

# BASNCR

Promoting botanical art in the National Capital Region

March 4, 2007

[www.basnrcr.org](http://www.basnrcr.org)

Volume 3, Issue 3

## HOW TO JOIN:

For membership information contact:

BASNCR, Treasurer  
6803 Connecticut Ave.  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Botanical Art Society  
National Capital Region

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Kandy Phillips

Vice-President: Open

Secretary-Treasurer: Emily Rowan

Program Coordinator: Open

Exhibits Coordinator: Caroline Hottenstein

Newsletter: Barbara Sweeney and Judy Brown

Membership Coordinator: Betsy Farr

Member-at-large: Margaret Saul



## Quarterly Meeting, Sunday March 25, 1-4 pm

Hillwood Museum and Gardens  
4155 Linnean Avenue, Washington, DC

Our Spring General meeting is Sunday, March 25, 2007 at Hillwood Museum and Gardens, 4155 Linnean Avenue, Washington, DC. You MUST RSVP to Kandy Phillips by March 16. There is one opening left. You may arrive beginning at 12:30 pm. The meeting will begin by 1:15 pm. Bill Johnson, a longtime Hillwood horticulturalist, will lead us through the gardens giving us background information on Mrs.

Post's vision, and pointing out practical information on plant identification. Bill believes that horticulture and artistry work together hand in hand, as Hillwood's Gardens will show. Bring your camera, sketch book, questions, and a hand lens, along with nibbles to share. Hillwood will provide tea and coffee. The Artist's Challenge is Orchids; plan to bring in an orchid drawing or painting to show. March is also Orchid month at Hillwood and the greenhouses should be full of tempting blooms to inspire you!



Hillwood Mansion

**DIRECTIONS:** from METRO, Hillwood is a pleasant 20 minute walk away; take the Red Line to VanNess/UDC. Go up the long escalator and turn to the right; go up the short escalator and make a U turn to the left and proceed away from UDC to Upton street; turn left and walk to the end; turn right on Linnean, and enter Hillwood at the first gate on your left; check in with security; follow the signs to the visitor center parking lot; we will meet in the white horticulture building to the left of the visitor center building, lower level.

**BY CAR:** Take Connecticut Ave to Tilden Street; turn left if approaching from MD or right if approaching from DC; turn left on Linnean and drive to the second gate on your right; proceed as above. For information on Hillwood, visit their website:



Slipper Orchid by Jan Denton

[www.hillwoodmuseum.org](http://www.hillwoodmuseum.org)

NOTE: Meeting will be cancelled in the event of a BLIZZARD. With the odd winter we have been experiencing anything is possible!

## Our Summer General Meeting takes place on June 24, 2007.

Artist Erik Hottenstein will present an inspiring program that is sure to motivate your creative endeavors. More detailed information will follow in our next newsletter.

# BASNCR Notes and News

## From the President's Easel

The Botanical Art Society of the National Capital Region (BASNCR) has grown from 8 to 60 members over a course of three years. We are a mix of students, recent botanical art certificate graduates, and professional botanical artists and instructors. As a group we would like to pursue a relevant project that will increase our skills, knowledge of art and botany, and produce a body of work suitable for a public show that will increase awareness of the beauty of the depicted plants, and their place in the environment. The Board has decided to focus on "Native Wildflowers of the DC/Metropolitan Area". The American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA) is planning a similar project featuring rare and endangered plants. We expect and encourage members to participate in both projects.

BASNCR is working to establish a partnership with the United States Botanic Garden (USBG). The goals of this collaboration might provide us with a meeting place, programs and resources that match our focus of Native Wildflowers of the DC/Metropolitan Area. We hope to benefit the USBG in a tangible way such as holding open public sketch-ins during special programs and supporting the April 14 Wilkes Festival on Saturday April 14, 1-5 PM with members demonstrating. Stay tuned as the details of our collaboration unfold.

*Kandy Phillips*

## Highlights from Our December Meeting

We had our first holiday party on December 10, 2006 at Green Spring Gardens. Everyone brought food to share, not only with BASNCR members but also with the general public who was included in our activities. The event was to act as another opening for our show, as well as, our general meeting for December. After having lots of time to socialize and eat the goodies on the buffet table,

Kandy Phillips welcomed everyone to a brief meeting.

A highlight of the meeting was the sharing session.

Margaret Saul showed us some Trilliums that she is currently working on for the Hunt Institute of Botanical Documentation, and also some works by her students (mushroom studies by Kathy Lutter and Mayumi Wantanabe). Judy Brown explained how she made address labels with her artwork on them (she used them as Christmas presents). Deborah Gudelsky displayed



*Bouquet by Caroline Hottenstein*

Christmas cookies that she had made with botanical art painted on the icing. Sandra Becker described a workshop she attended that involved pouring paint on the paper and manipulating it, and then showed us one of her pieces. Margaret Mattison talked about a medicinal herbs/plants book that she wanted to recommend. Erik Hottenstein talked about doing some projects related to the Jamestown settlement anniversary, and Caroline Hottenstein showed a piece she entered in the Susan Black Foundation Botanical Art Competition. Marcia DeWitt brought in photographs from the ASBA show and talked about what the jurors thought

about the works in the exhibition. Kandy Phillips shared a book by John Cody on moths and mentioned his workshop that will be held in May at the Brookside

School of Botanical Art & Illustration.



*Birdfoot Violets by Karen Coleman*

## WELCOME New Members

- Marsha Ogden
- Julie Yoon
- Anne Mazzola
- Jennifer Brown
- Margaret Reynolds

### Editor's Keyboard

## "Saying Sure!"

While attending the latest American Society of Botanical Artists conference in Seattle, member **Berit Robertson** replied, "Sure" when asked if she would buy raffle tickets. Her willingness was winning. Berit won the raffle entitling her to a five-day workshop with Anne-Marie Evans at the Fioli Gardens in California. The prize included her hotel stay. Watch for the Traveling Brush column on Berit's workshop experiences.

Speaking of saying, "sure", the officers of BASNCR recently met and decided we needed to hear more magic words like, "sure", "yes", "I'll do it", and "I'll help". In just three years, our organization has grown from a scanty 8-12 members to over 60 members. We've had exhibitions at Brookside Gardens, The Athenaeum and Green Spring Gardens, and published ten newsletters. Most of the work for the organization has fallen to the same small group of officers. It's time for others to step in and say those magic words.

Our visionary President Kandy Phillips has devoted an enormous amount of time and effort to develop a focused framework for our society. She is facilitating an exciting collaboration with the U.S. Botanic Gardens. The details of this collaboration are coming soon.

As you read about the developing plans for our society, please say those magic words as a mantra and contact Kandy or any of the officers with your support.

*Judy Brown*



Member **Barbara Sweeney** is thrilled to announce the opening of **Art Partners Gallery** in Sandy Spring, Maryland. Barbara recently joined Carole Jo Dennis in her framing business "**Forget-me-not Framing**" and together they decided a new art gallery featuring new and local talent was just the right addition. Please stop by and say hi! All BASNCR members will receive a 20% discount on their first framing project.

# BASNCR

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## MEMBERSHIP FORM (PLEASE PRINT)



Yes, I would like to become a member of BASNCR. I am enclosing a check for \$20 made out to Emily Rowan, Treasurer, BASNCR.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

BASNCR dues provide membership benefits from October to September of each fiscal year. Dues are not prorated for entry mid-fiscal year. Member names will only be used for BASNCR communications.

### Programming Interests:

- Trips to botanical gardens, arboretums
- Speakers on botanical art subjects
- Art marketing
- Native flora
- Focus on framing and presentation
- Collecting botanical art
- Reproduction processes for the artist
- Trips to special exhibits/ collections of botanical work
- Your** ideas and suggestions are warmly welcomed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your completed form with dues to:  
BASNCR Treasurer  
Emily Rowan  
6803 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

# Brookside Gardens



## SCHOOL of BOTANICAL ART & ILLUSTRATION

McCrillis Gardens, 6910 Greentree Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

Students in the advanced level classes look forward to completing the somewhat rigorous introductory curriculum in April with Painting III and the certificate registrants at this level will embark on their Certificate Project work in May. There should be some wonderful portfolios in the near future! Electives, as listed below, offered through spring and summer.

### SPRING/SUMMER CLASSES

( *March–July*) Descriptions of these workshops are available in the school pages of the spring-summer 2007 Brookside Gardens Program & Events Guide – also available online

Electives (E) total of 12 hours over 4 weeks; Workshops (W) full-day or half-day include step-by-step instruction, demonstrations & individual tuition. Unless noted otherwise, all these open workshops and electives listed below require an ability to draw in detail.

- **Tulips (W)** – Marcia DeWitt. *Tulip paintings are most sort after in this field of art. Thursday March 29 (10-2pm). Painting experience is beneficial.*
- **Spring Gems (W)** – Liz Stafford. *Color for the sketchbook with painting that is fast and furious! Sunday April 15 (10-2pm).*
- **Leaves in Detail – NEW (E)** – Margaret Saul. *Prior attendance at the half or one day Painting Leaves workshop is beneficial. April 9, 16, 23, 30 (10-*

*1pm)*

- **Sketching In The Garden (E)** – Merri Nelson. *In the classroom and in the garden at Brookside Gardens Sunday April 22 & 29 (10-4:30pm).*
- **Botanical Illumination (E)** – Kandy Phillips. *A must do if you love color and design. Kandy's journals, knowledge and love of medieval illuminated manuscripts will have you spell bound! Ability to paint in detail is beneficial. Tuesdays May 1-22 (10-1pm).*
- **Botanical Painting Studio** – May 2 through May 23. *Liz Stafford (Tues evenings), 6:30–9 ; Marcia DeWitt (Wed mornings), 9:30–12. Informal sessions for beginner – intermediate levels.*
- **Create Your Own Artist's Book (E)** – Marca Woodhams: *Bind a small book of art papers and with a decorative cover and then with Kandy Phillips: Fill these pages with illustrations of found objects or flowers - a variety of media is used to create this special art piece – to have and to hold! Thursdays May 3-24 (10-1pm) or Saturday June 2 & 16 (9-4:30pm).*
- **Painting Leaves (W)** – Margaret Saul, (Full day). *Illustrate the elusive, ephemeral quality of leaves facilitated by lots of step-by-step instruction and a comprehensive color printed exercise sheet. Intermediate – advanced painting ability. Saturday May 12 – the midweek offering has been deleted, (10-4:30pm).*
- **Botany For Botanical Artists** – Judy Brown. *Thursdays June 7-28 or Sat May 19 & June 9 (9-4:30pm). Some drawing ability is beneficial.*
- **Pen & Ink (E)** – Margaret Saul. *Rendering techniques for exhibition pieces. Tuesdays June 5-26 (10-1pm).*

Brookside Gardens

School of Botanical  
Art & Illustration



HANDBOOK

- **Ferns For All (W) Day 1** – drawing & field study, Day 2 painting – Margaret Saul. Open to all Saturday July 7 & 14 (10-2pm).
- **Botanical Art Intensive** – 3 days with Margaret Saul. A comprehensive overview of the school's beginner to intermediate level drawing and painting instruction. Stimulus – "Summer Daisies". Intermediate-Advanced. July 20-22 (9-4pm).

**Further information:**

School handbook requires reading prior to registering for first class. To receive a handbook and schedule of classes and fees please phone the school manager, Ellen Bennett (301) 962-1470. School information online [www.BrooksideGardens.org](http://www.BrooksideGardens.org), Registration options – 1. FAX your completed registration form. 2. Post or in person: (Visitors Center, Mon.-Fri, 9am-4pm), 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton MD 20902. Further information, E-mail: [MargaretSaul@BotanicArtist.com](mailto:MargaretSaul@BotanicArtist.com). Saul workshops outside of MD – [www.BotanicArtist.com](http://www.BotanicArtist.com)

**2007 DIARY DATE:**

**School Open House & Exhibition at McCrillis Gardens.**

Sundays May 6 & 13 (2:30-4:30pm). Have your questions about the school answered, view class work, watch demonstrations by teachers. Guided tours of this renowned spring flowering azalea garden will also be offered at this time.

**Master class with Dr. John Cody** ("Audubon of moths") at Brookside Gardens, Friday, May 25 – Sunday, May 27.

Focus on a botanical with a creatively painted background. Registration information - contact Ellen Bennett as noted below. Registration will open in February. (Advise you register for this very special offering even if it is wait listed - you may still get in! Registrations close April 27. Flyer available.

**Botanica 2007** – Annual school exhibition at Brookside Gardens Visitors Center, June 23-August 4. Opening Event - exhibition walk-through and presentation of awards, Sunday July 15 (4pm)

The article below might be of interest to a group of botanical artists. Now that we have a "truly black flower", our challenge will be how to paint it. –Article submitted by Sandra Becker

**How do you make a truly black flower?**



**Kate Ravillious**  
**Thursday May 26, 2005**

The Guardian

"It is impossible to create a truly black flower," says Hans Kapiteyn, who has bred the world's first black hyacinth, on display at the Chelsea Flower Show this week. "There will always be a touch of purple or magenta, but with the new hyacinth, Midnight Mystique, it looks black in all but the brightest sunshine."

Kapiteyn has spent 16 years creating Midnight Mystique, now being sold by plant specialists Thompson and Morgan. Cross-fertilizing a pure white hyacinth with a blue seedling, followed by painstaking years of bulb harvesting and reselecting for the darkest colour, have resulted in the black bloom. But what is it that makes the petals appear to be inky black?

Flower colour is determined by the wavelengths of light reflected from the petals. Pigments inside the petals absorb certain wavelengths, while other wavelengths are reflected back towards our eyes, creating the colour we see. "Black petals are out of the question because the pigments that colour flowers don't occur in black," explains Alastair Culham, a plant scientist at Reading University. But plants such as Kapiteyn's hyacinth appear close to black because their pigments are absorbing most wavelengths of light. "The colour can be enhanced by the shape and pH of the petal cells," adds Culham. Darker plants have rougher petal surfaces, which make them less reflective.

Black petals might be fashionable at Chelsea, but in nature they are rare. Most flowers want to attract pollinating insects, which seem to prefer red, yellow, blue and white. "Black doesn't really help a plant to stand out," says Culham. Even if black looks good to us, it probably looks very different to a passing bee.



# A PERSONAL PALETTE

**Marcia DeWitt**



I have always loved nature and art and I have made a lifetime of studying both. In the past I have chosen one or the other but now I am the happiest of all being able to combine science with art.

I majored in art in high school and college and went on for an M.A. in art education at New York University (NYU). After all that I still was not settled on a medium until I found a wonderful teacher at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, who was well known for his birds in watercolor. It was then that I began painting regularly and selling my work at art fairs and galleries. When my husband was transferred to Ft. Worth, Texas, the landscape was so unfamiliar to me that I went back to school for a degree in horticulture. At the Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens I trained docents to interpret the Japanese Garden and gave many herb workshops. I took up landscape design, taught plant identification at a junior college, and studied botany at the University of Texas. It wasn't until our move to Maryland seven years ago that I discovered the joy of combining both interests with the study of Botanical Art. I was the first to receive the certificate in botanical art from the U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) and the Corcoran College of Art & Design.

Now that I am an instructor at Brookside Gardens School of Botanical Art and the Corcoran College of Art, I feel that it is important that I experience a variety of techniques in teaching as well as techniques in watercolor. I have since studied with Ann Marie Evans and Katie Lee at the New York Botanic Garden and Jenny Phillips at the Denver Botanic Garden, as well as workshops with Susan Fisher, Martha Kemp and Catherine

Watters at the American Society of Botanical Art (ASBA) conferences. I always pick up some useful ideas that I like to share with my students since we all learn differently and every little hint can help.



*Primroses by Marcia DeWitt*

My favorite materials for drawing are the absolutely sharpest pencils possible, Papermate's Tuff Stuff click eraser, and vellum finish Bristol. My favorite painting supplies are: transparent Winsor Newton tube watercolors, Raphael and Isabey Kolinsky sable brushes (mostly size 4) and Fabriano's 300 lb hot press in both traditional and bright white. My favorite place to shop is on line with Dick Blick when they have a sale.

I have had to learn to slow down and appreciate the details and the intricacies of my subject and to accept the idea that drawing and painting the subject several times is not only okay but a darn good idea. All of this leads to satisfaction in the final piece and a greater appreciation of the subject in different light conditions and stages of growth. My drawings have been included in the ASBA /New York Horticultural Society exhibit, the USBG exhibit, the Corcoran Faculty exhibit, and in the book "Discovering Drawing" by Ted Rose. My paintings have been in the Corcoran's "Lewis and Clark" exhibit and the ASBA "Beauty of Botany" exhibit in Seattle.

I am planning to paint more in 2007. As I tell my students, yes, it is true, it is a matter of practice, practice, practice; and because I firmly believe that, I am expecting my next painting to be even better than the last.



# The Traveling Brush

## Amazon Adventure with Deborah Gudelsky

I have a real appreciation for Margaret Mee. Being new to Botanical Art, I had never heard of her until I returned from a trip to the Peruvian Amazon this past August. It was on this adventure that I discovered my love for plants and drawing them. I began reading more about her life and the work she loved so much.

We had many similarities in our "journey to the jungle", and I understood the hardships she endured and obstacles she learned to overcome.

Not much changes when you're close to the equator. The temperature stays about the same, around 85°, but the humidity makes it feel like 110°. The humidity is so high, it seems as if nothing ever dries – clothing and hair, as well as, drawing paper. I wonder how Margaret Mee always seemed to look so fresh in the photos I see of her....amazing. I certainly didn't pull that off very well. There is no change of seasons, and the days are all alike, as the sun rises and sets at the same time consistently. There are no roads, only familiar footpaths and waterways. The one thing that does change is very dramatic. During the rainy season the water in the river rises as much as 35 feet.

This is why most structures are built on higher ground or on stilts.

The living quarters along the Amazon were primitive. One end of our room was open to the jungle, so mosquito nets were essential on the single beds made of two-by-fours. It was important not to have any skin touching the nets, because the insects' proboscis could penetrate the net (and you). There was no electricity, just oil lamps to light our way along the walkway that led to the out-house. Our shower had cold water coming directly

from the river. I was visited by a tarantula on one trip to the bathroom. There were no grocery stores, so food was brought in fresh almost daily. The piranha was delicious!



I was struck by how much green there was. Because the jungle was so thick, with trees and plants of every size, green was all that could be seen. It would be frightfully easy to get lost without a guide. Because of the abundance of the thousands of colors of green, a flower really stands out. Although not frequently seen, unless you are in the canopy, the flowers are like jewels against the monochromatic backdrop. Trying to stay caught up with the botanical information provided and a variety of other activities, I was left with little time to draw, but I have

many wonderful photos. I was amazed at the variety of leaf venations.

I was fortunate to make this trip with Dr. James Duke, an amazing botanist with decades of wisdom and experience, who is very active in preserving the beauty and traditions of using plants as medicine in this area. One of my favorite parts of the trip was meeting the shamans who tend a beautiful medicinal garden, and learning from them how all these unfamiliar and exotic plants were used. This is an important reason to visit the Amazon. Tourists encourage the shamans to keep up with their practices while teaching future generations. The other reason is for the sights and sounds, as there is nothing like this anywhere else, and as we are all painfully aware, this natural world is disappearing. I now understand why Margaret Mee was an advocate for Amazon preservation.



*Dear BASNCR Members,*

*Thank you to all who participated in the Green Spring Exhibition. A special thank-you goes to all who helped with preparations and hanging. It was a very successful show.*



*Violets by Caroline Hottenstein*

*The total sales were \$4332.50. There were fourteen exhibiting BASNCR artists. Seventeen paintings were sold from the walls along with six matted and wrapped prints or watercolors, three packs of cards and ninety-six individual cards.*

*Dorothy Norpel was very pleased with our sales and was impressed with everyone's work. We have been invited to exhibit again in November/ December 2007, so be working on new pieces! There will be a prospectus forthcoming for this show.*

*Happy Painting*

*Caroline Hottenstein  
Exhibits Coordinator*

**Deadline for the July issue is June 10th.**

We are calling for your images of summer flowers and fruits. Send to [judy-brown@verizon.net](mailto:judy-brown@verizon.net)

### ASBA Conferences

<b>September 27-29, 2007</b>	Pittsburgh, PA Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
<b>September 25-27, 2008</b>	San Marino, CA Huntington Library & Gardens
<b>October 16-19, 2009</b>	Phoenix, AZ Desert Botanical Garden
<b>September 2010</b>	Pittsburgh, PA Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
<b>October 2011</b>	TBA - Boston?

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**Hillwood Museum**  
**Washington, DC**