



Newsletter summer 2003

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2nd Annual General Meeting of Botanical Artists of Canada will be held on **Wednesday June 18** at 6 to 7pm at the Civic Gardens Centre, Leslie Street and Lawrence Avenue, Toronto. All members are welcome.

The formal meeting will be followed by a talk by **Sheila Siegerman**, who is an accomplished botanical artist. Her work has been exhibited at the Hunt Institute and around the world as part of the Shirley Sherwood Collection. It has appeared widely in the American press. Light refreshments will be served

Lines from the Chair

Count no men poor who have the stars above
The peace and quietude of evening stars
And in their hearts that rarest gift of love
And in their garden – flowers

- Evelyn St Leger

Nearing the end of my first year as Chair of BAC, I find myself looking back at what we have achieved, and forward to what lies ahead for us. It had been an exciting, if somewhat bewildering year, during which there have been occasions when I have indeed been honoured to be representing the Botanical Artists of Canada.

Canada Blooms was just such an event. Although not strictly BAC, we certainly were a large part of the exhibition, and what a wonderful display it was! The positive comments, both during and after the show told us that we are on the right track and hopefully beginning to be a recognised name. Congratulations to all who exhibited.

On the 'recognition' theme, we have, and will continue, to contact various different venues to display our art. The wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake have been contacted and we hope to exhibit there before long.

Finally - my sincere thanks to the Steering Committee. The ongoing work, guidance and encouragement has got us this far, and will I know, take us to greater heights in the coming year. To that end, please do consider volunteering your time and talents in helping BAC to run smoothly. The more of us working at it, the easier it becomes.

Thank you all, and see you at the Civic Garden Centre on June 18, 2003. Until then, enjoy your gardens - and your painting!

Deborah Morrison

IN THE WORKS

The BAC Steering Committee has decided that we should produce a calendar for 2004. Details, such as size, type of paper, subjects, will be finalized in time for the AGM, so plan to be there and be a part of this exciting project. It will be open to all members. The twelve pieces will be selected by qualified non-members.

FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

BAC has been invited to participate in the Niagara Horticultural Showcase – "Visions from the Gardens", June 11 - 13, 2004. The Niagara Parks is partnering with the Master Gardeners, the Niagara Garden Club and Niagara College to bring an outdoor, full-scale event to the Region. It will be held at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens. There will be a Botanical and Contemporary Art Show as part of this 3 day event. More on this as we receive details.

TREASURER'S UPDATE

Balance in BAC bank account as of April 30, 2003 is \$3681.67

This is your life

© by Pamela Stagg

When you submit work for an exhibition, you'll often be asked to send in a biography with your paintings. For many painters, writing a bio is a lot tougher than creating botanical art.

It doesn't have to be.

Remember, you're the expert. You know the subject matter better than anyone else.

To get started, jot down everything you want to put into your biography. If you're relatively new to botanical painting, you may choose to include your training, your teachers and the personal details that bring a biography to life: why you chose botanical painting, what flowers you prefer to paint. If you're more advanced, you'll want to list group and solo exhibitions, as well as comments from reviewers and teachers.

Before you boot up the computer, remember the suggested length of the biography. If you're entering a group show, the organizers want everyone's bio to be a similar length. You'll make their work much easier if you come close to their word count. (And if you haven't used the word count function on Microsoft Word before, simply click on "tools", then click on "word count".)

Your bio should read as if someone else had written it. If you want to use first person, out your words in quotes.

- Florinda is fascinated by the blue poppy. "I first saw it on a rhododendron trek in the Himalaya. I knew instantly I wanted to devote my life to that unique plant." To date, she has created over 47 watercolours of the blue meconopsis.

To write an interesting bio, think about how people read. They look for something that piques their curiosity, they get hooked and they keep reading. See which one of these introductory paragraphs makes you want to find out more about the writer:

- Jane Doe loves flowers and has been painting them ever since she was in grade three and Miss Wilson brought in a pot of forsythia as a subject for art class.
- John Doe took up botanical painting after he retired from training tigers at the local zoo. "I traded tigers for tiger lilies and I've never looked back," he said. "Every time I get irritated because a tulip is opening while I'm trying to paint it, I tell myself that no flower is as difficult as an irate tiger."

Then comes the toughest part of writing: proof-reading. First, run your bio through your spell checker. Then print it out – you'll spot more mistakes on paper than on the screen. Check the spelling of proper names, check dates – well, check everything. Have someone else (or more than one someone else) read it as well.

When everyone's happy, do a final word count and a final spell check before you send it in. Even if no-one asks you for the movie rights for your life story, you're ready to be a star.♣

TIP: When you've read through a document a couple of times, it is difficult to spot the errors because your eye jumps ahead and spell check does not always pick them up. So read through the document from the end to the beginning. This forces the eye to look at each word individually and helps you pick up any mistakes.



WHO SAYS YOU HAVE TO GO TO FRANCE?

No need to head to France for a painting holiday when you can combine a couple of days in the Ontario countryside with some botanical painting classes. For those of you wanting to do some self-improvement during the summer, there are numerous courses available, both in Toronto and surrounding communities. See the BAC Calendar on page 4 for details.

Workshop with Tasira Strimban

"Improving and enriching the artistic ability of the artist".

A group of us met at Emily Luks' studio for two evenings in May to learn some different approaches to our botanical art. Tasira is both a wonderful artist and teacher, and a very stimulating person to spend time with. She emigrated to Canada from Russia where she studied architecture and was a scientific illustrator. She now runs an art school in Scarborough. She has an extensive portfolio of the most delicate and interesting work.

Our first project was to measure our subject - something we all thought we knew how to do! We came up with some 'interesting' variations on a grapefruit tree - got singularly frustrated, and as ever, when we got it right, were delighted with ourselves! We spent time talking about composition and colour perspective, a better understanding of how to improve our work; we even learned how best to preserve subjects whilst working on them. Without question, we look forward to more sessions with Tasira. Always a gracious host, Emily produced delightful dinners for us each evening - the body as well as the mind were well fed! I'd encourage more BAC members to sign up for these types of workshops, which hone our skills and always teach us something new. Besides, they are fun and it's a good way to meet and work with other botanical artists. - Deborah Marrison.

Book Review

"The Frampton Flora" is Richard Maby's account of the wild flowers, the painters and paintings done between 1828 and 1851, by the four Clifford sisters and their two aunts. The paintings were done in Gloucestershire, the Cotswolds beechwoods and the Vale of Berkley. The 300 Victorian flower paintings recently discovered in the attic at Frampton Court in Gloucestershire are "bold, exactly observed and skilfully executed. Those by Charlotte Anne Purnell, in particular, show an undiluted talent that must now rank her amongst the best of her generation."

In addition to glorious paintings, Maby has given some delightful insight into some of the uses of the plants; It was West Country Settlers who first took the plant Greater Celandine to the United States and with it an even earlier herbal name: swallow wort. This recalled the classical myth that swallows used the juice to cleanse their nestlings' eyes, and even to restore their sight if they had been injured. Later herbalists poured scorn on this story, but were not slow to recommend the acrid latex, which "consumeth awaie things that cleave about the ball of the eie."

Spread your wings workshop

Unfortunately SARS interfered with plans to bring nature artist, Jan Gunlock to Toronto to hold a pen and ink workshop for BAC members and friends in May. Emily Luks is hoping to reschedule this workshop at a later date.

Exhibition venues needed

We have not yet been able to find a suitable venue for our fall show. Most of the places we have looked into have very little traffic or were not looking for botanical art. One idea would be to find a suitable restaurant (lots of people traffic, near public transport). We'd need ample wall space, the right atmosphere, and they may be interested when we tell them that our openings usually bring out about a hundred people. Any ideas?? Contact Leslie Staple at staple@sympatico.ca or Emily Luks at (416) 441-1992.

2003 Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details	Contact
June 18 6pm	BAC Annual General Meeting and talk by Sheila Siegerman	Civic Gardens Centre, Leslie / Lawrence, Toronto	Deborah Marrison
June 14 - 16	Weekend getaway and botanical painting with Pamela Stagg	Amherst Island, near Kingston	Molly Stroyman at ms@mollystroyman.com or 416-533-5997
June 17 - July 15, Tuesday and Thursday 6 - 8:30 pm	Drawing in the Park with Celia Godkin	8 sessions. Through the School of Continuing Studies, course #0552-004. We work primarily in chalk pastels.	learn.utoronto.ca or phone (416) 978-2400; e-mail registration: scs.registrar@utoronto.ca
June 23 - 27 July 8 - 12	Painting in a summer garden with Celia Godkin	\$180. 9.30 - 12. 30.	Celia Godkin (416) 591-0491
July 5 - 9	Introductory class in botanical painting with Pamela Stagg	Civic Gardens Centre, Leslie & Lawrence, Toronto	Civic Gardens Centre (416) 397-1340 www.infogarden.ca
July 19 - 23	Advanced course in botanical painting with Pamela Stagg	Civic Gardens Centre, Leslie & Lawrence, Toronto	Civic Gardens Centre (416) 397-1340 www.infogarden.ca
August 2 - 4	Introduction to Botanical Painting	Workshops by Pamela Stagg in Deep River, Ontario. (See application form attached)	Aliyah Ebrahim, tel: 613- 584-2525 e-mail: ebrahimn@magma.ca
August 6 - 8 to Sept 2	Advanced Botanical Painting The Renaissance of Botanical Art: The Shirley Sherwood Collection	80 selections from the Shirley Sherwood collection at The Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.	The Smithsonian Institute
September- November, Tues nights, 6:30- 9:30	Botanical Watercolour course with Leslie Staple	9 Weeks, Northern Collegiate, Mt. Pleasant and Eglinton	Toronto District School Board, Continuing Studies
October 22- November 26, Wednesdays 10-1pm	Beginning in Botanical Art with Leslie Staple	Civic Garden Centre, Leslie and Lawrence	Civic Garden Centre 416-397-1340 www.infogarden.ca
November 2 - 4	Lily workshop with Pamela Stagg.	Civic Gardens Centre, Leslie and Lawrence, Toronto	Civic Gardens Centre (416) 397-1340 www.infogarden.ca

MONTHLY PAINTING SESSIONS			
The last Monday of every month	Monthly Painting Sessions - Patricia Bermiller's Studio	Studio open - 9 AM to 5 PM Fee \$5 per session	If you are interested in painting once a month at a studio with other botanical artists. Patricia Bermiller at 416-483-3367.

BOTANICAL ART WORKSHOPS WITH PAMELA STAGG IN DEEP RIVER, ONTARIO

Choice of two 3 Day workshops for entry level and working artists in the beautiful, scenic Town of Deep River, Ontario. Located on the Ottawa River at the edge of the Algonquin Provincial Park, this area provides a wonderful retreat setting, ideal for Botanical Painting as well as many other outdoor activities. For more information on the Town of Deep River, visit our website at: <http://town.deepriver.on.ca/>

Class size: 15. 9:00am – 4:00pm 1 hour lunch and 2x15min tea.

(1) Entry Level (August 2,3,4) Pre-requisite: A desire to learn Botanical Art in watercolor. Good drawing skills are an asset.

(2) Working Artists (August 6,7,8) Pre-requisite: Proficiency in watercolor technique.

Day 1: Introduction to Botanical Painting, demonstrations and exercises. Completion of small botanical painting. Exercises in drawing, painting technique and color matching. Afternoon practice on stem, leaf and petal.

Days 2 and 3: Work on subjects of our choice with individual feedback and additional demonstration.

The Artist and Instructor: Pamela Stagg is an extremely proficient artist, one of Canada's top Botanical Artists. A Royal Horticultural Society gold medal winner, she has exhibited and sold extensively. More importantly, she has done many workshops and master classes with great reports on her teaching ability.

A list of materials required will be given after registration. A bulk order of paper will be placed. If you need some, please inquire. As space is limited to 15 students, placement is "first come first served". Your registration is guaranteed only when a cheque is delivered to Aliya Ebrahim. Refunds will be given only if a replacement is found for those withdrawing or the course is cancelled. Please make cheque payable to Aliya Ebrahim and submit with bottom portion of the form to:

Aliya Ebrahim
P.O. Box 1583
Deep River, Ontario,
K0J 1P0

For further information contact:

Aliya Ebrahim
Tel: (613) 584-2525
email ebrahimn@magma.ca
or

Denise Hart
Tel: (613) 584-9078.
email: dhart@webhart.net

Registration for Pamela Stagg Botanical Art Workshop in Deep River, Ont.

Name: _____ Interested paper order Yes / No

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Workshop # 1 or 2 _____ Cheque enclosed for _____