

JANUARY ARTIST OF THE MONTH—EDWIN EAKINS



I was born and raised in Walhonding, a small (120 pop.), rural village in NE Ohio, complete with a one-room schoolhouse. A good time was spending hours drawing action figures on scrap paper.

On a trip to the county fair, I remember an artist painting and selling colorful landscapes. At home I tried to duplicate one from memory and my proud parents framed the result which hung in our living room for years. Later I discovered I had painted the mountains and foreground trees with the sun shining in opposite directions. Lesson learned.



*A*fter high school, a part-time job via a friend at WBNS-TV in Columbus, Ohio, led to my working on the floor crew and attending The Ohio State University, first majoring in Engineering, then Fine Arts. While I enjoyed the art classes I was unable to envision a career in commercial art.

I dropped out, was picked up by Uncle Sam and spent two years in the artillery in communications. While there, I authored a cartoon character for our battalion newspaper who often spoofed military traditions. I returned to Columbus and WBNS-TV and became a producer-director, at the same time majoring in broadcasting at OSU. Frequent trips to the station's commercial department resulted in my marriage to Sandra in 1963. Son Jay and daughter Robin quickly followed. Our one and only granddaughter, Abby, loves to draw and is becoming quite an artist.

*B*ack at WBNS-TV, art led me into promotion and for three years as promotion manager, creating print, on-air and sales promotion for our top-rated CBS affiliate. In 1966 I graduated with a BS in Education.



*T*he '70s brought a move to public television as director of programming for Ohio Educational Broadcasting, coordinating statewide programming for twelve affiliate PBS stations. I heard about a fellow who was teaching some evening oil painting classes. He got me back on track and was the motivation for the painting of "*Shotgun*", my dad, which was exhibited at the Ohio State Fair.



*I*n the '80s it was back to live television with Warner Cable in Cincinnati. As director of programming with a staff of forty, we did fifteen hours of live shows each week plus specials such as the ATP Tennis Championships and the Cincinnati Regatta National Rowing Championship.



*W*hile doing research for the Regatta, I came across the brilliant rowing artwork of Thomas Eakins which was a kick start back to oil painting and classes at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. My painting instructor taught the method of the old masters, layering color over a monochrome value painting. I still like its ability to provide success at each step of composition, value and color. "*Aggie*" was a Vietnamese model in our class.

I have been blessed with teachers and mentors who shared with me their talent and skills in photography, art, work ethic and character.

*A*fter retiring from Time Warner, we moved to The Villages. It's been a great experience and I'm happy to be associated with its strong art organizations and talented artists.

Edwin Eakins
268 Ellenton Run
The Villages, FL 32162
352-750-0202