

Artist of the Month—Mildred “Milly” Bruno



I CALL MYSELF A CRAFTER,
ARTIST, HOME DECORATOR,
JEWELRY DESIGNER AND
ENTREPRENEUR.

I moved to the Villages in Sept. 2007. My husband and I worked for the golfer, Jack Nicklaus and his wife Barbara, as their personal property managers and lived on their estate for 12 years before we retired.

My mentor was my Father. I was born in Rotterdam, Holland. In 1940 WWII, all of Holland was occupied in one day. All the fighting men from 16 to 60 yrs. were rounded up and taken to a holding area and then put on trains. My Father saw, by the signs, that they were going to Germany, and he knew he didn't want to go there. So, he jumped out of the train's window that night. He laid there till dawn and saw a farmhouse close by. He knocked on the door and the farmer's wife told him to come in. They hid him, with their son, up in their attic for about 3 weeks. The farmer took my Father back to Rotterdam to my Mother by hiding him under potatoes for a 3 hour journey. From then on, my Father hid in their attic for 4 plus years. During that time my Father was so bored he taught himself how to oil paint. My Mother would take the paintings and hide them in the bottom of the baby carriage and trade or sell them for food.

I was 2½ yrs. old when we moved to America. I was a sickly child with acute Asthma. I would be bored in bed and miss a lot of school each year. My Father worked nights so he was able to be with me during the day and show me things to do. He would show me how to draw, and I would watch him oil paint for hours on end. He also showed me all kinds of arts and crafts. He took a 4 yr. art course through Norman Rockwell and I always watched when he did his lessons.

I taught ceramic classes in the 70's in Michigan. I make decorated egg shells, sugar panoramic eggs with scenes inside. These are just some of the 3-D art that I do. My husband tells me I have to live to 150 years old to do everything that I want to do. My asthma went away 6 yrs. ago and now I feel reborn. I say the Villages cured me! I want to do all the things that my health prevented me to do all my life. I have taken classes with some great teachers, Laura Miller, Maria Wright, Rebecca Schwartz, drawing class with Frank Zampardi, and workshops with Janet Rogers. I started with acrylics and then with “my love” water color when I moved here.

I taught art & craft classes here. I invented and have obtained a full designer U.S. Patent for a "Tee-twirl" for decorating apparel. I sell them and Fabric "Circle of Life" necklaces at the Villages' Farmer's market at Brownwood and Spanish Springs. I did a casting call for Shark Tank and look at other avenues to market them.

