My Spot by Anni Matsick

Our holiday issue holds a lot of fun and should provide an opportunity for some relaxed reading during the busy holiday season. Members had a chance to gather earlier this month at Saturnalia and an eyewitness report within tells us it was another well attended annual holiday celebration. Photos are included to help you relive some of the memories.

Reprising a couple of fun features are another humorous illustrator’s tale by guest writer R. Michael Palan, as a bookend for his piece that appeared in January, and a selection of members’ early artistic efforts in a second version of Young at Art.

In an outreach effort through the Make A Wish Foundation, progress has been made in the mural being created by three PSI members. We have a glimpse of the delightful sketches transferred to the four walls of a little girl’s room.

Thus ends the 2009 Volume of PSInside, 12 issues showcasing a wide range of impressive individual and group accomplishments. We’ll be back in the new year with more of the same features and some new ideas, looking forward to your contributions!

News Flashes From Our Members

Christmas in California

The very smart folks at California University are once again featuring art by George Schill. George created two illustrations, one for their 2009 printed Holiday card and the other (snowman) piece for their e-card which was animated by Ron Magnes for their website. www.cup.edu/happyholidays.

Also, Animare Studios recently revamped their entire website and added some new work. www.animarestudios.com

Z is for Zealous!

Z is one of twelve illustrations by Ron Thurston that will appear on Zoltun Design’s 2010 calendar. The subjects all start with the letter Z. The images were done digitally to resemble an etching scratchboard technique. Shown is December’s Zinfandel. Zipper was used for another cold month.
On Exhibit

Three miniature oils by Leda Miller were accepted into the Miniature Art Society of Florida’s annual exhibit. One of them, “Hutch Bunny”, was awarded Best Work by a First Time Entrant. The exhibit will hang at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art in Tarpon Springs, FL, January 16 through February 7. Shown is the winning painting, 3”x3” oil on copper.

Runaway Winner

Leda Miller won an illustration contest sponsored by a company named Four Socks, for three different horse illustrations. The owner of Four Socks owns three Gyspy Cob horses (each horse has four white “socks”) and is developing a line of children’s products with the three horse images, such as children’s board books, tee-shirts and greeting cards. The award was $1000 cash and a possible opportunity to work on future projects based on the three horses. The prospectus for the contest was displayed at Panza Gallery during our Fission of Form show.

Lights, Camera, Action!

Rick Antolic’s adventures as an extra continued when he got in on the Russell Crowe movie being filmed locally, and had a chance to sit across from the star one day at lunch. Cast as a Canadian TSA (Transportation Security Agent), Rick expects to get some actual screen time along with PSI’s First Lady, Delilah Brewer, who sat behind Crowe in a scene on a plane (starting to get the gist of the action?). PSiers might also recognize a Dr. Sketchy model who made the cut as well. A big opportunity for Rick’s “baby” arose just weeks later when his yellow 1987 Cadillac got an offer to appear in the Jake Gyllenhaal movie also being filmed in Pittsburgh. “It was the one time that my car could make me money instead of costing me money,” says Rick. “Too bad I had just taken the big Rick Antolic Illustration decals off the sides of my car.” The day rate for a movie extra is $58 for 8 hours or less, time and half for anything over 8 hours. The day rate for a car is $125 a day. “I drove up and down one block of Liberty Avenue a few times and that was it. It took me 14 hours to make what my car made in a half hour,” the actor laments. The road to Hollywood is a long one... but the Caddy is ready to make the trip!

Gina Antognoli Scanlon provides this link to the YouTube segment she filmed back in September about her experience as a gestational carrier. Johnson & Johnson produced it and Gina was surprised at how much of her artwork they have shown. “That was an unexpected bonus,” she says. www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VcxbAgrWMc

Fission of Form Update

Poetry Reading

Ziggy Edwards reads her poem “Walking in the Woods” that inspired Judy Emerick’s painting, at the October 3 poetry reading at Panza Gallery.

Book Release and Signing

The 92-page Fission of Form book was released at a signing event Saturday, December 5 from 3-6pm at Panza Gallery, Millvale. The book, designed by Dale McNutt of Soho Invention, includes all the work and editorial essays from the recent collaborative show created by the Pittsburgh Society of Illustrators, the Pittsburgh Society of Sculptors, and the Pittsburgh Poets. The reproduction is first-rate art representation quality. The book signing/release event was successful in that almost every pre-sold copy was picked up that day.

continued on page 3
There are only 120 copies left of this important volume. You can order any amount for $15 each (checks to PSI). See November PSInside page 3 for details.

Make A Wish Mural Progress
Back in August we reported on a project taken on by PSI volunteers led by Michele Bamburak to fulfill the wish of a family wanting a mural for their 3 ½ year old daughter’s room to create a cheerful surrounding for her therapy sessions. Shown are Michele’s sketches for the four walls depicting a country landscape scene with cartoon style illustrations, sure to delight the young occupant. The painting crew includes Greg Schooley and Judith Lauso. “We have the basic background done and some of the details such as the foreground grasses, clouds and grasshoppers. We will start back up on the room after the holidays and anticipate completion by the end of January,” Michele reports.

Make A Wish Foundation of Pittsburgh fulfills wishes to children 2 ½ to 18 years of age who have a diagnosed life threatening illness or injury. The Pittsburgh chapter located in the Gulf tower downtown is the busiest in the world, having granted some 10,000 wishes since it opened in 1983. PSI is proud and honored to have its members among the contributors.

Illustrating for America
Fred Carlson reports a brand new assignment for longtime client America magazine illustrating a poem that won their annual poetry award. Sounds routine enough, but it turns out that the poetry prizewinner is none other than the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, Rowan Williams, presiding Archbishop of the 75 million Anglican Protestant Christians worldwide. This is the third largest worldwide Christian communion after the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. America is buying the original art from Fred to be a present to the Archbishop of Canterbury, so it appears Fred’s work will be gracing the walls at Lambeth Castle outside of London soon.

Archbishop Williams is known for his theological academic credentials as well as being one of the leading authorities on Welsh language and translation. This poem honors 40 Catholic Jesuit priests killed in an anti-Catholic purge in Wales in the 17th century during the Cromwellian period of British history.

Thanks again to all the participants and buyers and supporters of this enterprise! Thanks to Gina Antognoli Scanlon, Kurt Pfaff, Fred Carlson, Mark Panza, and James Shipman for final coordination and managing the book release.

Kurt and Gina at the book release table

Mark Panza and fellow employee enjoy sofa time with the book

Kurt, James Shipman and Gina relax at the end of the afternoon

Make A Wish Mural

Business Meeting
Upcoming Business Meetings
January 19, 7:30 pm
at John Blumen’s home

Fun Links
Lots of seasonal cakes at:
http://cakewrecks.blogspot.com

Indian Jingle Bells:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QYLxvJvJug
Let's just entertain the idea for a moment that some of us creative, visual communicators tend to be a wee bit shy at times. Not so at Saturnalia! Members and affiliates can all agree that we’re a lucky bunch to have participated in another superb year-end party. The atmosphere was festive from the start, and soon it was a standing-room-only, boisterous event that certainly left some of us with well-earned, raspy voices on Sunday morning. The food was fabulous and seemed only to increase as the hours passed. John Blumen’s home was beautifully decorated with a mixture of holiday cheer and his own impressive range of artwork, and there was no shortage of good conversation, new friends and familiar faces. Those who could not attend were sorely missed, their caricatures ceremoniously sketched on paper plates cast into the fireplace. Well that’s only half true (the first half!) but we hope everyone can make it next year! Here’s to our brilliant colleagues, a great year for PSI and a wonderful 2010 ahead!

—Molly Feuer
Kathy Rooney: “I was an avid Etch-a-Sketch artist and my images all got shaken away. I used it so much that I wore it out—the aluminum powder eventually leaked out of the knobs.”

Phil Wilson: “Drew this T-rex at age 8, and a Roman centurion, (yeah, I was into ancient history too), at age 12.”

Ilene Winn Lederer: “This study of Queen Elizabeth was done for a project at Pictorum, a Chicago design studio that I worked for right after art school in 1968.”

Fred Carlson: (top) ‘Page 1 of Fred’s Series’ comic company, May 1964 issue, depicts ‘Gargantuan and the Human Spring’. Gargantuan, a non-green version of the Hulk, fights an army of robots. I was in 3rd grade.
(above) ’1962 vintage ‘Apache Ambush’ from report on Indian Life; early 2nd grade. Green pen on yellow craft paper (nice!).

John Hinderliter: “When my Mom died I took the opportunity to throw away all the crappy artwork from my childhood that she had been hoarding. However, I do have this crappy cartoon Warrior that I did for the cover of my high school yearbook circa 1975. Much to my chagrin, it’s still being used all over my hometown of Canton, PA.”

Anni Matsick: “My grandmother was the recipient of this image done on scrap wood with a wood burning tool, at age 11½.”

Jen Scanlon: “Here’s a drawing I did when I was 12, I remember doing it at home for the fun of it. I loved horses during those pre-teen years!”
In Touch with...

JOHN MANDERS

John was named Outstanding Illustrator/Author by the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association in 2006 and was included in the 25-year retrospective of Cricket magazine covers. Distinguished honors indeed, but they don’t deter our fun loving guy from showing up in Buccaneer Bunny ears for his popular school visits! Read more on John’s immersion in his picture book art.

Q: How would you describe your personality and lifestyle?
A: While not exactly reclusive, I don’t have a problem spending large chunks of time by myself—which is convenient. Illustration is a solitary business. Lifestyle at the moment means working, eating and sleeping. When I get out once in a while I’m an erudite conversationalist and jolly dinner companion. It’s true—ask anybody.

Q: Was there a significant turning point or detour in your career?
A: Up until the mid-nineties I was a graphic designer—I’d worked in the promotion art department at Ballantine Books in New York, went freelance, and was hired as an art director at Prokell Design here in Pittsburgh. When that studio went under, I found myself without a job but with the opportunity to follow my long-suppressed dream of being an illustrator. Somehow while I was a designer I’d picked up the skills every illustrator (read: small business owner) needs—how to self-promote, how to plan your operation, how to keep books, how to keep your business alive.

Q: From what illustration assignment did you learn the most about yourself?
A: When I began promoting myself as a children’s illustrator, I received a lot of rejections because my style was too cartoony. It wasn’t until I got the assignment to illustrate Señor Don Gato that I began to concentrate on modeling my characters with light and shadow, rather than working in line colored by flat tones. I looked to the paintings of Diego Velasquez for inspiration and education. I mimicked his style in color studies. I learned that I could draw the cartoony way I always had, but use of light and shadow—more brushwork, less dependence on line—and a restrained color palette gave my characters more weight, more respectability.

Q: What’s the one aspect of illustration that most inspires or motivates you?
A: What I love about this job is that I learn something new with each assignment. I particularly enjoy doing historical/costume projects, which call for library research. An author can write a line like, “Cleopatra sailed into town on her barge,” and call it a day. It’s up to me to find out what Cleopatra, her barge, an Egyptian town, the dock, and a crowd of extras look like—then draw it to make it all look believable.

For an illustration I’ve had to find out how to concentrate on modeling my characters with light and shadow, rather than working in line colored by flat tones. I looked to the paintings of Diego Velasquez for inspiration and education. I mimicked his style in color studies. I learned that I could draw the cartoony way I always had, but use of light and shadow—more brushwork, less dependence on line—and a restrained color palette gave my characters more weight, more respectability.

Q: Does the artwork that you do for yourself differ from the artwork that you do for your clients? If so, how?
A: I wish I had time to do work for myself. About the only personal work I’ve had a chance to do in recent years is life drawing at the sessions PSI past president Rick Antolic organized. So the principal difference is that there are a lot more naked ladies in my personal work.

Q: What do art directors like about your work?
A: This is pure guesswork—I believe many of them like that I dig into the children’s stories I’m assigned and find more than one...
level of meaning. They like that I’ll do the research for historical projects. They like that I communicate my ideas through thumbnail and tight sketches, so that they are made part of my creative process. They like that I listen to their ideas.

Q: Who or what has been the biggest influence on your work?

A: Lately, I think the animation business has influenced my work the most. Pixar puts out these The Art of… books for their movies, with all the character design, set design, color maps and tons of development sketches that go into one of their projects. Sites like characterdesign.blogspot.com and colorfulanimationexpression.blogspot.com and animationbackgrounds.blogspot.com have been inspirational. There’s a vast difference in budget for an animated feature and a kids’ book, so I can’t pour nearly as much time/energy into my books as Pixar can afford, but I find it helps to draw model sheets for my characters, design the settings separately from the illustrations and paint color maps to organize my palette before I begin painting.

Q: What would you do with ten million dollars?

A: Pay off debt; take care of my parents and in-laws; buy gold, land and ammunition; fix up our old farmhouse; build a studio.

My dream studio, or the Funatorium, will be a one-room structure with lots of storage and counter space. The back of the studio will face north, so that wall will be all windows with a view of the woods. There will be a little wood-burning stove, a big sink for washing up, and enough lights for the studio to be seen on Google Earth.

Q: What do you enjoy reading?

A: History. One of the best books I’ve read lately is Justinian’s Flea by William Rosen—about the Black Death in the Byzantine Empire. I’ve enjoyed Patrick O’Brien’s Aubrey/Maturin series—British naval adventure set during the Napoleonic wars. Everything by George MacDonald Fraser. P.G. Wodehouse’s Bertie and Jeeves stories. Thomas Cahill’s histories. Old favorite authors are Mark Twain and C.S. Forester. I’m trying to slog through Gibbons Decline and Fall right now. Daniel Defoe. The pirate novels of Rafael Sabatini. Henry Fielding’s Tom Jones is hands down the most tightly-structured plot of any book I’ve ever read. Nowadays I hardly ever read books the old-fashioned way; instead I listen to audio books while I paint.

Q: What one thing would you like to learn to do?


John’s website: www.johnmanders.com
John’s blog: johnmanders.wordpress.com

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From the Blog of:

R. Michael Palan
rpmalan.blogspot.com

The Tiffany Blue Castle that No One Wanted

Misdirection can be as painful as rejection. Sometimes you think you are giving a client exactly what they asked for only to find out you were misdirected. Ultimately, your work is still rejected but you know in your heart that the real problem was you were misdirected. It’s best

O’Brien’s Aubrey/Maturin series—British naval adventure set during the Napoleonic wars. Everything by George MacDonald Fraser. P.G. Wodehouse’s Bertie and Jeeves stories. Thomas Cahill’s histories. Old favorite authors are Mark Twain and C.S. Forester. I’m trying to slog through Gibbons Decline and Fall right now. Daniel Defoe. The pirate novels of Rafael Sabatini. Henry Fielding’s Tom Jones is hands down the most tightly-structured plot of any book I’ve ever read. Nowadays I hardly ever read books the old-fashioned way; instead I listen to audio books while I paint.

It wasn’t my idea to make a Tiffany Blue castle for Christmas. My wife, Karen, will point out that nobody actually told me to do it either. What I was told was to make a castle, Tiffany Blue is the hot color for the season. Actually, Tiffany Blue and Chocolate. The hot color for Christmas is usually what the hot color for fashion was a year or two earlier. Regardless, the client took one look at the blue castle and asked, “What were you thinking making a blue castle?” As is too often the case, I wasn’t thinking at all. Didn’t someone ask for a Tiffany Blue castle? This Christmas, as in Christmases past, you will find under our tree a castle in the hot colors of a Christmas past that nobody asked for or wanted.

R. Michael Palan is a freelance illustrator who designs holiday ornaments with his wife, Karen Loccisano and blogs about it at rpmalan.blogspot.com
What is your favorite holiday tradition for this time of year?

Rose Gauss: “One of my favorite holiday traditions is our family’s celebration of Christmas Eve. My parents were immigrants from Czechoslovakia, and even though they are gone now, we still make all the same foods. I have a huge family and we all fit into one house for an evening and enjoy one another’s company....very loudly. No gifts, just lots of good food and and singing and conversation!”

Kathy Rooney: “I love it when it snows at Christmas time so that I can take night walks with my dog Alfie in my Mt. Lebanon neighborhood to look at all the numerous Christmas light displays buried and illuminating in the snow drifts. Also, we like to bring out our Nativity scene consisting of a 2-story inn built by my husband Ray based on what the inn would have looked like at the time when Jesus was born. In the lower level is the manger barn containing the Nativity figures; the upper level is the inn with stocked and furnished kitchen and common sleeping area. Alongside the inn is a merchant booth filled with wares of the day. Every year we add elements (animals, angels, objects, etc.) that we find that are strictly proportionate to size based on our nativity statues. The inspiration for our manger is the Presepio Nativity scene at The Carnegie.”

Ilene Winn-Lederer: “When my boys were young, we always enjoyed baking Chanukah cookies in the shapes of stars and dreidels (spinning tops), then painting them with a mix of sugar, egg yolks and food coloring. But that was for dessert. The bigger treat was, and still is potato latkes (pancakes) and applesauce!”

Rick Antolic: “Far from being original, a Christmas tradition since I was very young is watching It’s a Wonderful Life. When I was growing up, it was on TV constantly at Christmas time, and it seemed that whatever I was doing, helping to decorate the house, putting ornaments on the tree, or coming in to the house after a couple hours of sled riding, there was always that movie on TV (and this was before cable and VCR’s)!”

The Christmas music I listened to as a kid was my parent’s vinyl. They had the good stuff: Andy Williams, Perry Como, Bing Crosby, Ray Conniff, Gizelle McKenzie, etc. It’s still not Christmas until I listen to some of those vinyls. The CDs just don’t cut it for nostalgia. Besides, I’ve never seen ‘Bossa Nova Noel’ on CD. Yet, ‘The 12 Days of Christmas’ which annoys the dickens out of mostly everyone I know, is on at least half of the Christmas CDs produced. What’s up with that?

But in more recent years there have been times where the Christmas spirit just never came to visit, and I didn’t do anything to enjoy the season. And the holiday came and went. So I’ve learned that, whether I’m in the spirit or not, it’s important to get myself out there to do something, anything, to experience the season. It doesn’t need to be a tradition, but make a tradition of simply doing something to celebrate the season before it’s gone.”

John Hinderliter: “My favorite holiday tradition is decorating the Christmas tree with Dee Dee while listening to Christmas music and drinking spiked eggnog (she hates eggnog, which means more for me!). BTW, never ever read the nutritional contents of a carton of eggnog.”

Jen Scanlon: “I don’t have any Holiday traditions but I am looking to start some new ones with my new love, Armando.”

Anni Matsick: “I have about a dozen little hedgehogs made of baked dough that I display on a tree bought at a long-gone Hill’s department store. I made them at a workshop given when my son was a year old, 25 years ago. According to the workshop notes, the traditional folk-art of making dough figures originated in Vizovice, Czechoslovakia. My husband’s heritage is Slovak so this is a nice little Christmas tribute.”

Kurt Pfaff: “My favorite holiday tradition is the joy of seeing many family and friends throughout the season. I’m very grateful. It’s surprising another year has passed.”

Judy Emerick: “I have many favorites, but our Christmas Eve fondue dinner has become a tradition for our family and now seems to be a tradition for our friends. We have grown in size (17 last year) and now need more fondue pots. We outgrew the dining room and now set tables up in the stretch through the kitchen and foyer. We have friends from everywhere... and I mean everywhere. Last year our daughter, Lauren, who is a foreign language major, brought home her friends (who are now our friends) from Russia, Korea and Africa. L-R: Jun/Korea, Masha/Russia, Moussa/Mali, Africa, Lauren, Jacob/ Burkina Faso, Africa. Jacob has become very close to us and we refer to him as our “African Son”! This year he will bring his wife and son who arrived in the USA last January. We learn so much about our friends around the world when we gather and it is just wonderful. Some will be back this year. It is a night of love and laughter. Perfect way to celebrate and remember the season!”

Johann Wessels: “I grew up with the old German tradition of having the dinner and gifts around the tree on the eve of the 24th. We have continued the tradition as my sons have grown although we haven’t always been together. This year we are all home. Because we moved to North America almost a decade ago, we have no family or relations nearby. We have grown closer as a family because of this. I will be doing most of the cooking and food preparation. Roast chicken, potatoes, asparagus, ice cream are important edibles in this season. At times like this I am often struck by just how different this cold season is compared to the hot African summers we grew up in. Holidays at the beach near the ocean, sunburn and lots of ice cream. Big family get-togethers. The cold crisp Christmas in Canada are growing on us. We will be toasting our new friends and acquaintances on Christmas Eve. Cheers!”

Fred Carlson: “Going to PSI Saturnalia—the true social highlight of the year. Swiss Fondue on Christmas Eve. Midnight services. Playing guitar and mandolin at midnight services. Putting up my grandmother’s set of little Santa’s from the 1950s on shelves in the bathroom. Reminding people that it’s really the Advent season until December 25, not the Christmas ‘season’.”
A Look at What PSI-ers are Working on This Month

John Blumen created this illustration and logo for the promotion of an online graphic novel, *The Revolution*.

Here’s one of Craig Jennion’s latest drawings. He is working on a small series to submit to card companies.

Judy Emerick recently completed this mural on a bulkhead between first story and a loft. It can be seen when entering the main door. Judy’s new website can be seen at: www.northernskystudios.com

Bill Vrscak has been working on a series of paintings called “Downtowners”, figures that you see in downtown Pittsburgh; sitting in Market Square or Point Park, or waiting for a bus, or just hanging out in a fast food joint. He has about eight or nine done.

Taylor Callery sends two portrait illustrations done for self-promotion. The first is Weezer (promoting their new album, Raditude), and the other is a portrait of Oprah, in light of her recent announcement of plans to end her show in 2011.

This tempting image was concocted by Kurt Pfaff for an upcoming self-promo email campaign. “This exercise was also beneficial in gaining much needed experience with the 3D modeling program I use regularly,” Kurt adds.

Jen Scanlon just completed a commission for a client who has owned many Samoyed dogs during his adult life, many who have passed on. “This one’s name is Olaf but he is the last survivor and doing very well,” Jen says. “It is my best one from this series, probably because I was able to photograph him myself.”

Since everyone has a birthday Ilene Winn-Lederer’s book makes a perfect holiday gift! Shown is ‘Capricorn’ from *The Alchymical Zoodiac: A Celestial Bestiary*.

This interpretation of the twelve Zodiac signs plus four elementals (Sun, Moon,
Wind & Ouroboros) became a book earlier this year and includes a poem and detailed information about each sign and symbol. It is available in limited quantity at: [www.winnlederer.com/zoodiacbook/default.htm](http://www.winnlederer.com/zoodiacbook/default.htm) Arrange for a signed copy at: ilene@winnlederer.com

“Wolf” is a piece Johann Wessels did for an adventurous couple who are retiring, commissioned by friends who wanted a picture recounting their forays into the wilds of northern Canada. “This piece shows things which are special to them both,” Johann says. “I did it in acrylics on board. The odd shape at the bottom is an old post office mailbox that contains a small painting of a surgeon’s hand holding a scalpel.”

“This is a piece featuring a Harvard training aircraft which fly out of the base nearby us,” Johann reports. “After some initial questioning from the Canadian Defense Force about copyright and my rights to depict an aircraft that belongs to the Air Force I pointed out I was within my rights as an artist and that I used only my own source material. It took the bureaucracy a few long weeks to deliberate then tell me I could continue. Ilene Lederer referred me to a wonderful aviation artist, Paul Rendel, whose advice led me to Canadian aviation artists and their support.” Johann is hoping to produce a series of images of local aircraft, printed as signed, limited editions.

Here are samples of tonal art Anni Matsick created for a mission book for children on the topic of East Timor, for Nazarene Publishing.

Here is another watercolor painting of a wedding bouquet that Michael McParlane finished this month. “A rather un-typical image for me,” he says. “It was bought at a charity auction for the Liver Foundation in 2008, and redeemed this year by the purchaser as a gift for the bride and groom. The finished size is about 12 x 10.”

“‘I haven’t been doing much except story-board work and teaching lately,’” reports John Hinderliter, “so here’s a painting in the works and a drawing from the Tuesday night figure session at the Bethel Park Schoolhouse.”


This concept idea for game art is another of Valerie Orosz’s digital paintings.

Ron Magnes created this piece for MarketSpace Communications for end client, Eaton. It will used as part of an interactive display at the Carnegie Science Center’s Highmark SportsWorks.

Here are samples of tonal art Anni Matsick created for a mission book for children on the topic of East Timor, for Nazarene Publishing.