

## ■ Upcoming

### August 16

*Jennifer Carpenter Reception*  
Christiansburg Library • 3–5

This meet the artist reception is for Carpenter's residency from Aug. 15–30. She will also provide drawing demos on Tuesdays and Thursdays and a drawing workshop on Aug. 30.

### August 23

*Heritage Day*  
Montgomery Museum, Christiansburg •  
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Plein air painters are invited to set up to record the day and be part of the fun. Contact Sue Farrar for more information at 540-382-5644.

### August 24

*Plein Air Painting*  
Riner • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Email [braaarts@gmail.com](mailto:braaarts@gmail.com) for more information and to reserve a spot.

### September 5

*Donald Sunshine Art Talk and Reception*  
Warm Hearth Village Art Center • 3:30–5 p.m.

Architect, artist, and author Donald Sunshine presents his art themed "Appalachian Country." He will give a talk about his work at 3:30 followed by a book signing and reception.

### September 11

*Lois Stephens Reception*  
Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller  
Regional Art Center • 5–7 p.m.

Landscapes, Cloudscapes, Escapes is the theme of this show featuring oil paintings by Lois Stephens.

### September 13-15

*Danie Janov Workshop*  
Newport Recreation Center • 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Realism to Abstraction is the theme of this exciting workshop. For full information and registration, see the calendar of events at [www.blacksburgart.org](http://www.blacksburgart.org). Hurry, it's almost filled to capacity!

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## With quiet resolve

By Fred Jones

Lois Stephens, graphic designer and editor of the BRAA newsletter, recently stepped down as marketing manager for Continuing and Professional Education at Virginia Tech after 40 years of employment with the university. Outside of work she developed a reputation as a stellar artist known especially for her vibrant landscapes. She has exhibited locally and regionally in such venues as the Holtzman Alumni Center at Virginia Tech, the Crossroads Arts Center in Richmond, and the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. When asked to reflect on her past having reached the milestone of retirement, Stephens reluctantly consented commenting, "My life is rather dull."

While some artists speak of a flame within, driving them to create, art came to Stephens more like a slow cooking crockpot. No one in her family had pursued art and while, overall, her elementary education was positive, she remembers, "I had a couple of bad experiences with art classes." In one instance she was chastised after a teacher falsely assumed Stephens' figure drawing mocked her. In another case an exasperated teacher condemned the artwork of the entire class as "horrible." As a result she stated, "I didn't take a single art class in high school."

After high school graduation, financial considerations forced Stephens to find work. She recalls, "In the 70s employment was booming at Tech, and if you could keyboard, you could get a job." She began doing clerical work and eventually developed graphic design skills by taking classes, reading and experimenting. At that time such work involved a combination of light boxes, exacto knives and masking film. Stephens was witness to dramatic changes in the field with the progression of technology. She laments, "Sometimes I missed the hands-on work we used to do that is now accomplished in front of a computer."



Retiring from full-time work has allowed Stephens to spend more time pursuing her passion for painting. A work in progress is displayed on her easel..

By the early 80s Stephens began to take advantage of the tuition-free classes offered to employees at Virginia Tech. Around this same time she saw an article in the newspaper about Christiansburg artist Barbara Capps. Stephens had been doing some sketches of her young son and thought she could benefit from some help so she contacted Capps and began working with her. She described those sessions as, "... a strong foundation in charcoal, watercolor, acrylics and oils." The classes continued for several years.

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## ■ Exhibit Opportunities

### Self Portraits

**October 3 – November 29 •**

#### The Jacksonville Center for the Arts

Self portraits have been a part of the art world since the beginning of time. From the realistic to the surreal, interpret this topic in your own unique way. All media are welcome. Application deadline is **Sept. 2**. Reception is Oct. 11. For more information visit the "For Artists" tab at <http://jacksonvillecenter.org>.

### Gobblerfest

**September 5 • 4–8 p.m.**

#### Downtown Blacksburg

Artists and other vendors are invited to participate in this annual festival that connects students and local businesses. Visit [www.gobblerfest.dsa.vt.edu](http://www.gobblerfest.dsa.vt.edu) to sign up for a booth.

## ■ Other Opportunities

### Figure Drawing

The Artful Place, A Fine Art Studio at 106 Faculty Street, offers live model drawing opportunities. Upcoming Sunday sessions are **August 17** and **31**, 6-8 p.m. Cost is \$10 per session and easels and drawing boards are provided.

Reserve your spot by emailing [diana@creekmorelaw.com](mailto:diana@creekmorelaw.com) by the Thursday before each session. Space is limited to seven participants.

## Upcoming continued from page 1

### October 17-19

#### Jennifer Carpenter Workshop Newport Recreation Center

Jennifer Carpenter returns to lead this workshop to further explore the intricacies of colored pencil. For more information and registration, visit the calendar of events tab at [www.blacksburgart.org](http://www.blacksburgart.org).

### March 17, 19, 20, 2015

#### Robin Poteet Workshop Christiansburg Presbyterian Church

Robin returns in spring! This time she will be exploring pouring techniques with watercolors and acrylics. For more information, contact Sue Farrar by email at [director@montgomerymuseum.com](mailto:director@montgomerymuseum.com).



Photo by Gerri Young

Fourteen people participated in the Aug. 2 BRAA play date in Ava Howard's studio in the Newport Recreation Center. Howard taught artists how to use CitraSolv (a citrus solvent) to manipulate National Geographic magazine photos. The often surprising results can be used as backgrounds for paintings or drawings, or as abstracts.

## Virginia Museum of Fine Arts accepting applications for fellowships

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowship program has awarded nearly \$5 million to Virginia's artists who demonstrate exceptional creative ability in their chosen disciplines since the program's creation over 70 years ago.

VMFA offers \$8,000 awards to professional artists, \$6,000 awards to graduate students, and \$4,000 awards to undergraduate students. Applicants may apply in the disciplines of crafts, drawing, film/video, mixed media, new/emerging media, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and art history (graduate students only). All applicants must be legal residents of Virginia and student applicants must be enrolled full-time in degree-seeking programs. Applicants' works are reviewed anonymously by distinguished jurors and awards are made based on artistic merit. The deadline for fellowship applications is **November 7, 2014**.

Full eligibility criteria, an application, and a printable PDF flyer can be found at [www.VMFA.museum/fellowships](http://www.VMFA.museum/fellowships). ■

## Hats off to our volunteers!

**Bill Pulley, Gerri Young, Nancy Norton, Teri Hoover** and **Fred Jones** for helping on the tent project.

**Fred Jones, Teri Hoover, Bill Pulley** and **Gerri Young** for their Art at the Market presence and tent building.

**Ruth Lefko, Judy Crowgey** and **Gerri Young** for setting up plein air events.

**Ava Howard** for hosting and teaching the CitraSolv art Play Date.

**Jeanette Bowker, Betty Moore, Teri Hoover, Ava Howard** and **Marie Collier** for all the work on the annual theme show and to **Riley Chan** for being the photographer. Thanks to the many folks who supplied reception goodies for this event.

## ■ President's Report

It is hard to believe it is August already and hints of autumn are showing up in the trees! I am seriously not finished with summer.

BRAA has had a busy time lately.

One of the last "housekeeping" things that really needed attention is almost done. A huge thanks to Bill Pulley, Nancy Norton and especially Teri Hoover for the enormous amount of work it took to help me move all the bits and pieces of two tents and a (surprise) canopy out of the CAIO storage corner and set all three of them up in Teri's front yard. This was necessary to know exactly what we had and if all the pieces and instructions were there and whether or not we should keep them all and which one to use for Art at the Market.

Result? The entire evolution including the setup and breakdown of the popup tent at Art at the Market on July 19 totaled 10 put ups and takedowns and storages of tents/canopy in five days! We were exhausted. Thank goodness tall Fred Jones stepped in to help for the July 19 evolution.

For awhile Teri's front yard looked so much like a yard party in the making that we flirted with the idea of actually doing one! After several days, all tents were back in boxes and bags in the storeroom.

The biggest tent is for sale! Info on that elsewhere in this newsletter. The popup tent is excellent and easy and available for rent by any member who needs one for a show or yard party! Same deal goes for the canopy, which is mostly just a shade, no sides, no waterproofing.

BRAA was present at Art at the Market on Draper Road for the first time in several years. Fred was fortunate enough to make a sale, we talked to lots of potential members, signed up a renewed member and passed out a lot of info about our organization. Despite a little rain, we had fun and felt like the day was worthwhile. On the awards side, congrats to members **Alex Crookshanks, Dale Norton, Sally Mook** and **Susan Young** for earning ribbons in this fun annual event.



Photo by Gerri Young

Art at the Market

We had a great day in Teri Hoover's yard for plein air and two more events are coming up. The Montgomery Museum has invited us to set up to paint or draw during their annual Heritage Day on Aug. 23. If painting in public makes you nervous, this is a good one for a first time out. Show up any time after 10 a.m. Event ends at 3 p.m. Stay whatever amount of time you want. Food and beverages available on site.

The next day (Aug. 24) we have been invited to a private home in Riner, which is just wonderful! It offers close up views of the Little River, gardens, old buildings, a tractor, stones, stream, etc. If you only come to one plein air day this summer, make it this one. Email braaarts@gmail.com to reserve your spot.

## ■ Now Showing

**July 15 – October 15**

(except where indicated otherwise)

**Pat Bevan**, Zeppoli's, Blacksburg

**BRAA Theme Show**, VTLS, Corporate Research Center, Blacksburg

**Jennifer Carpenter**, Montgomery Chamber of Commerce (through Sept. 12)

**Charlotte Chan**, Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion (through August)

**Marie Collier**, Real Life Dental Care, Blacksburg

**Vera Dickerson**, Blue Ridge Cancer Care, Blacksburg

**Anne Hammond-Tooke**, Virginia Tech Women's Center, Blacksburg

**Lois Stephens**, Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Blacksburg

**Vikki King**, Pointe West Management, Blacksburg

**Maxine Lyons**, Brown Insurance, Blacksburg

**Betty Moore**, See Mark Optical, Blacksburg

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

**Lois Stephens**, Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, Christiansburg (Sept. 11 through Oct.)

**Donald Sunshine**, Warm Hearth Village Center Art Gallery (September)

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

**"If you could say it in words, there'd be no reason to paint."**

~ Edward Hopper

## Reminder to gallery artists

If you are scheduled to display in a BRAA gallery and you need to deviate from the scheduled dates for changing out artwork by *a few days*, you must contact the other artist to arrange an agreeable change out date.

If you are scheduled into a BRAA gallery and you cannot meet your commitment for the *entire quarter*, you must contact [charlotteychan@gmail.com](mailto:charlotteychan@gmail.com) as soon as possible so she has time to find a replacement for the space.

For both of these schedule changes, you must also inform your individual gallery chair of the situation *at the same time*. ■

## President's Report

*continued from page 3*

The second play date in Ava Howard's studio was great fun! Transforming National Geographic pages into art was so easy! Plans are in the works for the next event.

September and October bring excellent workshops by Danie Janov (which is quickly approaching maximum capacity) and Jennifer Carpenter. Info on these events can be found at [www.blacksburgart.org](http://www.blacksburgart.org).

Our Kroger Cares Card program has resulted in our first payout of \$278 from Kroger so this program is definitely worth using. Do you have a Kroger card yet? Cards available from me at just about any time, just ask.

Welcome to all our new members and thanks to all the stalwarts who have joined and supported and encouraged and helped.

Your partner in art,



Photo by Lois Stephens

Danie Janov gives a preview of her upcoming workshop, *Realism to Abstraction*, at the BRAA monthly luncheon and art spot on Aug. 8. The Sept. 13-15 workshop will be held at the Newport Recreation Center. The registration deadline is Sept. 1, but may fill before that date. For more information, see the Events tab at [www.blacksburgart.org](http://www.blacksburgart.org).



tent for sale — \$300

Photo by Gerri Young

One owner 10' x 10' Trimline tent in clean, excellent, like new condition. To buy new is \$895. Heavy duty, waterproof vinyl top and sides, two air vents, four sides that zip shut, 60" sunroof for plenty of light, all parts and original written instructions included. Used very few times. Stored in clean, dry, air conditioned space at all times when not in use. Excellent tent for art/craft shows or sporting events. Easy setup and take down with 2-3 person team. Can be transported in SUV when packed. Could possibly be used for greenhouse purposes as well.

Write to [braaarts@gmail.com](mailto:braaarts@gmail.com) or call 540-629-1208. Tent available for pickup in downtown Blacksburg.

## 24 artists participate in annual theme show

The 2014 BRAA members-only theme show opened at VTLS in Blacksburg's Corporate Research Center July 17 with 40 works on display by 24 artists.

Members and guests attending the opening reception voted for best representation of the 2014 theme "Family" and winners of the People's Choice awards were **First Place, Charlotte Chan** (right); **Second Place** (tie), **Fred Jones** (below, left) and **Jordi Calvera** (below, right). Each received gift certificates for use at Mish Mish art supply. The first place award was provided by Mish Mish, a corporate supporter of BRAA, and the second place awards were funded by BRAA. The show continues at VTLS, Inc., 1701 Kraft Drive, until Monday, Oct. 13. ■



Photo by Riley Chan



Photo by Riley Chan



Photo by Chuck Hoover

Artists at the July 26 plein air session enjoyed a beautiful day at the Hoover's residence on Draper Road in Blacksburg. Participants included (clockwise, back row) Judy Crowgey, Ruth Leftko, Gerri Young, Charlotte Chan, Ann Groves, and Teri Hoover.



Photo by Gerri Young

## Upcoming Plein Air

Mark your calendar for an exciting plein air event on Aug. 24 from 10 a.m – 2 p.m. The photo above is just one of the vistas at this lovely home on the Little River in Riner. Good shade and views in every direction of gardens, water, stones, old buildings, farm equipment and more. To reserve your spot, email [www.braaarts@gmail.com](mailto:www.braaarts@gmail.com).

Quiet Resolve *continued from page 1*

As the years passed Stephens continued painting, raising her son and working full time. She transferred her Virginia Tech credits to Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Va., because they had a strong program in alternative education for adult students. In 1995 she graduated magna cum laude with a double major in graphic design and communication within a week of her son's graduation from the College of William and Mary. For someone who describes herself as, "... having a tendency to give up easily," it is a remarkable accomplishment.

Stephens has continued her education in art in workshops such as the Hudson River Valley art workshop in New York and participating in the Nimrod Hall Summer Arts program in Bath County, Va., for the past five years. She is considering taking more formal classes declaring, "I'm not finished yet!" Even outside the classroom she continues to study. Her husband, Cliff, muses, "If only she would spend as much time creating art as she does reading about it ..."

Stephens is known for her oil paintings but enjoys working in pastels, charcoal and other mediums. Her focus on oil stems simply from practical considerations. She says, "I don't like matting nor having to deal with glass and glare."

Regarding subject matter she claims, "I am drawn to figures and portraits more than anything else." However, she does not enjoy the pressures of commission work. She believes she is headed in a direction that is not so literal, explaining, "Other than working plein air, I usually start with a photograph for inspiration, but at some point I put it away." During a recent trip to Alaska, Stephens took several photos of the landscape from an airplane and states, "They are just screaming for an abstract derivative."

To walk through the grounds surrounding Stephens' home in Newport, Va., is to recognize the strong connection she has to nature, which is also mirrored in her art. Beautiful gardens both flower and vegetable grace the property. Near

a meandering path lined with hostas is a tree stump holding a tiny fairy village. She explains, "I gathered the materials with my grandchildren and we built it together." With few exceptions the entire scene is created with natural objects: stones, moss, sticks, and plants. She also enjoys providing artistic nurturing by frequently painting with her granddaughter and grandson.

Whether representational or abstract, Stephens' work will likely continue to be rooted in the natural surroundings of her native Giles County. When asked what her goals are as an artist she replies simply, "Just to keep learning and improving." Compared to the fast pace of today's rapidly evolving technology Stephens believes people would find her life boring. However, her life story is one demonstrating how, through quiet resolve and unrelenting persistence in pursuit of goals, she has reached her full potential. There is nothing dull about that.

Stephens will have a solo exhibit at the Montgomery Museum from September 11 through October 2014. In November she will be the featured artist at the Floyd Artists Association. BRAA members will recognize her work every month with each edition of the newsletter. Her design and editorial work has helped turned the publication into the envy of arts organizations in the region. ■



The art featured in this month's nameplate is "Feather My Nest" (left, turned, stained and waxed ash wood, 13" diameter) by Dale Norton. This and more of his work can be viewed in the ICTAS building on the Virginia Tech campus through mid November.



**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/>



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Send Facebook news postings to:  
**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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