Hot Press News

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DWS President, Brad Hastings Message November 2026

November is here but it was a beautiful weekend to end October as we picked up our artworks from the successful Nassau Valley show. Thank you again to all who entered and participated, and especially those who gave of their time and talents to put on a lovely exhibition. We have some great opportunities coming up in 2027 that we're excited to share with you in the coming months

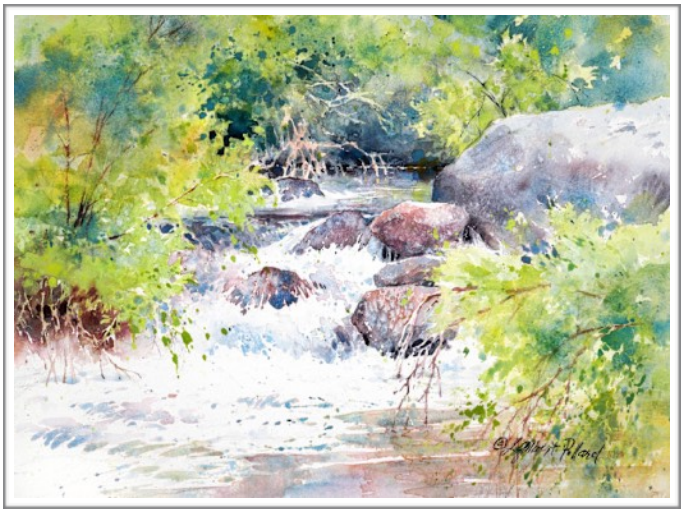
Hopefully, everyone received their Election Buddy email and voted. If not, there's still time. Let us know if you didn't get or misplaced your email. Please mark your calendars for our December annual membership meeting on 12/9/26 starting at 11:00. We've got a short business agenda to bring everyone up to date on our status and upcoming calendar of events, and a few giveaways for those attending. Then, we'll have a demo from Julie Gilbert Pollard (https://www.juliegilbertpollard.com/). This will be a preview for our upcoming four-day workshop with her in May. We look forward to seeing everyone, online as it may be, in December. Keep painting, as we'll have announcements for upcoming exhibitions for 2027 as well. Sending everyone the best.

-Brad

Julie Gilbert Pollard: Guest Artist at Annual 2026 Meeting

Phoenix artist, Julie Gilbert Pollard, paints in oil and watercolor in a fluid, painterly manner. Her painting style, while representational, is colored with her own personal concept of reality. “The eye may see as a camera ‘sees’, but the mind’s eye sees an altered, imagined image, what it wants and hopes to see. It’s that illusive image, uniquely mine, that I try to express in my paintings. This amazing world of ours is often a mysterious, sometimes frightening, place, but filled with scenes and subjects that excite my eye and imagination! The magical allure of the natural world, and my reverence for it, compel me to attempt to capture its essence on canvas or paper.”

Enjoying an extensive career in art, Pollard has been published frequently and is routinely asked to teach artists workshops:









Here are the Candidates for the Election being held now! Results Will be Announced at Annual Meeting in December

Vice President Candidate: Jane McElvany Coonce

Jane McElvany Coonce is a signature member of Baltimore Watercolor Society, Virginia Watercolor Society, as well as Delaware Watercolor Society. She has been the past president of several local art groups.

Workshop Director Candidate: Leslie Lesko

I am Leslie Lesko, and am honored to be on the ballot for Delaware Watercolor Society's Workshop Director. A Lewes resident since 1986, I happily retired in 2024 after a 37-year career in school psychology. I enjoyed my first class with the Delaware Watercolor Society in 2014. My self-taught watercolor paintings and fine art photography have since been exhibited throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. I am excited to be a resident artist at the Lewes Art Gallery and was thrilled to be named the 2026 Best of Coastal Style Artist for Sussex County. My favorite subjects include macro florals, intimate figural portraits, and abstract compositions inspired by my experiences with ADHD. I have spent the last ten years coordinating the weekly Sketch Group at the Rehoboth Art League, giving me hands-on experience managing community art programs. I would love to use this background in program coordination and education to organize inspiring workshops for the DWS members.

Exhibition Director Candidate: Cathy Foley

My husband John and I moved to Delaware 3 years ago after I retired. Originally a fabric collage artist, I became interested in watercolor painting after I took a drawing class.
Joining the DWS has introduced me not only to the art of watercolor but, more importantly, the people who have I have met and with whom I have become friends.

Thank you for the opportunity to work at helping share the art of so many talented artists.

Communication Director Candidate: Melissa McLean

Melissa has been a DWS member since 2014. She enjoys studio watercolor painting and occasionally will venture into plein air painting. She has been the communication director for DWS since 2023.

Treasurer Position Candidate: Judy Olsen

My education and working career have revolved around accounting and finance. I moved to Delaware from New Jersey in 2002 and after having worked mostly for large corporations began an accounting business primarily for small businesses until retiring in 2020.

I began exploring watercolor through various classes and workshops and joined the Delaware Watercolor Society in 2013.

This past July, I was asked and appointed the Treasurer of the DWS, replacing Pat Hoey who is moving out of state. I thoroughly enjoy working with this talented and dedicated group and hope to continue to serve as Treasurer in the coming years.

Exhibition at Nassau Valley Recap

DWS held a highly successful show that spanned the entire month of October at the Nassau Valley Vineyard and Winery. In case you missed the revised newsletter from last month, here's a recap of the prize winners and merit awards along with juror, Deborah Conn's remarks.



First Prize
Barn Around the Bend by Devin Lulu

This piece is arresting. The neutral palette and lowering clouds set the mood, while the barn sits, as it has done for decades. The artist's handling of the spare foliage, both in the foreground and background, is lovely (that tree!), as are the just-enough details on the barn itself. I love the way the roof is pulling away slightly, while the vertical boards in front contrast beautifully with the horizontals on the side. I think it's a masterful painting.



Second Prize
1623 Spring Cleaning (Plymouth, MA) by Luis Perez

I love the use of complementary colors in this painting – the warmth of her skin and the wooden bed frame contrast beautifully with the blue in her clothing and the floor. The artist's handling of fabric is lovely – I can almost touch the crinkles in her blouse and feel the softness of her skirt and apron. This has some nice directional work as well, with the metal cross rails in the bed and the wooden timbers in the wall. I could look at this piece for a long time.



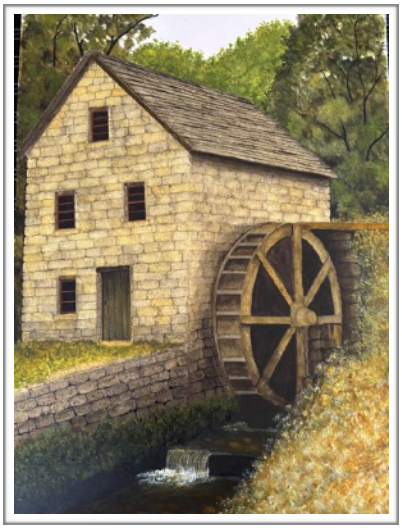
Third Prize
Somewhere Deep in the Woods by Mick Williams

I wanting to use the word "crisp" to describe this work. You just know the air is clear and sunny and dry. The trees are beautifully painted, with just a few individual leaves, becoming cooler and less defined in the background. The angles of the trunks give interest, and the falling-apart fence tells you just where to look. The painting makes me happy, and I would love to be right there.



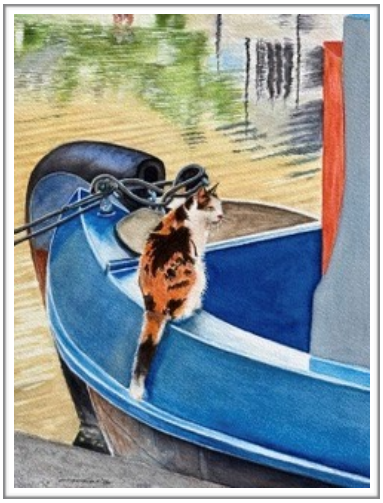
Merit Award: ***Hold Fast Against the Storm*** by Joan Judge

You can just hear the breakers against the rocks and the roiling waters below – this is a powerful piece. There's great movement in the water and the crashing waves and stormy sky merge into a single looming threat to the stalwart lighthouse. This painting is technically and emotionally a winner.



Merit Award: ***Timber and Moss*** by Grover Langshaw

The muted palette in this painting speaks to the age of the mill and its peaceful setting. The artist has beautifully executed the building's stones and the wooden roof and mill wheel, not to mention the delightful splash of water in the stream. I wonder if water ever flows anymore to turn the wheel.



Merit Award: ***Ship's Cat*** by Lawrence Cordeiro

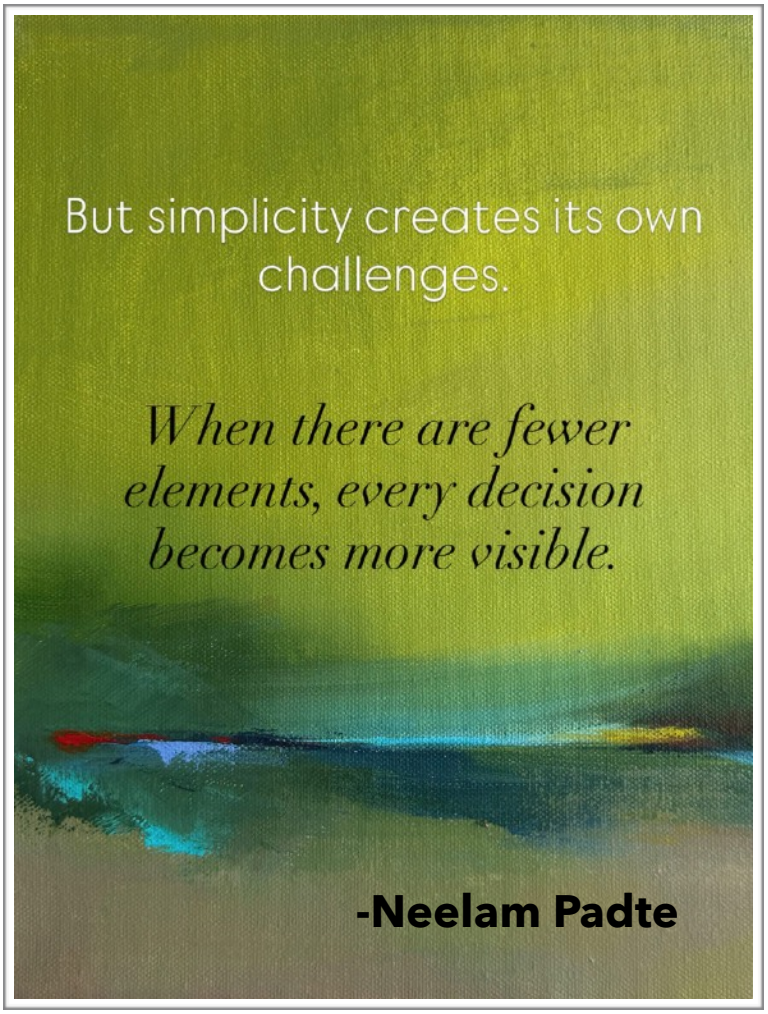
This cat is not afraid of getting wet! It feels right at home, calmly looking at its domain. The orange slash at the right perfectly punctuates the blue of the boat. I like that the artist didn't feel compelled to paint the water blue – the yellow cast nicely sets off the boat, and the reflections conjure a peaceful, sunny day in the dock.

Member News

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Jane McElvany Coonce's painting, titled "Resting Among Kindred Spirits," was accepted and won the Award of Distinction at the Virginia Watercolor Society's 47th Annual Exhibition. The exhibition will be held at the American Virginia Museum of Fine Art in Richmond, Virginia, from September 4 to November 1, 2026. The juror for awards was Mary Whyte. Congratulations Jane!



Resting Among Kindred Spirts
by Jane McElvany Coonce



DWS Executive Board and Board of Directors
President: Brad Hastings
Vice President: Jane McElvany Coonce
Secretary: Charlotte Hughes
Treasurer: Judy Olsen
Communications Director: Melissa McLean
Workshop Director: Wendy Leddy
Exhibition Director: Cathy Foley
Signature Review Chairperson: Isabel Pizzolato

Do you have watercolor painting tips for the DWS membership?
Please reach out to me at:
(In My Experience :Tips for the Watercolor Journey)
mclean.melissa@rocketmail.com
DWS Communication Director

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