

Artist of the Month—Peter Kushner



I have loved art for as long as I can remember. When I was 9 or 10 I was taking art classes every weekend at the Boston Museum of Fine Art. My father would drop me off at the museum and when my class was over I would take the subway by myself to a location where my father or one of his friends would pick me up. I really enjoyed drawing the most. From the time I was 14-22 I worked at a theatrical arts camp where I taught theatrical makeup, tennis and fencing. As a Senior in High School I loved art, science and math and had to make a decision which way to go in college. Since I didn't think I could make a flawless drawing of a person or a portrait from my imagination, I decided to go into math and computers. Of course in my later years I found out that really good artists would hire models for portraits or figure drawings - oh well!

I continued to take sporadic art courses as well as taking software courses to create programs to help artists do computer graphics. I was actually accepted to Brown University as a Master's student to work with Professor Andy Van Dam who was one of the early creators of computer graphics. Incidentally, the character of Andy in Pixar's "Toy Story" was named after Professor Van Dam. Due to unfortunate circumstances I was unable to work for Professor Van Dam but still attended Brown University.

After starting a family I didn't seem to have time for art until my daughters were 16 or above. I got back into color pencil drawing and surprised my family that I could create art. Since then I took many art courses at the Worcester Museum of Fine Arts. During COVID I took some courses for credit from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD).

After retiring and moving to The Villages last September became a full time artist, drawing 7 days a week for 8-10 hours a day. I am an active member of the Colored Pencil Painters Guild and have been asked to help teach "Colored Pencil levels 1 and 2" enrichment classes. In addition, I have given two well received presentations with demonstrations on 3, 4, 5 and 6 point perspective.

Prior to moving to The Villages I was doing colored pencil paintings with pastel backgrounds and acrylic or white ink highlights. One of my hobbies is to attend comic conventions where I would find the names of the voice actors who would be attending. I would then draw colored pictures of their characters and get the actors to sign them. In this way I have gotten signatures for the actors who voiced the Little Mermaid, Belle from "Beauty and the Beast," Mulan, Batman, Avatar the Last Airbender, C3PO from every Star Wars movie as well as many others.

