gwen Douglas** stepping forward to volunteer to share the feature writing. Besides artist features, we are happy to have members write how-to's or evaluations of workshops they have attended.

I believe we have one of the best, if not the best (but I haven't seen them all!) art association newsletters around. It is a great deal of work and more participants would be greatly appreciated.

The progress and improvements made by BRAA in the last year are tremendously gratifying to me. The energy and involvement of our members is essential to our continuing success and I thank each and every one of you for your interest and efforts.

Your partner in art,

Gerri



Christy Mackie demonstrates the effects of watercolors on Yupo paper during a Sept. 27 play date at the Newport Recreation Center.

Photo by Gerri Young

■ Now Showing

October 15 – January 15

(except where indicated otherwise)

Charlotte Chan, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg

Marie Collier, VTLS, Corporate Research Center, Blacksburg, and Art Pannonia, Blacksburg (Oct. through Nov.)

Pam Congrove, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg

Carole Davis, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

Susan Hensley, Eucalyptus Massage and Healing Arts, Blacksburg (through Nov.)

Danie Janov, Zeppoli's, Blacksburg

Pat Bevan, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

Sally Mook, Hahn Horticulture Garden Pavilion, Virginia Tech (through Oct.)

Dale and Nancy Norton, ICTAS, Virginia Tech Campus (mid-May to mid-Nov.)

David Pearce, Real Life Dental Care, Blacksburg

Joy Rosenthal, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Tuesday Night Painters, Virginia Tech Women's Center, Blacksburg

Lois Stephens, Floyd Artists' Association Gallery, Floyd (Nov.)

Lisabeth Weisband, ICTAS, Virginia Tech Campus (mid-May to mid-Nov.)

Gerri Young, VTLS, Corporate Research Center, Blacksburg

■ Kudos

Congratulations to **Susan Lockwood** who was recently awarded second place for photography at the Virginia Fall Foliage Festival in Waynesboro.



BRAA Officers

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



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



www.facebook.com/BlacksburgArt

Send Facebook news postings to:
Gerri Young at
 younggerri@googlemail.com
 or **Teri Hoover**
 at crystalirisphotos@gmail.com

Twitter @BlacksburgArt1

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

Thanks to Mish Mish for providing
 printed versions of this newsletter.
 Please support our local art supply store!



The Oct. 12 plein air day off Catawba Road in Blacksburg was one of the best ever, despite near constant rain. Participants (left to right) **Mina Hejazi, Gwendolyn Douglas, Ruth Lefko, Matt Gentry and Gerri Young** display their works painted from the porch, under umbrellas or just out in the rain!

Photo by Kitty Brawley



Taking a break from painting during the Sept. 28 plein air session in Shawsville are (left to right) **Angie Saban, Ruth Lefko, Matt Gentry and Judy Crowgey.**

Photo by Gerri Young

■ Exhibit Opportunities

Art in the Barn

October 25-26 • 10 a.m. – 5 pm. (Sat.) and 1–5 p.m. (Sun.)

Sinkland Farms, Riner

In concert with the annual pumpkin festival, this weekend features live music, hayrides, and much more. The entry fee for the two-day event is \$50 and the registration deadline is **October 15**. For more information, visit www.sinklandfarms.com.

Art4Christmas

December 5 • 5–8 p.m.

Eucalyptus Massage and Healing Arts

Eucalyptus Massage and Healing Arts is inviting artists to exhibit and donate 5 x 7" works on paper with proceeds going to Blacksburg's food pantries. The show and sale is in conjunction with the First Friday Downtown Art Walk. Deadline for submission is **November 15**. For guidelines and more information, email art4christmas@gmail.com.

■ Other Opportunities

VMFA Fellowships

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts offers monetary awards to professional artists who demonstrate exceptional creative ability in their chosen disciplines. Applicants' works are reviewed anonymously by distinguished jurors and awards are made based on artistic merit. The deadline for submitting applications is **November 7**. Full eligibility criteria and an application can be found at www.VMFA.museum/fellowships.



The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Bergman, Fanny & Alexander" (left, MOAB Slickrock Metallic Silver, 11 x 14.5") by Joy Rosenthal. This and more of her work can be viewed at Blue Ridge Cancer Care in Blacksburg from mid-October to mid-January.