

ARTIST OF THE MONTH Marlene Geraci



I grew up in the Pittsburgh suburbs before moving to The Villages. I am married, have a wonderful husband of 46 years, two children, and three grandchildren. I spent years at home raising our family before beginning work as an administrator with insurance companies, then the University of Pittsburgh as a Fellowship Coordinator for Pulmonary and Critical Care Fellows with the Department of Medicine. I retired

from the University in December 2005

When I was young, I always enjoyed drawing and creating, and spent four years taking art in high school. Raising our family and work put a lot of that creative process into sewing and needle arts. It was a few years before I retired that our daughter asked me to do a picture of the sand dunes and sea oats at one of our favorite vacation spots, Hilton Head Island. We had a good art department at the University Book Store, so my first thought was to buy colored pencils, and a sketch pad, and when we were next in Hilton Head, I drew the sand dunes, and waving sea oats she wanted. I enjoyed doing the sketching again, and thought when I retire, I'll take art classes.

Once we retired and moved to The Villages, and at the first opportunity, I took a watercolor pencil class. I was disappointed in the process in that I liked my picture before adding the water, so I looked for an alternative class, and Nan Klein, the colored pencil instructor at the Lifelong Learning College, came highly recommended. That was in April 2006. I took every class Nan offered and am so grateful for her teaching and friendship. Through her I found my niche in colored pencil, and continue to grow by going to her Monday workshops at Laurel Manor on the first and third Monday of each month. I have met so many terrific colored pencil artists while attending the workshops and everyone is willing to share their learning experiences. There's a great camaraderie among the group.

I also took a Design and Composition class from Sam Hoppe who also teaches at the college. The class helped me a great deal in the planning of my art work. I've taken watercolor classes, and oil classes, but I feel most comfortable doing colored pencil. I continue to oil paint at Laurel Manor on Wednesday mornings. It is a medium I like very much, but I need more experience before I feel confident in my ability. All of this has contributed to my growth as an artist.

My first oil painting won a Third Place ribbon and the Peoples' Choice Award at the Annex Art Show in October 2008. My colored pencil pieces have won two Honorable Mentions, an Award of Merit, a Second and Third Place award, but a First Place award still eludes me. I will have to try harder. I've also won Third Place in the Arts Round the Square at Lake Sumter Landing in April 2009, and another Peoples' Choice Awards at the last Annex Show in June. (photo to the right). I so appreciate the Peoples' Choice Awards. This comes from the people who view my art, and I am so thrilled they like my work enough to vote on my piece. I'm just so grateful to everyone who voted for my paintings.



Through all this is a very supportive husband who always says my art is wonderful, even when a piece isn't finished. Now when holidays come around, and an opportunity for a gift, I request art supplies. He says, "Great, that's less expensive than jewelry!"

I'm absolutely delighted to have this opportunity to learn, create, and participate in The Villages art community.

Eds. Note: Marlene is a member of both the Villages Art League and the Visual Arts Association. Her art will be on display at the Spanish Springs Citizens Bank during the month of August.