



BASNCR

Botanical Art Society of the National Capital Region

Promoting botanical art in the National Capital Region

September 2010

www.BASNCR.org

Volume 6 Issue 4

HOW TO JOIN:

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President's Message

By the time you receive this issue, we hope to have volunteers for all open positions on the Board. And our bylaws are changing to address succession of our leaders. Joan Ducore will be stepping down as Vice-President and Barbara Hanft will wrap up her year as Exhibits Chair. And, this is Marsha Ogden and Sandra Becker's last newsletter as Co-Editors. Jerry Kurtzweg is assuming the editor's job with assistance from Jane Zander. I will continue for another year, helping the new Vice-President to plan programs that will appeal to members and the public. We will coordinate with the new Education Chair Sandra Becker and Co-Chair Jane Dowling to ensure we have chances to educate ourselves as well as reach out to others. Secretary Laura Gilliam, Treasurer Judy Rodgers, Membership Chair Betsy Farr, Website Chair Kelly Sverduk, Newsletter Designer and Printer Barbara Sweeney and Newsletter Distributor Kathy Lutter will all continue. We do not have an exhibit scheduled beyond the one at Brookside from December 5, 2010-February 6, 2011. We need a Chair and Co-Chair/Chair-Elect for Exhibits who can line up more venues. I thank all the Board members for their dedicated work during the past year. We have enjoyed our time together. New members will continue the spirit of the organization while adding unique contributions. We can all look forward to that.

All the best, *Pamela*

A Winning Double Header

by Marsha Ogden

BASNCR members were treated to a winning double header at the May meeting. Member **Debbie Bankert**, who was granted funding from the American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA) to depict endemic and endangered plants in a remote region of Colombia, South America, presented a talk replete with slides and

originals of her artwork. Curator Bill McLaughlin of the U.S. Botanic Garden later led the group on a tour of the National and Regional gardens.

Debbie's presentation was as much about the surrounding environment for her work as the progress she is making to document the bromeliads and orchids of the El Dorado Reserve in the Santa Marta Mountains. Her research took her to 7,000' to 8,000' above sea level, overlooking snow-capped peaks where northeast winds cause clouds to appear as playful colts galloping across valleys and mountains, bringing daily rain.

The Reserve exists for birds and ecotourism, but not much plant life has been identified for 50 or 100 years. It is a 2½-hour ride over rough terrain. There are many hiking trails, on which Debbie felt safe, but she didn't stray from the

path. There are no deadly snakes in the Reserve: it is simply too cold an environment. In the forests, where she focused her efforts, the flora was different from one elevation to the next. Consequently, she included habitats in her bromeliad works.



*Debbie Bankert includes the habitat in her bromeliad works, including this *Guzmania pallida* © 2010*

With every day being a new adventure and every trail resulting in what she termed a visual overload, she found journal writing imperative. Debbie is seeking additional funding to return.

We went from the heights in Colombia to the National Garden at USBG in just a matter of steps as we joined Bill McLaughlin for an in-depth look. The idea for a National Garden stemmed from 1986, when the rose became the national flower. Fund raising occurred in fits and starts, but took root in earnest after the September 11, 2001, attacks. In 2003, ground was broken and the garden opened to the public in 2006. A design competition resulted in today's display that contains a First Ladies' water garden, a butterfly garden, and a formal rose garden. (Did you know that roses are native everywhere and have been mentioned and/or depicted since 1176?) There are dozens of rose varieties in this garden interspersed with other plants to draw away predators. The garden, thus, is sustained without insecticides. Oh, let's not forget the 150 or so volunteers who keep everything lush and lovely.

He then led us to the Regional Garden to learn its background and plant varieties. Featured here are plants native to the coast and Piedmont regions from New Jersey to North Carolina. Because of the wide range of Mid-Atlantic habitats, the garden has many representative, naturally occurring plant varieties with high wildlife value, and many that thrive in bogs and pinelands. As expected, there were lots of Zone 8 winners. But who knew that the Venus flytrap is a Carolina native of wet pinelands? 🍃



Blue false indigo starts from asparagus-like shoots, grows to a small bush with blue flowers, and then has large black seed pods in the fall. Graphite by Jerry Kurtzweg © 2010

Losing Paradise Exhibit on Its Final Stop

by Joan Ducore

BASNCR members recently had a private guided tour by **Alice Tangerini** through *Losing Paradise?: Endangered Plants Here and Around the World* exhibit at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History. This was a traveling project of the



Members and friends at ASBA's exhibit enjoy a personally guided tour by member Alice Tangerini. Photo by Joan Ducore

American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA). Destruction of habitat, global climate change, the introduction of invasive species, and pollution all contribute to the decline or extinction of many plant species. This show is a collaboration of scientists assessing the risk of extinction for certain species, and artists capturing their form and beauty while they still exist. Art chosen for the show had to depict botanically correct plants in an artistically beautiful fashion. The show, as a whole, represented the wide range of plant habitats in which species are endangered, said Alice.

All 45 botanical illustrations are hung at eye level, and if there had been alarms we would have set them off as we practically pressed our noses to the glass studying the detail and discussing the techniques the artists might have used and critiquing the art. Jean Emmons's *Ixia viridiflora* was a wonderful example: viewing it closely allowed for appreciation of the multiple pale washes of different colors applied to each petal. The effect was astounding.

BASNCR was well represented in the exhibit by **Karen Coleman** (Fuzzywuzzy airplant or *Tillandsia pruinosa*) and **Alice Tangerini** (*Mortoniendron uxpanapense*). The exhibit includes a showcase explaining the steps Alice takes to create scientific illustrations from an herbarium specimen. *Losing Paradise* closes December 12. Until then, members **Kelly Sverduk**, **Berit Robertson**, **Jane Dowling**, **Judy Brown**, and **Doreen Bolnick** are demonstrating their skills at the exhibit on Mondays. 🍃

Field Trip: Sugarloaf Mountain Walk

by Marsha Ogden

May is a fickle month: rainy and chilly, or so hot and buggy that the idea of taking a hike through the woodlands of Sugarloaf Mountain just does not appeal. But this past spring we struck it lucky on all counts. The predicted



Tina in her studio. Photo by Marsha Ogden

rain held off, so the mountain walk was a "go." Tina Brown, who lives within hollering distance and spends many hours illustrating the dozens of specimens there, led our

hardy group on a nature walk then a tour of her studio and home built between 1743 and 1874.

Tina gave us an orientation atop the mountain with several examples of what we would be looking for. We were well prepared with an extensive species list for May, which included the unfamiliar as well as the familiar: garlic mustard, wild yam, rattlesnake weed, pink lady's slipper, and cranefly orchid among them.

Her books with Melanie Choukas-Bradley, *An Illustrated Guide to Eastern Woodland Flowers and Trees: 350 Plants Observed at Sugarloaf Mountain, Maryland* and *Sugarloaf: The Mountain's History, Geology, and Natural Lore*, are impressive especially coupled with Tina's 20 years of artworks.

It was a trail walk that many of us have been anticipating for a long time, and Tina did a fabulous job of showing us her world at Sugarloaf. 🍃

Field Trip: June Open House at the Hunt

by Pamela Mason

This year's exhibition open house at the Hunt Institute (Pittsburgh)--*Botanicals: Environmental Expressions in Art*--drew several BASNCR members in June. Many recognized paintings from before, particularly those who took Hillary Parker's composition class at the 2007ASBA meeting. We won't soon forget her full-sheet watercolor of a pumpkin vine (all 10 feet of it). Hillary's method of immersing herself in her subjects is evident in this portrait, so it was a delight to see it on view.

Archivist Angela Todd's talk on John Banks was another treat. Banks sailed on Captain Cook's *Endeavour* in 1768, returning with plant specimens, including five Australian plants that eventually would be named after him by Linnaeus's son. In the Hunt exhibition, the unusual seed heads, flowers, and life cycle of *Banksia rosserae* were depicted in a field-sketch style painting by Cecilia Rosser, a renowned Australian artist. Another artist, Kyoto Katayama, rendered five *Banksia* seed heads.

Also notable was librarian Charlotte Tancin's presentation on specimens appearing in rare books and manuscripts. Ferdinand Bauer, on a voyage to Australia in 1801-03, made more

than 2,000 sketches. The exhibit included a color chart by Bauer and an engraving of a crab annotated with numbers representing some of the 140 colors he used in his work. To render the colors and shading, rather than reproduce the color in the preliminary sketch, he developed and memorized a complex system so a number would stand for a color. Fascinating. 🍃



Cucurbita pepo © 2005 Hillary Landemare Parker. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation at Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh



In the Classroom

A column wherein members may list classes they will be teaching, and read about other botanical art class opportunities.

For further information about classes at Brookside School of Botanical Art and Illustration (BGSBAI) please visit www.BrooksideArtSchool.org.

Drawing 102 (BGSBAI)

Instructor: Doreen Bolnick

When: Oct. 13, 20, 27 & Nov. 3, or Oct. 23 & Nov. 6

Location: McCrillis Gardens, Bethesda

Registration: www.ParkPASS.org Fee: \$217

Drawing plants by observing and drawing leaves and flowers teaches plant structure and accurate, scientific rendering.

Beginning Botanical Art & Illustration in Pen & Ink

Instructor: Celeste Johnson

When: Oct. 13, 20, 27, Nov. 2 & 9

Location: Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond, VA

Registration: www.LewisGinter.org

Fee: \$245/\$195 members

Learn to illustrate plants with accuracy and artistry by exploring the history and traditions of botanical art. Basic botany and exercises to develop drawing and observation skills. Prior drawing experience recommended.

The Art and Science of Botanical Illustration

Instructors: Gary Krupnick and Alice Tangerini

When: Oct. 14

Location: Smithsonian Institution

Registration: Call 202-633-3030 or

www.ResidentAssociates.org

Fee: Members \$45/nonmembers \$55

Smithsonian research scientist Krupnick will discuss the ways herbarium specimens are used in conservation research. Tangerini will show you the tools she uses as the Smithsonian's botanical illustrator. Try drawing with Alice's materials.

Butterfly Painting Workshop

Instructor: Mindy Lighthipe

When: Oct. 19-21

Location: McGuire Center for Lepidoptera & Biodiversity, Florida Museum of Natural History, U. of Florida, Gainesville

Registration: Call Tiffany Ireland at 352-273-2061 or www.flmnh.ufl.edu/butterflyfest/registration.html

Fee: \$327

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Using McGuire's vast butterfly collection, learn to accurately depict specimens through drawing and painting demonstrations.

Fun & Fast Composition (BGSBAI)

Instructor: Merri Nelson

When: Oct. 24, 10am-1pm

Location: Brookside Gardens Adult Workshop

Registration: www.ParkPASS.org Fee: \$38

Learn a few do's and don'ts of composition and enjoy some fun exercises (using photographs and photocopies) to enhance your right brain "seeing" skills.

Drawing 309 (BGSBAI)

Instructor: Diane Berndt

When: Oct. 30 & Nov. 13, or Nov. 2, 9, 16 & 23

Location: McCrillis Gardens, Bethesda

Registration: www.ParkPASS.org Fee: \$217

In this advanced level subject, students work in graphite to create detailed works to use for Painting 310.

Drawing Studio (BGSBAI)

Instructor: Diane Berndt

When: Nov. 11, 10am-1pm

Location: McCrillis Gardens

Registration: www.ParkPASS.org Fee: \$38

Informal instruction in botanical drawing for intermediate to advanced level students. Bring a work in progress or make a fresh start.

Painting 103 (BGSBAI)

Instructor: Kathy Lutter

When: Nov. 17 & Dec. 1, 8 & 15 or Nov. 20 & Dec. 11

Location: McCrillis Gardens

Registration: www.ParkPASS.org Fee: \$247

Brush-handling skills, varied watercolor wash techniques, color studies that help you mix a range of colors from three pigments. Structural and color composition included.

Edible Plants in Colored Pencil (BGSBAI)

Instructor: Karen Coleman

When: Nov. 20, 10am-4pm

Location: Brookside Gardens Adult Workshop Registration:

www.ParkPASS.org Fee: \$93

Create a glowing work of a fruit or vegetable using colored pencil on Stonehenge paper. Learn to depict smooth, glossy surfaces or bumpy, grainy surfaces.

The Art of Painting Mushrooms (BGSBAI)

MASTER CLASS

Instructor: Sasha Viazmensky

When: Dec. 2, 3 & 4, 10am-4pm

Location: Brookside Gardens

Registration: www.BrooksideArtSchool.org Fee: \$315

Study with the world's master mushroom painter, and learn how to illustrate forms, colors, and structural elements. Learn from his attention to accuracy and approach to field sketching and compositions that include his trademark scattering of natural elements. 🍄

Congratulations go out to the newest Brookside School certificate holders. BASNCR members **Denise Swayne, Berit Robertson, Joan Ducore, and Karen Coleman** were feted September 12. On hand to do the honors was School founder and director Margaret Saul. **Jeanne Benson** also was awarded her certificate.

You Might Want to Try This at Home

by Doreen Bolnick

An article in the *New York Times* on February 23, 2010, changed the way I do art forever. "Stand up While You Read This" is by my favorite columnist, Olivia Judson. In summary, sitting appears to be bad for many aspects of health even if you get plenty of exercise. My solution, used for several months now, is to stand at a jerry-rigged raised desk, sometimes for hours at a stretch. I have a drafting table, set in horizontal position, as high as it will go, about the height of a kitchen counter. I measured the height of the desk at which I formerly worked against my ribs. Then I stacked two sets of large books to the same height on my drafting table, adding a tilted surface on top.

I have more energy from working while standing up. Shoes with good support and a pair of Dr. Scholl's massaging gel inserts prevent my feet from aching. Now, don't laugh, but I have also substituted an exercise ball for the chair at my former desk and at the kitchen table. Apparently it exercises more muscles than sitting.

A Fahrad Manjoo piece talks about the quest for an adjustable stand-up desk. His article appeared April 21, entitled "Can't Stand to Sit Too Long? There's a Desk for That." Both articles are in the *Times* archives at www.nyt.com. Type the title in the search box. 🍄

Falling in Love with the Season's Bounty

by Linda C. Miller

As I write this, fall is still a month away, yet many of our blooming beauties are already bearing the fruits of their labor. With the help of their pollinators and even on their own, many of the spring and summer flowering flora are growing fruits of many shapes and colors. Looking up, tree branches that flowered this spring are beaming with their green fruits such as the oaks, pomegranates, and the persimmons. Why, the beeches have already dropped their brown nuts. Today while on my walk, I spied the long green fruit of the Trumpet Vine almost five inches long.

Over the past two years, I have painted a number of fruits and nuts, but it was while I was taking a workshop with **Juliet Kirby** last fall that I realized how unnoticed these subjects can be. It was then Lucy, a dear fellow student said, "Now Linda, why are you going to paint those weeds?" looking upon the Horse Nettle fruits on my table. I don't remember saying anything, but when I brought back my work the next week, she saw what I had seen in those two decaying stems.

I now realize that it's the naturalist in me that shows up in my work whether I am painting from a garden specimen such as rose hips and including the remains of a spider's web or the decaying fruit of a mettlesome native wildflower. I so enjoy showing others the intricacies of this amazing world as I teach at The Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, North Carolina. 🍄



Wisteria Seed Pod © Linda C. Miller

On the Calendar

Mondays (except holidays): **Open studios** 9-5 at Brookside Gardens Adult Workshop room, Wheaton, MD. Bring whatever you are working on plus your lunch. Email Mark Richardson by prior Friday if you plan to use the space
mark.richardson@montgomeryparks.org .

October 17: Annual General Membership Meeting, USBG, 12:30-4. Kandy Phillips will present a program on botanical illumination. If you didn't make it to her class at Brookside this summer or ASBA in September, do not miss this meeting. Also, new leaders will be introduced.

December 5-February 6, 2011: BASNCR Annual Exhibit, Brookside Gardens. Opening reception on December 11, noon-2pm.

December 10: Deadline for art and article submissions for winter 2011 issue of the newsletter. We welcome your contributions.

Through December 12: *Losing Paradise?* ASBA exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Downtown DC.

Through December 17: 13th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, 5th Fl., Hunt Library, Pittsburgh. Info at 412-268-2434.

January 23, 2011: Quarterly meeting, USBG, 12:30-4. Bring a friend, and make sure dues are up to date. 🍀

Two BASNCR Members' Art in International Exhibition

by Marsha Ogden

Kandy Phillips and **Karen Coleman**, both BASNCR members and teachers at Brookside Gardens botanical art school, have works hanging in the 13th International Hunt exhibit, which lasts until December 17 in Pittsburgh. The American Society of Botanical Artists' (ASBA) meeting was held in conjunction with the opening of the prestigious exhibit.

In the large exhibit of 110 artworks, Kandy's illuminations literally shine as the sole medieval-inspired pieces. Framed together they compel the viewer to pause and examine them. She has donated them to the Hunt.

Karen's pen-and-ink bloodroot, also part of the show, has been purchased for the Institute's permanent collection by the Western Pennsylvania Unit of the Herb Society of America.

It was a highlight at the ASBA opening reception in the Hunt Library to see Kandy and Karen's works displayed alongside that of 70 other internationally prominent artists. 🍀



Centaurea species (left) and a Hoefnagel-inspired blue columbine
by Kandy Phillips © 2009



Rose illumination
by Kandy Phillips © 2009



Bloodroot in pen-and-ink
by Karen Coleman © 2009

The Traveling Artist Sees the Famed Texas Bluebonnets

by Sandra Becker

Our son, Elliott, a law student in Austin, invited us to visit him last spring, urging us to come right away. The plentiful rain had the wildflowers blooming in such profusion that hasn't been seen in a decade.

When your adult children invite you into their lives, you don't think twice, so we went for a few days, ostensibly to see the wildflowers. Austin is located at the edge of the scenic hill country. It has a humid subtropical climate, receiving an average 33 inches of rain yearly, yielding a green park-like atmosphere that is different from west Texas or other drier climes dominated by cacti.

We traveled the highways marveling at the bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*, a type of lupine), which are a cobalt blue, punctuated by red and yellow poppies, red Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja indivisa*), and yellow daisies



Lupinus texensis © 2010 Lotus McElfish

(*Engelmannia peristenia*). This primary-colored botanical lushness decorates the highway medians throughout the hill country.

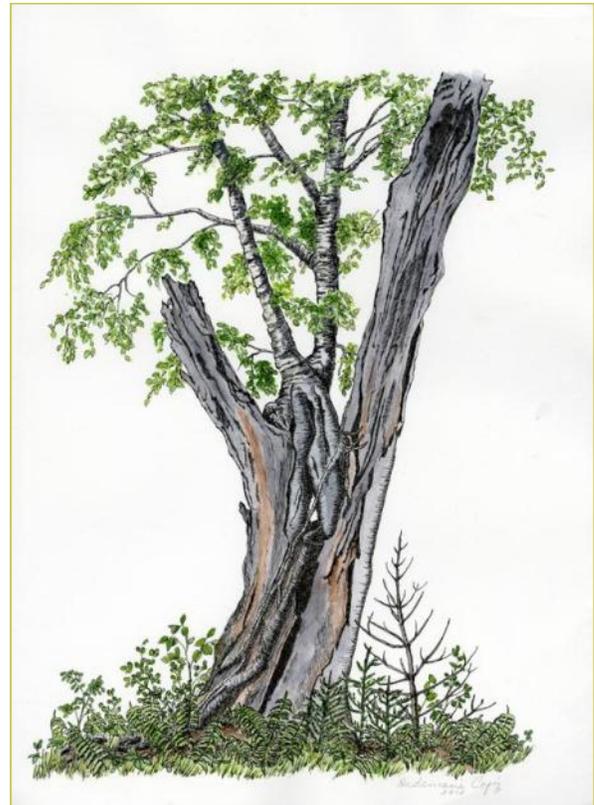
Our next stop was the 30-acre Zilker Botanical Garden (www.zilker garden.org). Its Japanese garden is outstanding, with stone hardscape, streams, waterfalls, and koi ponds. The butterfly garden builds on the fact that Austin is a stop on a major butterfly byway by providing butterfly bait like sedums, coneflowers, and passionflowers.

Last on the itinerary was the Lady Bird Johnson wildflower preserve, a 279-acre display of native Texas plants (www.wildflower.org). The preserve, a former ranch, is a research center and part of the University of Texas. Its 16 different gardens all feature native plants in their

natural habitat. A stone tower allows for views of woods and pastures and gave us a sense of the authentic sprawling Texas landscape. 🌿

BASNCR Leadership

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Heidemarie Copiz's love of trees is apparent in her pen-and-ink work. © 2010

What's Blooming Now

by Lee D'Zmura

Last spring Doreen Bolnick and I discussed nectar guides. In the ensuing months, I have not examined a flower without searching for its pollinator alert. No flower has a better-defined guide than the pansy. And as we move into fall, we have wonderful opportunities to explore these signals.

Pansies did not exist until the 1820s when they were bred in Victorian England. Hybridized from *Viola tricolor*/ Johnny-jump-up, *V. lutea* subsp. *sudetica*/ Hudson Mountain Pansy and possibly *V. altaica*, there are now thousands of cultivars. Pansies have five petals, four of which are arranged in pairs with each pair different. The dark markings and petal arrangement of the Johnny-jump-up have given the pansy its face. My nectar guides! Found in



Viola x Wittrockiana, Lee D'Zmura © 2010

an amazing variety of colors and markings, they are a delight to paint.

The name pansy is thought to be derived either from the French word *pensee* for thought or remembrance. Or, it could be a corruption of "pain's ease" -- a reference to the medicinal properties of *Viola tricolor*. The flowers and foliage are edible sources of vitamins C and A. If planted in the fall, pansies will reappear in the spring. If the weather is mild they may bloom throughout the winter.

I love fall because it marks the end of summer. Autumn is filled with

myriad opportunities for the artist in me, however: the brilliant leaves and berries, the warm, vivid hues of squash and gourds, and the sophisticated palette of the chrysanthemums and asters. I urge you to step out and explore the gardens, meadows, fields, roadsides, and woodlands. Enjoy the majesty that is fall. And while you are out there, check out those nectar guides! 🍃



BASNCR

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BOTANICAL ART SOCIETY OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Next Meeting
October 17, 2010

12:30-4pm

U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG)

www.usbg.gov