

## SEPTEMBER ARTIST OF THE MONTH—GAIL PARKER



*I* was born in Maine, and grew up in various New England states and a tiny Pennsylvania town. At 16, I began dating Ed, now my husband of nearly 48 years. After college we married and settled in Pittsburgh, where we lived most of our adult lives and raised 3 children. (We now also have 5 grandchildren.) As

the kids grew older, I returned to Penn State, at the local campus, to earn an associate degree in Business. I found that I loved the challenge of preparing income tax returns, and I worked for H&R Block for 25 years.



*A*s far back as I can remember, I had often thought that it would be fun to be able to draw and paint. I took a drawing class once, and also a class in water color. Both appealed to me, but

I didn't have the time during my younger years to pursue these things.

*We* moved to The Villages in 2003, ready to try new things. Early on I tried my hand at One Stroke painting. It was fun, but not really "me." Next I took an introductory workshop in oils. I had no idea what I was doing, but I fell in love with the feel of the brush on the canvas. A couple of days later, as Ed and I explored an expo put on by the Lifetime Learning College, I discovered an oil painting demo by Russell O'Brien. He made it look

easy and fun, and I immediately signed up for his next class and several since. I belong to both the VAL and VAA, and enjoy the informal painting groups.



*I*'ve been painting for 5 years now, and find it to be fun, relaxing, and satisfying. It has been only recently that I feel confident enough to enjoy displaying my work at various local venues. Last year I took 3rd place in the VAA's contest for new

painters, and since then I've won an honorable mention ribbon at the Sumter Annex.

*I* like to paint from my own photographs, especially from those I've taken during our many travels. I enjoy doing scenes with rocks and water, and close-ups of animals, many of which hang in my grandchildren's bedrooms. One of the most fun pictures so far was one of several dinosaurs requested by my then 7 year old grandson (and which was not done from one of my personal photos!!). I'm a realist, and enjoy small, detail work.



*I*'m looking forward now to taking a basic drawing class this fall with Frank Zampardi. I think that some drawing know-how will be very helpful with my painting, and hope that I'll also find a new avenue for my creativity