

April 2014

■ Upcoming

April 26

Whet Your Palette Reception

5:30–8:30 p.m., *The Artful Lawyer, A Fine Gallery Inc.*

This show's theme is Springtime Florals and features eight artists. Exhibit on display until July 9.

April 27

How to Photograph 2D and 3D Artwork 2–4 p.m., *Blacksburg Library*

Taught by BRAA member David Pearce, this session covers important technical considerations as well as practical examples using professional as well as basic equipment. Workshop is free and open to the public.

May 1

Ruth Lefko Art Reception

5–7 p.m.
Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, Christiansburg

Come visit and enjoy works of art by Ruth Lefko. Exhibited through June.

May 31

56th Annual Sidewalk Art Show

10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Roanoke

This exciting annual event takes place in the historic downtown section of Roanoke near the Taubman Museum of Art.

June 7

35th Annual Juried Watercolor Exhibition *Lynchburg*

A day trip to see this Virginia Watercolor Society exhibition is being planned. Sign ups available in mid-May. Drivers wanted.

An emerging masterpiece in Newport

By Fred Jones • Photos by Teri Hoover and Gerri Young

The arts encompass a broad range of disciplines including theater, dance, music, literature and the visual arts. In the tiny community of Newport, Va., Ava Howard is bringing all these disciplines to life by reconfiguring the old high school into an arts center. The beginnings of her journey to this pivotal project began almost by accident many years ago in her hometown of Bristol, Va.

It was her senior year in high school and she needed another elective to graduate. She never intended to take Mr. White's art class. Having taken other art classes, Howard had little interest in the subject. However, White's was the only class available. Unlike in the past, this time something clicked.

Howard recalls, "He didn't give a lot of instruction. He just gave me a picture from a newspaper clipping and told me to draw it. I remember clearly it was an old pair of wrinkly boots." White recognized Howard's talent and for the rest of the class allowed her to follow her own artistic interests. "He tried to encourage me to go to art school," recalls Howard, but she had other plans.

Entering Virginia Tech as a major in architecture, Howard was delighted to find the program was steeped in art. She was encouraged to take courses in urban planning and found she was drawn to that subject more than architecture so switched majors. She continued to take all the art classes she could fit in and at graduation had enough credits to minor in art.

Describing her career after college, Howard runs through a long list of jobs stating, "I worked as a graphic designer at a number of places." Her first job was to design packaging for products such as kitty litter and White Lily flour. As she describes it, "I used to do layout the old fashioned way with the photos and the pasting." A subsequent job for a robotics company gave her the opportunity to work in graphic design with some of the first computer programs made for that purpose. Eventually her urban planning degree came into play when she worked as a transportation planner in Louisville, Kentucky and in Roanoke, rising to the rank of administrator.



Ava Howard sits in her studio gallery surrounded by her art and works by others.

■ Exhibit Opportunities

Sutherlin Arts and Wine Show May 3 • 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. • Danville

Sponsored by the Danville Museum of Fine Arts, this event also includes food, winetasting, silent auction, and live music. For more information, email info@danvillemuseum.org.

2014 Jax Juried Exhibition June 6 – August 1 • The Jacksonville Center for the Arts, Floyd

This annual exhibition offers cash prizes and honorable mentions. Artwork will be selected by Juror David Mickenberg, president of the Allentown Art Museum and past president of the Taubman Museum of Fine Art. Application deadline is **April 22** via CallForEntry.org. For more information, email info@jacksonvillecenter.org.

BRAA Annual Theme Exhibit July 17 – October 13 • VTLS, Inc.

The focus of this year's show is "family." Artists are invited to create works based on their own interpretations of this theme in any 2 or 3D medium. Entry deadline is **July 1**. For more information, visit the events tab at www.blacksburgart.org.

Art at the Market July 19 • 9 am – 2 pm • Blacksburg

Come celebrate Blacksburg's vibrant arts community by participating in downtown Blacksburg's Art at the Market (Farmer's Market, that is). The booth application fee is \$35 and the deadline is **July 1**. For more information, visit the events tab (see art and more) at www.downtownblacksburg.com/.

Stadium Woods Art Show Fundraiser

Date to be determined

The Friends of Stadium Woods are planning an environmental art contest and show focused on art work inspired by this rare old-growth urban forest. For more information, email rebekah.paulson@comcast.net.

An emerging masterpiece continued from page 1

In the midst of her work history there was a respite in 1988 when Howard and her husband started a family. She remarks, "I really wanted to slow down and stay home at that point in my life." What "slow down" meant to her differs greatly from what the average person thinks that means. Howard's husband is an avid collector of model trains. She remembers, "We used to go to train shows where I saw all these artists selling their drawings of trains and I told myself, 'I could do this.' That way we hit on something we both enjoyed." Howard refers to this time as her "train period." She produced many detailed drawings of trains and had lithographic prints made to sell.

In 1998, Ava made the decision to re-enter Virginia Tech and earn an art degree. "I took three studio classes in one semester as an adult with children," Howard said. "That was really tough." Later she took anatomy and physiology in order to support her interest in drawing the human figure. The vast majority of the students were in the health sciences and when the professor found out her background he pulled her aside and asked, "Are you sure you want to do this?" Howard comments on this doubting professor by saying, "People don't realize how hard artists work." As another example she points to her son who was a straight "A" student in high school and is now a senior at Georgetown. "He spent far more time and effort struggling with his art projects than he did his other classes."

Despite the apparent public perception of art as an innate gift some people possess, Howard believes art plays a crucial role in society. She explains, "You have to have a source of creativity to come up with something new. Professionals such as doctors with an art background are the ones designing new tools and processes that are helping in their field. I think artists learn more about processes than many people in technical fields." If that is not reason enough to justify the importance of artists she adds, "We would be a boring world without creativity."

Howard recently gained a further appreciation for art while participating in a group study of the Book of Genesis. She came to the realization that in creating the animals,



Photo by Gerrit Young

Ava Howard (left) and volunteers cut the ceremonial ribbon at the grand opening of the Newport Library. Also shown are Ramu Anadakrishnan, Reed Kennedy, Aubrey Bunger, Bonnie Bunger, and Pam Zivolosky.

plants, and all the parts of the universe God perhaps wanted to express himself and share it with others. As she puts it, "When you create a piece of art you don't really get a sense of satisfaction until you have shared it with others and you get a response." Her own approach to art took an abrupt turn as a result of an art history class on Picasso. She explains, "I realized there is a difference between imitation and creation and I wanted to create." She once accepted commissions on mostly detailed realistic works (portraits of people, places and things). Now she says, "I don't enjoy commissions as much anymore because I have to create what someone else wants me to create." As Picasso evolved so has Ava. She has moved into creating abstract works which require less hours at the drawing table and gives her a sense of originality, i.e. creating, rather than imitating.

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Kroger Cares program to benefit BRAA with extra funds

BRAA member Fred Jones recently made the effort to enroll BRAA in the Kroger Cares Fundraising Gift Card Program.

This program is available to any church, school and 501(c)3 non-profit organization. BRAA has been an official non-profit organization for a number of years.

How will these cards benefit BRAA and its artists?

BRAA must sell the Kroger Gift Cards for \$5 each to its members, supporters and friends. Each card is already loaded



continued on page 4

President's Report

It has been a busy month full of successes for BRAA.

We successfully signed up for two new fundraisers for our organization—Amazon Smile and the Kroger Cares card. Members are already utilizing these programs and, before long, we will be seeing their benefits. See the article on the Kroger program elsewhere in this newsletter.

One of the biggest successes has been the long-awaited activation of the TV in the CAIO. It took some testing, updating and overcoming of unexpected problems to make all the equipment work and a lot of computer time to design a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation features some of the art and artists of BRAA along with marketing slides about the organization and its benefits. All this came together in time for its debut on the first Art Walk of the year on April 4. Several months from now the presentation will be edited to feature a new assortment of art. A hard copy book of the presentation and contact information for the artists featured is on display immediately under the TV which switched from the wall location to a rolling stand during this evolution.

Seventeen artists contributed over about 70 artworks for the Newport Village Library grand opening on April 5. A great bunch of BRAA volunteers helped on this event. There was a great turnout and it was a super test of the very efficient little program called wufoo.com, which we used for the registration process.

We are about to have the fourth event of the year from 2-4 p.m., April 27, when BRAA member David Pearce presents his photography workshop on how to properly photograph artworks for competitions and record keeping. This should be of help to a great many of you so I encourage you to attend.

Some of you have asked me what that new, funny looking black box on the back page of the newsletter is all about. It is called a QR code, which stands for "quick response." It is a "two-dimensional" barcode more powerful than the familiar barcode we all know. When smart phones or tablets equipped with QR code readers are pointed at the graphic, it quickly opens our webpage, <http://www.blacksburgart.org>, on the device which read it. While that may bring a yawn to some of you, it is a very cool thing of interest to young, techo savvy folks today. Thank you, Wikipedia, for making me sound so smart on this subject!

Thanks for your support and enthusiasm and the awesome luncheon in March!

Your partner in art,

Now Showing

April 15 – July 15

(except where indicated otherwise)

Jordi Calvera and Darcy Meeker, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

Jennifer Carpenter, VTLS, Corporate Research Center, Blacksburg

Riley Chan, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg

Carole Davis, Zeppoli's, Blacksburg

Susan Hensley, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg (through July 15) and Warm Hearth Community Center (through April 29)

Ruth Lefko, Montgomery Museum, Christiansburg (beginning May 1 through June)

Susan Lockwood, ICTAS, Virginia Tech Campus (until mid-May)

Maxine Lyons, Real Life Dental Care, Blacksburg

Darcy Meeker, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg

Betty Moore, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

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

Martha Olsen, Glencoe Museum, Radford (through April)

Joy Rosenthal, Community Arts Information Office (CAIO), Blacksburg (through April)

Lois Stephens, Virginia Tech Women's Center, Blacksburg

An emerging masterpiece continued from page 2

Howard's involvement with the Newport Rec Center (NRC) first began when she rented studio space there. Sitting in her well-appointed studio in the NRC, she recalls, "I heard there were other artists out here, but while there were artists renting rooms, they really did not spend time here. There was nothing happening, and it was disappointing." Rather than get discouraged she recognized potential. She approached the board of the NRC and realized how much they cared for the place. Since that meeting Howard has been immersed in the project. She explains, "I have dabbled in many areas over the years and it has paid off with the Newport project because it hits

both of my passions: art and urban planning, which in this case is synonymous with community development."

While Howard first came to Newport to create art she hasn't produced a single piece since moving there. She holds no regrets as she says, "I have never been happier. I don't feel lost. I've made many connections with people who share similar passions. If I see other artists creating and we're helping each other that gives me great satisfaction."

In an orchestra there may be many superb musicians capable of performing stunning solos. However, symphonic music can only occur when a conductor brings all the individuals

together. In some sense Ava Howard has assumed the role of conductor for artists in the region. Her education and experience have provided her with a unique set of skills to accomplish her goal. Should her vision for the NRC come to fruition she may no longer be able to lament that she has never finished a work of art in Newport. Indeed, the NRC may become her greatest masterpiece. ■

Note: Ava Howard's artwork may be found on <https://sites.google.com/a/vt.edu/ava-s-art/>

Kroger Cares continued from page 3

with that same amount so the transaction ends up being free to the buyer. To reap the benefits of the program for BRAA, each card owner should then load the card with additional money and use it to shop any Kroger store or gas station.

Each time additional money is loaded to a card, that amount of money is credited to BRAA. Once \$5,000 collectively accumulates from those reloads, a 5% rebate will be issued to BRAA in the form of a check.

"What that means," said Jones, "is that for each \$5,000 spent using a BRAA Kroger Cares Gift Card, BRAA will receive \$250 into its official treasury to use for BRAA programs. All the owners of the cards have done is buy the groceries and gas they normally would and paid for them using the gift card."

BRAA president, Gerri Young, found loading the card with funds extremely easy. "I stopped at the Kroger gas station and went over to the attendant hut to ask how to do it," she said. "They said I could load funds on to the card using cash, check, credit or debit. I used my bank debit card to transfer money from the bank to the card. It was so easy and fast. Because it takes about 15 minutes for that first transfer to electronically complete, the cashier

set up the pump for me to buy \$30 worth of gas and made that \$30 come from the Kroger card. The whole thing with the cashier took maybe five minutes, I pumped my gas and was on my way."

That transaction (\$500 loaded on to the card) earned BRAA \$25.

Member Nina Templeton has an SUV with over 200,000 miles on it. She has used a Kroger Cares card from another organization for "every single gallon of gas ever put in the car. It is so easy and very worthwhile," said Templeton.

Kroger Cares cards can be reloaded at any Kroger cash register or customer service counter. This should be done before groceries are rung up. When you buy a card from BRAA, the number of the card is recorded with your name in the event you lose the card with money still active on it. With this information Kroger may be able to save the available funds for the owner.

A regular Kroger gift card bought at the stores will NOT credit to BRAA. You must purchase the card through BRAA for the financial benefit to accrue.

A monthly accounting of how much money has been loaded on the BRAA Kroger cards will be provided to the organization.

"I know many of you already use Kroger Cares cards for other organizations so I do not expect those members and friends to purchase another one to benefit BRAA," said Young. "However, if you buy and use a BRAA Kroger card, it would be beneficial to the organization in providing workshops at reasonable rates, supporting high school art competitions or doing other programs being considered."

Cards will be for sale at all monthly luncheons or by contacting younggerri@gmail.com. They can be purchased by members and non-members alike. ■

***"You can't wait
for inspiration.
You have to
go after it with
a club."***

~ Jack London

How to photograph 2D and 3D artworks

Workshop by David Pearce

Can't figure out how to make your artwork photos look the way you want? Feel like you don't understand your camera enough to make it happen? Don't have a clue how to do the whole thing?

In the New River Art Juried Biennial last year, the three jurors expressed one recurring theme: "I couldn't fairly rate this work of art because the photography was too poor." The lead juror expressed frustration over having truly believed an artwork might be worthwhile, but being completely unable to judge it only due to badly rendered photos.

What a shame. To have worked so hard to create a magnificent painting or sculpture but be unable to take or process a quality photo of it.

Today, more and more art competitions are taking only digital files of entries. Some, like the New River Art Biennial, have transitioned from the old CD and paper entries to a totally online application process. If you are a master with a paintbrush, but a novice with a camera and a computer, this process can be daunting.

Photographer and wood turner, David Pearce, a long-time BRAA member, will try to bring some of this process into focus April 27 at a two-hour workshop in the Blacksburg Library.

"I hope to show through equipment set ups, demonstrations and actual photos of artwork how an artist can produce better photos of paintings, drawings and three-dimensional works like pottery and sculpture," said Pearce. "It doesn't have to cost a lot of money to set up for this kind of photography."

"Obviously, we won't have time for every attendee to actually photograph an artwork, but students can bring one small 3D or 2D work—minus frames and glass, of course—and we will use some of them in the demonstrations.

"Students can bring the camera they normally use for photographing their art," continued Pearce. "Some cameras are simply not capable of doing really good artwork photography, so this workshop is a good place to bring it in the hopes of finding that out."

Equipment and lighting doesn't have to cost a fortune. This workshop will teach you ways to make inexpensive setups to produce photos that do justice to your art and give you a better chance in the next competition or just to keep accurate records of your work. This process can be used to record pieces of art or valuables you own for insurance pieces as well.

The Blacksburg Regional Art Association, in cooperation with the Blacksburg Library, sponsors this workshop. It is free and open to the public. ■

How to
Photograph
Your Artwork

April 27
2–4 p.m.

Blacksburg Library
200 Miller Avenue

Free and Open to
the Public

■ Other Opportunities

Figure Drawing

The Artful Place, A Fine Art Studio at 106 Faculty Street, offers live model drawing opportunities. The next Sunday session is **April 2**. Cost is \$10 per session and easels and drawing boards are provided.

Reserve your spot by emailing diana@creekmorelaw.com by the Thursday before each session. Space is limited to eight participants.

Mask Decorating, Anyone?

Montgomery Museum is seeking a volunteer to teach mask decorating class for kids third through fifth grade in summer 2015. Contact Sue Farrar for more information at 540-382-5644.

Paint En Plein Air

Heritage Day at Montgomery Museum is set for Aug. 23. Artists are invited to participate by painting en plein air, setting up throughout the grounds. Contact Sue Farrar for more information at 540-382-5644.

Earth Day Contest

Habitat for Humanity is sponsoring an Earth Day contest — Upcycle or re-purpose any old or discarded item and submit it for display and judging in the Restore facility in Christiansburg at 1675 N. Franklin Street until **April 19**. Entries judged in several categories and winners earn ribbons and prizes on **April 26**. For more information, visit www.habitatnrv.org/earth-day-contest.

■ Kudos

Congratulations to two BRAA members who took prizes in the New Works Exhibition at Jacksonville Center for the Arts. People's Choice Award winners included a second place for "Port Tack," by **Ruth Lefko** and a third place for **Vikki King** for "Madison."

Hats off to volunteers

Big thanks to all the volunteers who helped BRAA in March and early April.

All the officers, membership chair, newsletter team, gallery committee and chairs, program committee and to the following for helping on special projects:

Maxine Lyons, Sally Mook, Martha Olson, Nancy Trump, Jennifer Carpenter, Mina Hejazi, Teri Hoover, Lois Stephens, Bill Pulley and Gerri Young, for helping **Ava Howard** pull off the enormously successful Newport Village Library Grand Opening on April 5. Tons of work went into this from planning, handling registration of art and artists, moving things around, transporting display grids and answering a million questions. What an awesome team. Thanks to **Downtown Blacksburg, Inc.**, for loaning a bunch of display grids to the cause. An enormous hand to **Ava Howard** for all she has done and will continue to do for the cause of art in Newport. (See page one.)

Bill Pulley for bringing the monitor in the CAIO alive for the first time and **Gerri Young** for producing a PowerPoint presentation to show on it in time for the first Art Walk of the year. **Denisse Bento** for redesigning the brochure. **Gerri Young** for creating the first BRAA business card. **Lois Stephens** who deserves applause every month for the wonderful newsletter and **Fred Jones** and **Teri Hoover** for the awesome features and photos.

Thanks to **Fred Jones** for being very proactive in the establishing of BRAA in the Kroger Cares program. Cards are selling already!

Big hand to **Charlotte Chan** and **Jeanette Bowker** for being very proactive this year on the gallery schedule, getting new galleries and setting up new exhibiting artist guidelines (soon to be published).

Nancy Trump, Judy Crowgey, Teri Hoover and Marie Collier for the wonderful judging, speaking, photographing and graphic support of the Christiansburg and Auburn high school art competitions at the Montgomery Museum this year.

If we missed your name, please know we didn't mean to and we really appreciate all you do for BRAA. ■



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!

Upcoming continued from page 1

June 14

Jax Juried Exhibition Reception
5-8 p.m.
The Jacksonville Center for the Arts

Mark your calendar for the opening reception for this annual juried exhibition.

July 17

BRAA Annual Theme Exhibition Reception
5-7 p.m.
VTLS, Inc., 1701 Kraft Drive, Blacksburg

Come to the opening reception and see how fellow artists have interpreted this year's theme of "Family."



The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Wild Yellow Rose" (left, acrylic) by Maxine Lyons. This and more of her work can be viewed at Real Life Dental Care through July 15.