

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

June 2017, Issue 260

Virginia Cantarella

A sweltering 93° day gradually subsided into soupiness for those of us who ventured out to witness the lifework of an area artist: Donna & Walter Ingalls, Virginia Cantarella, David Tschinkel, Audrey Matott, Bette Welter, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Mary Heisinger, Bob Shaw, Ron Golden, Christine Mickelsen, Stephanie Ingalls, Hope Konecny, Jason Rogers, Anders Neimanis, Sarah Wagner, Suzy Holmes, Phil & Lori Hoyt, and Don Teator, as well as a few whose signatures I could not decipher and a few more who did not sign in. A half dozen plus names new to GLHG meetings was testimony of the connection to Virginia Cantarella.

A long, long time ago, in the early 1990s, the GLHG ran a couple programs featuring area artists Rudy Weinlich and Rita Hoovler. The 1996 calendar featured Stanley Maltzman, both with a cover sketch of his, as well the inside back cov-

er recognition, the first of what has become a tradition

The idea of resuming the recognition of our area artists has been jiggling in my brain for a bunch of years, and thus we undertake that idea once again.

When I asked around who might be available, a half-dozen names formed my list but mentioned a couple times was Virginia Cantarella of South Westerlo. Thus began, for me, a few pleasant months of communications, meetings, and transfer of work to the meeting,

One of the visual parts of the evening was a PowerPoint of a selection of Virginia's work. She had grouped them into: medical illustrations, horses, trees, landscapes, flowers, still life, skulls, objects, abstract, and portraits. About fifteen of her works lined two walls of the library for the evening.

The other visual part of the evening was a preparation of a canvas. I had watched Virginia partially stretch a canvas over a frame earlier the day before, and she finished it this evening. Then, she explained the contents and purpose of the plaster she uses, thus resulting in a surface that is usable and long-lasting—



ordinary stuff for the artists, and an interesting intro to the non-artists.

The meeting opened with an introduction and brief outline of her life. In the 1950s, she attended Connecticut College for Women and spent four years as a painting major at Boston Museum School. Six months in Italy studying art was followed a few years later by two years in Paris in the 1960s. She married, had two children, would divorce, and later marry.

It was after the divorce she decided she needed to earn an income and became a prolific medical illustrator, specializing in the ophthalmology field. She illustrated two volumes of Dr. Richard Troutman's *Microsurgery of the Eye*, as well as numerous other books. The list of books takes a couple pages.



Virginia plastering her canvas

Still painting, she continues showing - another lengthy list of exhibitions. Somewhere in the 1980s she bought a house in South Westerlo, set up her studio, and married Herman Shonbrun. She would move full-time to South Westerlo in the 1990s, completing another volume of Troutman's work, retired in 1997 from full-time medical illustrating, and devoted her time to fine art. She still illustrates on occasion,

is prolific in her painting, with work accomplished almost every day, with a few hundred paintings nestled in the barn bearing testimony to this productivity.

During the question period, she explained the background of several of her paintings brought to the program, and described the several books she brought.



One of Virginia's favorites—love of horses, and Catskill Mountain Escarpment view

Virginia, the GLHG thanks you for sharing your work and life, and for exemplifying a tenet of community life that we enjoy and should take time to enjoy more. Your life work is testimony to a life mission, the influences of people and events, and a reflection of worthy people and a community that respects creative efforts.

And the meeting finished with questions and answers, of which there were plenty. Among them: Virginia is still active, is willing and desirous to sell her work, and is open for commissions. Virginia can be reached at 518-966-4419 and email [gingerartist4@gmail.com](mailto:gingerartist4@gmail.com).

Notes:

Of course, a thank you to Stephanie and Christine for the “light refreshments” I keep promising in my newspaper press releases.

The July 10 meeting features Den Mower—photographer of regional, American, and Canadian scenery and wildlife—who will present a travelogue of an epic journey. In mid-Summer 2016, Den embarked on what would become a solo 18,000 mile trip, including six Canadian provinces, Mt. McKinley, both countries’ Rockies, and Texas before returning home fifteen weeks after the start. Mower has selected a hundred of favorite, dramatic, and representative photos of the 13,000 taken on his journey to illustrate his findings.

The Greene County Home Tour came through Greenville on June 3, with hundreds of people experiencing the charm of Greenville, Freehold, and South Westerlo. If anyone missed the Tour and would like to see the brochure of listings, I have scanned it and can email it to you if you let me know.

The Civil War is not over, at least not in Greenville. Mary Heisinger continues the monthly meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at the library at 7:30 p.m. Contact her for more info.

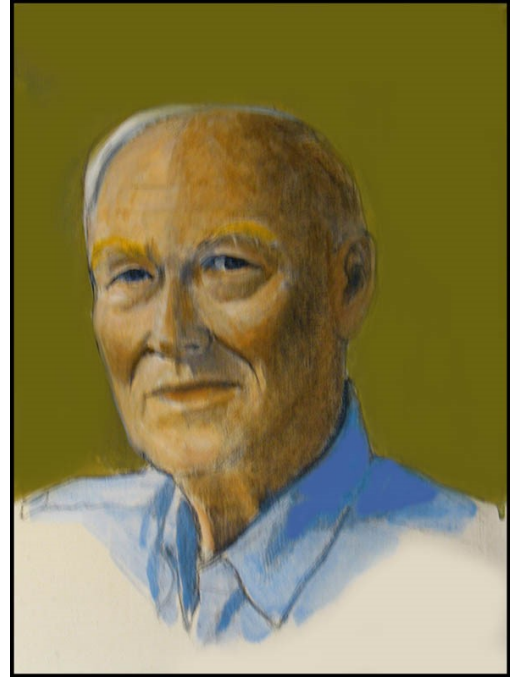
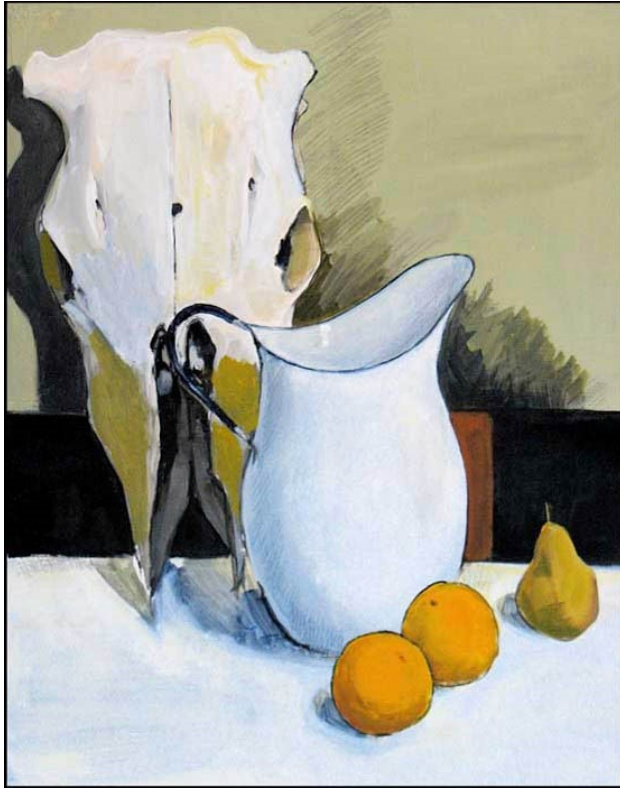
The Big Eye Gallery’s next exhibition is *Small Treasures, Simple Pleasures* from July 1-30, with opening reception on July 2, 1-4 p.m. Hope Konecny is the major force at the gallery on 270 CR 405 in South Westerlo.

Here’s to a pleasurable summer and Fourth!  
-Don



Eagle in Homer: one of Den Mower’s 13,000 photos





**More of Virginia's art:**

Left: still life with skull

Upper: brother

Bottom: abstract

