



Artist of the Month—Bonnie Canning

I began drawing and painting as a little girl, when I discovered that, unlike my sisters, I had absolutely no musical talents. I got my first commission and sold my first painting when I was thirteen. I continued my artistic endeavors throughout high school, where I designed the covers for my high school's literary magazine, was president of the Art Club, and sold portraits of my classmates to their adoring parents.

Thinking that I wanted to make art my career, I began college as an art major. However, my fascination with all things Chinese soon led me to change majors and schools. I was the first undergraduate to receive a degree from the George Washington University's Sino-Soviet Institute in Chinese Language and Studies.

After receiving a master's degree in Information Science, I went on to a corporate management career. Meanwhile I pursued my artistic interests on the side by taking up fiber crafts. I became fascinated with spinning various types of fibers, from cotton bolls to dog hair, lama to sheep's fleece; and, using natural dyes for color, produced woven art hangings for many years.

Upon my retirement in 2000, I returned to my interest in Chinese culture and art. After moving to Florida in 2005, I began to concentrate on Chinese painting techniques. I look to the paintings of ancient and modern Chinese masters for my inspiration.

I have taught Chinese Painting at the Lifelong Learning College, and since January 2014, I have been teaching Chinese painting every Saturday to a group of enthusiastic artists here in The Villages at the Pimlico Recreation Center. I try to imbue in them the philosophy that Chinese painting is an expression of your "chi" or energy; that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to paint.



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