

Hot Press News



January 2026 No. 1

P.O. Box 984, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971

delawarewatercolorsociety.org

Annual Membership Meeting Held December 10 2025

the DWS annual meeting was held on December 10th with 34 members present on ZOOM. DWS is pleased to report the results of Election Buddy, which had a 49% participation rate:

President-Brad Hastings

Secretary- Charlotte Hughes

As we welcome Brad Hastings into this pivotal role, we are excited about the future and the fresh perspectives he will bring. Jane McElvany Coonce will be appointed as Vice President to fulfill remaining term in 2026 and will be formally voted-in during the boards January meeting.

Although the Exhibition Director position is still open, Kath Cropper will be helping organize the newly formed Exhibition Committee which will include: Terry Kelly, Isabel Pizzolato, Joan Judge, Anne Crown Cyr, Ruth Ann Kaufman, Charlotte Hughes, Melissa McLean, Pat Hoey, and Brad Hastings. Kath Cropper reminded us that the paintings at the "Awash in Color" exhibition at the Biggs Museum will be on view until January 11, 2026 and that artists should pick up paintings on January 15-16, 2026 from 10 AM to 4 PM.

Treasurer, Pat Hoey, reported that generous donations from our members over the past year created a positive impact with our fiscal status. She also reported we now have 75 members and in 2025 we welcomed in 19 new members. Pat reminded us to renew our membership by logging onto the website, clicking on membership and then clicking, renew membership. The annual membership fee remains the same for everyone, \$45.

Charlotte Hughes, DWS secretary, expressed appreciation for the donations made to DWS in 2025; Judy Olsen, Margie Wuestner, Cathy Balsley, Joan Fabbri, Marie Samohod, Charlotte and Bill Hughes have all sponsored awards at exhibitions. Patty Derrick and Harris Sperling had contributed to the general fund. Margie Wuestner, Kathy Balsley, and Wendy and Steve Leddy provided food for The Nassau Valley reception along with Melissa McLean who donated the wine.

Workshop director, Wendy Leddy, reported that both in-person workshops in 2025 were very well received. DWS started the year in April with Annie Strack and continued with Luis Perez workshop in September.

There are three workshops planned for 2026:

- Alexis Lavine three-day workshop *Bridging Abstraction and Realism* in March.
- Dan Marshall is coming from Colorado to present a three-day workshop *Confidence in Watercolor* for May 2026.
- Christine Heyse, one of our own, is scheduled to do a workshop in September 2026.

Rounding out the Zoom meeting Brad Hastings, the new President for 2026, expressed his commitment to continue the organization's progress while emphasizing the importance of membership involvement. Brad then presented Past President, Margie Wuestner, with a framed certificate. Brad went on to introduced Christine Heyse who surprised everyone with a poem to honor Margie Wuestner's involvement with the DWS board over the past 10 years, 5 of which as President.

Christine Heyse also organized the creation of a unique portrait made from 25 individual watercolor paintings, done by members. Marjorie was surprised with the presentation and greatly moved.

Check out the full story and poem on the DWS website under Board Minutes.

Join us in thanking Marjorie for her incredible contributions!

The meeting concluded with a demo by Alexis Lavine, highlighting her unique process of creating abstract art from realistic images.



Welcome New Members 2025

Melissa Hayman
Patty Cunningham
Sheila Simmons
Kate Huffman
Marietta Dantanio Madsen
Marcia Sabo Williams
Susan MacIntire

Iona Ferguson
Jennifer Kohn Murta
Marie Samohod
Dorothy Kowey
Sharon Radle
Cindy Beyer

Karen Coning
Jean Frazier
Nancy Peper
Nancy Hardy
Martha Wensel
Laura Violand

Sign up **HERE**

Bridging Abstraction and Realism

Alexis knows that at the core, the heart, of every one of her realistic watercolors, is an abstract design. That design is the foundation of every painting, essential for its success. So - every one of her paintings, even if it looks realistic, is also abstract!

And then every so often, she creates a painting that is entirely abstract, with no identifiable imagery in it. This process is different from her realistic process, but as with realism, requires a strong foundation of design. Two very different ways of working, with two very different results, but sharing a respect and love for design!

*In this workshop Alexis will paint a realistic painting and an abstract using the same source photo, with a strong emphasis on **using photographs creatively, along with design and intuition**. It will be fascinating and inspiring to see how she uses lines, shapes, values, colors, and textures from one photo ... to create two very different paintings.*

Here is an example of this:



Flowering



Flowering.jpg



Kit

About Alexis Lavine:

Alexis believes in the power of design so strongly that she gave up her decades-long devotion to plein air painting to devote herself to studio work, where she could take more time to design her very best paintings! Teaching is one of the most important things she does. She loves to share her passion for art by guiding others to reach their creative goals, and she teaches with enthusiasm, commitment, passion, humor, and kindness. She has taught watercolor for over two decades, from California to the Caribbean. She has seamlessly adapted her classes to the Zoom platform and believes that her online workshops are as good as, and in many ways better, than in person classes. Honored as one of Watercolor Artist Magazine's "Ones to Watch," she is a signature member of the American Watercolor Society, National Watercolor Society, Watercolor Honor Society, Transparent Watercolor Society of America, and others. Her paintings reside in collections throughout the country and overseas, and they can be found in galleries from the Mid-Atlantic to the Virgin Islands.

www.alexislavineartist.com

Upcoming exhibit- Art League of Ocean City Spring 2026

- Paintings will be delivered to Art League of Ocean City MD
February 2, 2026 10am-Noon

502 94th St
Ocean City, MD 21842

- The reception will be held at ALOC on February 6, 2026 4:30pm-7pm, with award presentation, 4:30-5pm.
- Paintings to be picked up March 1, 2026 10am-Noon



DWS is pleased to have juror Ellen Elmes for this exhibit. Ellen Elmes' paintings have been acclaimed for their unique, collage-style blend of symbolic imagery and flowing naturalism. From watercolor paintings inspired by the majesty of the ancient Appalachians, to painted expressions sparked by the songs and music of Carter and Ralph Stanley, to murals depicting the heart of rural

communities, Ellen's art thrives on the rhythms of her personal life and community experiences.

Ellen displays and sells her artwork on a regular basis in southwest Virginia and West Virginia, including CDR Framing and Gallery in Bristol, VA. She is a signature member of the Virginia Watercolor Society and 'Round the Mountain Artisans.

Featured Member Anna Bellenger Shares Her Story!

I was in the first grade. I remember it like it was yesterday. The art teacher gave me a ball of clay, saying, "Pull out the pieces you want; don't stick them on." I made a pig, pulling out its legs and snout. My love of art had begun!

It wasn't until about fifth grade that they noticed something wasn't right, as my first name is spelled the same backward or forward, with all capital letters through the "N" being backward. However, when I wrote "Hubbard" backward, something was up: dyslexia! From then on, I got to do the block prints for Christmas programs. The way I saw it, it was the way they printed, and so my love of printmaking started!

Some of my biggest winners over the years have been mixed media with silk screens. Driving home on a winter evening, I saw a black cat walking through an acorn field. I did a silk screen of the cat, then took it outside on the freezing, windy day to spray paint acrylic for the background—and it started to snow! What I got was a very interesting effect. The painting's title is "Night Stalker." It won an award in the "Philadelphia Works on Paper." I entered it into the "National Pen Women's Biennial" in Washington, D.C., that year, where it won Best in Show. Another mixed media silk screen of Norfolk puppies also won Best in Show at the Rehoboth Art League.

In 2012, at the Philadelphia Watercolor Society's Member Show, a mix of gesso, charcoal, watercolor, and a silk screen crow won First Prize. But perhaps my biggest win was in New York for the AWS's 150th Anniversary Show and Dinner, where "Sidewalk Games I - The Lookout" won the Bud and Gretchen Marble Medal with a prize of \$1,000! Plus, having it hanging next to Kathleen Conover's work, which I love, was beyond wonderful!

I did a lot of sidewalk game paintings for my one-person show at the Chester County Art Association. The show opened Thursday night and was closed Saturday afternoon—Covid had come! A few months ago, I had an open house here at our Jenner's Pond cottage to show those paintings and have a glass of wine. It was fun to get them out—lots of pigeons and squirrels, my favorite subjects! And no, they aren't all silk screen mixed media; some are watercolor!





After thoughts;

I was lucky for two years to have Cy Twombly for a teacher at the Southern Seminary. The year after graduation he moved to Italy.

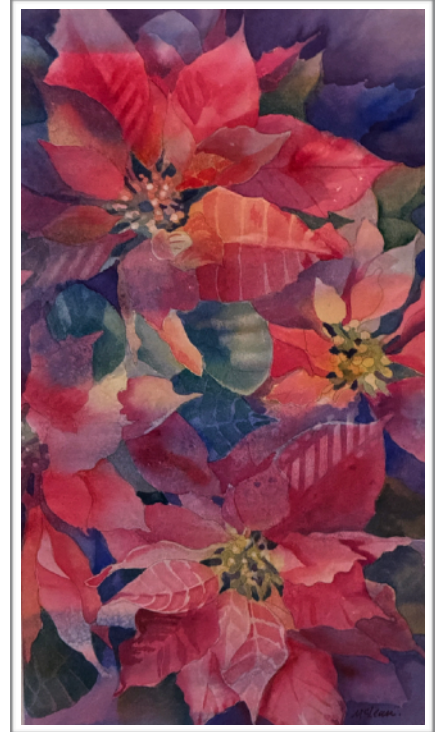
I have illustrated two books "Outside In" with poems by Carol Hixon. And "Knick Knack" a children's Christmas story by Clella Murray, I've also written an illustrated children's counting book "Sky High", which comes with a cloth cover with carrying handles and a book of animals called "Anna's Animals".



Members News

The Biggs Museum of American Art presented Melissa McLean with their “People’s Choice Award” on Thursday December 18th for her painting *Poinsettia Medley*.

Melissa received a years membership, tote bag, paperweight award and bragging rights!



Poinsettia Medley



I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape. Something waits beneath it; the whole story doesn't show.

Andrew Wyeth

DWS Executive Board and Board of Directors

President: Brad Hastings

Secretary: Charlotte Hughes

Treasurer: Pat Hoey

Communications Director: Melissa McLean

Exhibition Director: Kath Cropper

Workshop Director: Wendy Leddy

Signature Review Chairperson: Isabel Pizzolato

Please submit all member news and recent achievements to
Melissa McLean
mclean.melissa@rocketmail.com
by January 20th