

# PSINSIDE

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

September, 2011

## My Spot by Anni Matsick



For those who read the newsletter cover to cover, it's a long journey this month, through pages

jam-packed with news! Others who responded to this month's question have favorite sections they turn to first. Whatever your style, it's time to find out what's been keeping members busy since last issue.

Lou and I made a trip to Shadyside (where we got a parking space near the door at GalleriE CHIZ) for the Opening Reception of *Drawing Under the Influence*. The memorable evening is recorded in photos on pages 6-7. I went on to spend Labor Day weekend at the Highlights Advanced Illustrators Workshop and am sharing a report.

There's more inside on members exhibiting their art, including an interview with one who rated a one-man show of his prints now running in a New York City gallery.

If you're methodically reading this piece first, you now have a good idea of what to look for inside. If you're a "hopper" you're already into it. Either way, it's a great read!

Editor: Anni Matsick  
Design/Production: Ron Magnes

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## News Flashes From Our Members

### Artful Dining

This 11" x 15" study is for a much larger (approx. 25" x 37") painting **Kit Paulsen** is working on. It's the first in a series commissioned for a new restaurant from Eat 'n Park Hospitality Group: The Porch at Schenley. It's being built now on Forbes Avenue in Oakland, near the Carnegie Museum. Their concept is "the outside is inside" and the space, even under construction, feels like the outdoors.



### Copycat

As part of UPMC's green initiative, **Ron Magnes** and **George Schill** were contacted by Zoltun Design to create animations that would educate employees on the importance of reducing copy paper usage. They concepted and created a campaign using a series of humorous shorts, called Paper Clips, that



kicked off with "Don't be a Copy Cat." Five more are completed that will go into rotation throughout the next 12 months.



### Pie in the Sky

This Wheel Deliver menu artwork was done by **Wayno**, who's been working with Wheel Deliver for several years doing covers for their menu guides. This latest guide pays tribute to the city's recent invasion by the Batman movie film crew.

*continued on page 2*

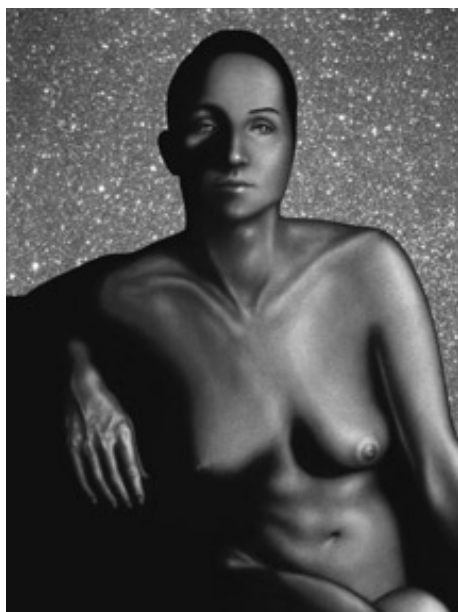
## NEWS FLASHES continued

## Happenings...

**Jeffrey Katrencik** will have his art featured on a spread in the annual issue of *Direct Art* magazine, published each fall. The artists for each issue are selected from an international talent search. Jeffrey's coverage is the result of awards from competitions sponsored by Limner Gallery of New York, where he exhibited last fall. [www.slowart.com](http://www.slowart.com) To be included are the two images shown, "Apollo with Cancer" and "Portrait of Job", both pen



and ink on paper with glitter. Dimensions are 30"x40" and 35"x25", respectively. According to their website, *Direct Art* "has emerged in the last decade as a leading alternative fine art magazine. The concept of *Direct Art* is to provide a direct connection between the artist and the public. The commentary in the magazine is written by the artists themselves, unfiltered by critical and/or curatorial analysis." It is distributed by COMAG Marketing Group, the same distributors of *Art News* and *Art in America*, to fine book and magazine stores across America, including Barnes and Noble. It may also be ordered on their website at: [www.slowart.com](http://www.slowart.com)



**Mary Dunn** has been hired by Grumbacher to teach Fine Art Classes at the Michaels store at the Waterfront Munhall location. Classes will be on acrylic painting and range from florals, seascapes, landscapes and still life. The first one on September 24 was a floral.

Mary was accepted through a screening process into the South Hills Artists League on September 7.



**Susan Castriota** and Wilson just got back from an appearance in Milwaukee. Here's the video: [www.themorningblend.com](http://www.themorningblend.com) And here is Wilson's first UTUBE video: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**Cara Armstrong** is a Visiting Professor in the School of Architecture and Art at Norwich University in Northfield, VT this semester. For their catalyst project, second year students had to do 100 folded paper sculptures to study light, which culminated in an exhibition of their 2700 sculptures in the Armory Building. Here's a link: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Third year students looked at buildings by contemporary architects and generated diagrammatic explorations of solid/void, order/sequence, path/place, layering, geometry, proportion, etc. and then built a model of one the buildings. Here's a link: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

**Rose Gauss** and **Leda Miller** will hold book signings during Bedner's Greenhouse *Art Under Glass* event on October 15 and 16, Saturday and Sunday from 10 am-6 pm. The day features a variety of family activities and many artists set up all through the greenhouse. Bedner's is in Cecil, just outside of Bridgeville. Details on their website at: [www.bednersgreenhouse.com](http://www.bednersgreenhouse.com) Leda's book, *Kana and the Missing Koi*, is an early reader level 2 picture book. Rose will be signing *Callie and the Stepmother* by Susan Meyer and



two titles she illustrated from the *I Wanna Be* series by Joanne Fairchild Miller, a series of personality based books for children and children's workers. A third is in progress.





## NEWS FLASHES continued

## On Exhibit

Three oil paintings by **Leda Miller** and three pastel paintings by **Anne Trimble**



will be included in the *South Hills Art League Annual Juried Show* at Vanadium Woods Village, 50 Vanadium Road, Bridgeville. The September 25 opening offered food and live music performed by several Pittsburgh Symphony strings.



**Ilene Winn-Lederer** enjoyed a visit to Morgantown, W.VA last week for the opening of *Reflections: Homage to Dunkard Creek*, a show at Arts Monongahela/Jackson Kelly Gallery that included her "American Toad" drawing. Here is a link to the show: [web.me.co](http://web.me.co)

Also, a live, original play called "Dead Fish Rising!" written and directed by Kathleen Cash, an international human rights activist will be performed in October by the shores of Dunkard Creek. Her frog illustration was made into the show's poster.



## Worthy Cause

**Johann Wessels** created this 30"x12" piece for Pentiction Art Gallery's Annual Art Auction in British Columbia. It's trompe l'oeil with actual 3D elements to confuse the viewer. In the detail shown, there are driftwood sticks bundled and

glued to the board. "All about textures and glazes...rather dark. But fun, nonetheless," Johann says. The gallery is a not-for-profit charitable organization.



## Personals



**Johann Wessels** reports from his new home in Pentiction, British Columbia: "I built a driftwood fence and gate on the one side of our house...a cheap way of keeping our dog from wandering off, although there were complaints from my family who were asked to help drag the rather heavy logs and sticks back to the house! There is something compelling about driftwood. So far I have resisted turning it into table lamps to sell in local curio shops!"



**Cheryl Johnson's** son Christopher and wife, Jackie, were married August 20 at Ligonier Country Inn, in Ligonier.

## SOCIAL NIGHT

Every last Friday of the month beginning 8 pm with FREE appetizers!



**The Church Brew Works**

Pittsburgh's Finest Brew Pub  
3525 Liberty Ave, Strip District



## FEATURES

# How to Make a Shirley Temple

by Vince Dorse

Anni asked me to do a work-in-progress feature for this month's newsletter. I refused, but she arm-wrestled me and won, so here we are. This is a quick run-through of my digital process for the Shirley Temple piece I put in the drink directory.

There's a bit of research that goes into a piece like this – finding photos of Depression-era taverns and mustachioed barmen. One of the biggest challenges was getting the nine-year old model just tipsy enough to pose correctly without having her pass out. Once that's accomplished, I begin with a pencil sketch.

I like to run my initial doodles by other PSI illustrators for input and feedback. My go-to-guy for brutal, bare-knuckle critiques is **John Blumen**. He's an angry man and he doesn't care whose feelings he hurts. Besides, a second set of eyes can help you see what you need to see and push the piece where it needs to go aesthetically. Since this illustration was headed for our high profile drink directory, I also ran it by **Pat Lewis**, **Jamie Huntsman** and **Craig Mrusek**. All of them offered constructive suggestions that ultimately made the sketch better in the end.



I wanted an old-timey, aged feel to the piece so I planned on using muted

colors. But the piece is kind of busy. With no striking colors to help separate the elements, I knew that getting the values right was vital. So I decided to do a greyscale underpainting to help me build the darks and lights in a way that highlighted the important features. PSI co-founder **John Manders** often uses this same technique using burnt sienna and it gives a nice, warm undertone to everything he does. I used grey tones because, frankly, burnt sienna is for hacks.



Now I begin to lay in the digital colors in transparent layers, letting the underpainting do most of the heavy lifting. Once again, I run my preliminary color roughs past John Blumen. I can't stress enough how beneficial it is to have so many talented illustrators just a phone call away, willing to give me the benefit of their experience.

John and I went back and forth about the cool hues and warm hues, how they bounce off each other and focus the viewer's eye. We also debated the relative impact of a yellow dress versus a pink dress. The pink won out in the end and, admittedly, works much better than the yellow. And, as he always does after a long, in-depth conversation about art, John said, "I'm sure you'll do a great job, Vince. You are, after all, the finest illustrator I've ever known."

"Honestly?" I ask "Well," he continues, "being completely honest, I'd have to say you're also the finest *person* I've ever known." That Blumen's a class act, all the way.



Now it's just a matter of balancing the color and the line. Since I'm going for a watercolor feel in this particular illustration, I decided I'd pester watercolor expert **Fred Carlson**. Fred was kind enough to send a 14-page email that detailed his technique and offered a brief history of bluegrass music to boot.

Armed with that knowledge, I paint over some of the linework so it's not so in-your-face, layering the color on a little at a time until I'm happy with the results. To further age the piece I adjust the color balance, pushing the yellows forward. This has the added benefit of brightening up the piece just a bit and giving it a nice, warm glow.



And that's about it. Tune in next month and maybe I'll be back to bore you to tears with yet another work-in-progress feature.

—V



FEATURES *continued*

# A Highlights Founders Event: Advanced Illustrators Workshop

by Anni Matsick

"The Barn" housed its first offering for illustrators over Labor Day weekend, Sept 1-5.

Within a year ago, the conference center on Highlights' founders property at Boyds Mills was still only a gleam in Kent Brown's eye, although reflected in that gleam was the log-beam framework of what is now a spectacular facility for

as Washington, and one student from the United Kingdom. It was easy for all to become acquainted quickly while chatting over appetizers on evening one, and mixing with the faculty over dinner. The distinguished panel included children's book illustrators (l-r, in photo) **Floyd Cooper, Melanie Hall, Lindsay Barrett George, Suzanne Bloom** and Caldecott Medal winner **Eric Rohmann**.



Over the first two full days, the faculty held casual panel discussions on various topics, lining up on the patio and encouraging questions and comments. Portfolio reviews were conducted before lunch for half the attendees, and that half also displayed their work in an evening showcase.

artist and writer events. Kent Brown Jr. is Executive Director of the Highlights Foundation, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to raise the level of the offering of writing and illustrating for children. Having been a contributor to Highlights publications for some 23 years, I was eager to participate in the first offering for artists held in their new landmark, fondly dubbed "The Barn."

Last year, I reported on a smaller workshop on creativity in the June 2010 PSInside, which took place in one of the original buildings on the property. It was cozy, and a privilege to be within the walls originally inhabited by the Myers family who founded Highlights for Children magazine 65 years ago, but accommodations had to be expanded to provide for new extensive programming. This workshop drew nearly 30 participants from 11 states, as far away



Day one of classes started out with squeals—as we quickly sketched pigs for a printmaking assignment from Eric Rohmann. With no time to obsess, we transferred the image to blocks and used carving tools to define the blacks and whites. This was an exercise to throw us off our usual game and discover new styles. The collective results were inter-



esting—and darned cute! That afternoon, Melanie Hall had us working with torn paper collage and mixed media to illustrate lines from a poem.



Day two's exercises were given by Suzanne Bloom who invited us to dip into her Senneliers along with other types of pastels to work outside of our usual color schemes on black grit paper. Lindsay Barrett George demonstrated then had us try working with gouache with a black base, describing a form with fine strokes of lighter shades.



On day three, Floyd Cooper demonstrated his technique of working from dark to light, using a kneaded eraser to remove tone from an oil stained illustration board.



## FEATURES continued

We worked along, beginning with his "umbrella" shape to define the higher planes in a portrait.



Evenings provided exciting guest speakers Alix Kennedy, Executive Director, Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, and Vera B. Williams, children's author/illustrator and longtime women's and civil rights activist, who rated a standing ovation from the admiring crowd. I was introduced to Vera's *A Chair for My Mother* and *Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe* through PBS's *Reading Rainbow* when my son was growing up, so I asked if she had anything to impart about that experience. Her reply was that it resulted in the river adventure book being carried in the L.L.Bean catalog.



A lot of us took advantage of an offer to stay over through Monday morning, using the time to work further on the techniques that had been introduced. I saw it as an opportunity to schedule a model for us in a lavish belly dancer costume. After a dramatic entrance accompanied by music, we worked intently until it was time for the mysterious lady to depart, some still not recognizing her work-week identity as Cindy Smith, Art Director for Highlights magazine.



The five days offered me a wonderful sylvan retreat within driving distance of my home and a chance to connect with other illustrators from around the nation. (And I can't forget to mention the plentiful gourmet food!) Due to enthusiastic response, the workshop will be offered again in 2012, August 30-September 3, so start planning your getaway!



Info on Highlights Founders Workshops here: [www.highlightsfoundation.org](http://www.highlightsfoundation.org)

Workshop faculty websites:

[www.suzannebloom.com](http://www.suzannebloom.com)  
[www.floydcooper.com](http://www.floydcooper.com)  
[www.lindsaybarrettgeorge.com](http://www.lindsaybarrettgeorge.com)  
[www.mhallillustration.com](http://www.mhallillustration.com)  
[www.ericrohmman.com](http://www.ericrohmman.com)

## Opening Night Splash!



Bartenders got a real workout at the opening reception as illustrators, patrons and friends gathered for PSI's *Drawing Under the Influence* exhibit at GalleriE CHIZ in Shadyside. The rhythmic sound of their cocktail shakers was a constant accompaniment to the evening's pianist as three recipes were mixed up from the book's pages. A sign at each station identified the recipe and its contributor as an enthusiastic crowd lined up for samples. Guests also cruised the tempting buffet of appetizers provided by the gallery's owner, Ellen Chisdes Neuberg, who could be found mingling in the crowd. A



steady stream of viewers passed through the gallery from 5:30 til 8:30 pm, enjoying the artwork on the walls and getting a first look at PSI's newly released 2011 Directory of Illustrators. Kurt Shaw's appreciative review of the book appeared in the September 11 Sunday Pittsburgh Tribune Review, "Illustrators add another element to directory's mix": [www.pittsburghlive.com](http://www.pittsburghlive.com)

"It was a heck of a lot of fun, and the whole concept seemed to go over really well. I was excited at the prospect of doing freshly-made cocktails in a gallery setting, and serving drinks that were created by



FEATURES *continued*

PSI members made it even more special. I also managed not to splash booze on anyone's artwork or damage gallery property, so I consider the evening a success from that angle as well."—Craig Mrusek



**Craig Mrusek**, aka Dr. Bamboo, writes and illustrates the cocktail column "Last Call" for Bachelor Pad Magazine as well as a monthly feature for online drinks resource [www.barnonedrinks.com](http://www.barnonedrinks.com). He is on the board of the Cocktail & Spirits Online Writers Group and was profiled in Vintage Spirits & Forgotten Cocktails as one of "The 25 Most influential Online Cocktail Pioneers." Craig posted on our opening event at [drbamboo.blogspot.com](http://drbamboo.blogspot.com)

Nathan Lutchansky is a bartender and spirits expert who also reports unofficial advice and product updates for Pennsylvania cocktail enthusiasts on his blog at [plcbusersgroup.org](http://plcbusersgroup.org)



**Kurt Pfaff's** art was spotted on the label of Daily's Sweet & Sour Mix, used in **Dave Biber's** Devil's Advocate which proved to be a crowd favorite. The entire line of taste-tempting illustrations for the Daily's Drink Mix products were produced by Kurt. Learn how he garnered this project in his interview on page 6 in the August 2009 issue of PSInside: [www.pittsburghillustrators.org](http://www.pittsburghillustrators.org)



Devil's Advocate Ingredients:

1 shot Bacardi Limon  
1 shot Triple sec  
¾ oz sour mix  
1 Tbsp grenadine  
4 oz cranberry juice

Mixing instructions: In a shaker mix all ingredients. Pour over ice.

The directory would not be in our hands today if not for the extremely generous gift of time and talent from its designer, **Steve Cup**. Here, Steve tells about his own recipe and rendering: "When faced with having to pick a drink recipe I first looked towards mixes that I personally enjoyed. But most had bland names and were of the 'This and Soda' or 'That on the Rocks' variety, so I decided to expand my horizons. Within a short time searching, I found a drink with a title that would easily lend itself to illustration. It

was perfect: short, colorful, and rude. After going through a series of questionable sketches that would have made **Rick Antolic's** Earthly Delight look modest, I eventually settled on a moodier, more subdued vision. The artwork is a traditional woodcut print carved from a poplar board and printed on rice paper."

PSI would like to thank the following who contributed most significantly toward a successful project and opening reception:

Book Concept: **Ron Magnes, George Schill**

Book Design: **Steve Cup**

Project coordinators: **Gina Scanlon, John Blumen**

Announcements: **Anni Matsick**

Reception organizer: **Mark Brewer**

Bartenders: **Craig Mrusek**, Nathan Lutchansky

Liquor providers: Vodka, Boyd & Blair; Triple Sec, Hiram Walker and the Brand Action Team

Many thanks to Ellen Chisdes Neuberg, owner of GalleriE CHIZ, for giving PSI the prime display area with an exciting opening reception, and for handling book sales.

Check out more photos of opening night by **Alexander Patho Jr.**  
[www.pathophoto.com](http://www.pathophoto.com)



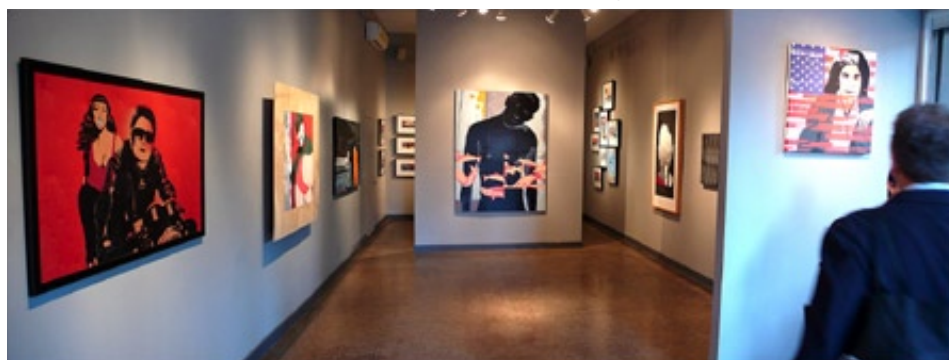
## FEATURES continued

## WORKED UP in New York

### A Solo Exhibition By John Ritter

By Kathy Rooney

Before Andy Warhol became a famous artist, he was already well known as an illustrator in New York City. It was when Warhol's commercially oriented work crossed over into fine art that art history was made.



Now comes another Pittsburgh-born illustrator, **John Ritter**, whose work has the same artistic potential to launch him into the contemporary art world. John seems to be following a path emblazoned by Warhol in having his first solo exhibition in New York at the Lyons Wier Gallery.

The Lyons Wier *WORKED UP* exhibition catalogue reads: "Ritter is well-known for creating visual narratives of cultural icons of the 20th and 21st centuries in a variety of serious and satirical situations. His keen eye and sharp mind have propelled his career as an illustrator, with his works consistently defining the pages of many of the country's top publications. In 2008, Ritter's art was featured on the cover of Time magazine on four occasions. His work has also appeared in The New Yorker, Harper's, Newsweek, GQ, TV Guide, People, Money, Forbes, Entertainment Weekly, and the New York Times."

I talked with John after the opening of his show. He said his reception was very well attended, he initially sold a painting and a print, and it was quite an education into the "big" art world. Thank you, John, for letting PSI know about your experience as an illustrator emerging as fine artist. We appreciate your willingness to share your insights with fellow PSers.

**K:** Congratulations on your show in NYC. Did you ever see yourself having a solo show in a New York City gallery?

**J:** Thank you Kathy, it's something that I have been working toward for several years. I started to explore alternative printing techniques at Artist Image Resource on Pittsburgh's North Side in 2000 and in 2005 I produced my first large scale silkscreen on six metal shelves that I found on Carson street. The title of that piece is "The Bone Game" and it has defined the direction of my personal work in terms of media, execution and exploration. Since then, I've had multiple printmaking projects in motion. It was my

goal to create ten large-scale pieces that could be exhibited as a cohesive body of work in a gallery context.

**K:** Did you pursue this chance to exhibit your work or did the gallery approach you?

**J:** My good friend Richard Byrne Reilly, whom I met in Pittsburgh while he was a staff writer at the Trib, introduced me to Michael Lyons Wier. Michael is the gallery owner. Richard is a journalist and art collector. He relocated to NYC in 2008 and has been instrumental in the progress of my personal work. He says things like, "RIT, you need to do something on Kim Jong-il. NOW!" He walked into the gallery and started a conversation with Michael and that's what got the ball rolling.

**K:** Since your work is digital, all of the artwork will be shown as Giclée prints. Is the gallery handling your print editions for you?

**J:** I reconfigure bits and pieces of digital information into visual compositions so the foundation of my work is always electronic. The issue that confronts most artists that work this way is how to present those 1s and 0s in a way that is visually stimulating and has some sort of meaning or depth. A Giclée print is a high quality digital print that uses fade resistant inks on archival paper. This is often

used to present a digital file in a physical and consumable form. The show has 24 of these prints which are traditionally matted and framed. The larger works are a combination of silkscreen, hand painting and digital imaging onto metal and wood. There are also two commercial light boxes that were produced at Filmet in Pittsburgh. I had to produce everything on my own dime so I manage the print editions. The gallery handles sales.

**K:** Is your gallery guiding you on how to market your work as fine art rather than illustration and if so, what are they saying about it?

**J:** The clear message is that there is no reason to differentiate between illustration and fine art in terms of commerce. Art values are another issue. I am unknown outside of the contemporary illustration world so dollar values were set at a "new artist" level. In Manhattan, that's still quite high but nothing I can retire on. The main design of this show is to introduce my work to a new audience.

**K:** How did your illustration style develop?

**J:** It is a product of poor drawing skills, mediocre photography knowledge and a short attention span. Ha! Really, it was just a lot of hard work and focus on making decent pictures that are conceptually strong and visually stimulating. My involvement with Photoshop's development at Adobe Systems in the early 90s was certainly a pivotal moment in my process as a visual artist.

**K:** Briefly describe your early career as an illustrator.

**J:** I studied graphic design with Robert Slenker at IUP and spent summers in Northern California skateboarding and working at Go Skate and Santa Cruz Skateboards. I relocated to CA after graduation and got a job at MCA records working in the art department designing t-shirts for Madonna, Billy Joel, New Kids on the Block and...Milli Vanilli! From there I begged my way into an internship at Adobe Systems where I was a human guinea pig testing a new software application called Photoshop. Adobe was a fantastic place to be at that point in my career. The designers were from Cranbrook, Art Center and RISD. I learned to pay close attention to every minor detail of typography, information hierarchy, use of photography and illustration. I also learned that I was much more interested in visual narratives than typography and design. While working at Adobe as a graphic designer, I went through a very difficult personal situa-



## FEATURES continued

tion that left me emotionally paralyzed. I started to make loose painterly art using Photoshop as a means of therapy. I wound up sending several prints to David Carson in San Diego and they were published in Ray Gun Magazine, which was highly influential in the editorial world at



the time. That was the beginning of my illustration career. I left adobe in 1993 and opened John Ritter Illustration in my tiny SF apartment.

**K:** With this exhibit opportunity, do you see your work possibly going in a different direction specifically geared to the fine art world?

**J:** I plan to focus on more large scale printmaking work while I continue doing editorial illustration and some product oriented stuff like skate decks and clothing.

**K:** A fine artist creates his vision from scratch, whereas an illustrator's creativity is inspired by the needs of his client. How do you feel about creating your work starting with a blank canvas, so to speak, rather than working on assignment that begins with artistic problem solving?

**J:** Both are fantastic. After 18 years of editorial assignments, I am still thrilled to receive a call. The personal stuff is more about questions. There is a certain purity or truthfulness in creating personal work. It is very stimulating and difficult. I've had a rough year with injuries and the death of my father so I have a lot to express and delve into.

**K:** Does your family in Pittsburgh understand your art?

**J:** I have two older sisters. The whole notion of art is somewhat mysterious to them. We never discuss it. My wife Julia, on the other hand, is my best critic. She basically supports my career at every level. I am very fortunate to have a creative family.

**K:** What influenced your decision to move to Ligonier, PA where you are somewhat isolated? Has it had an impact on your work?

**J:** We like new experiences and the opportunity arose to move to a remote site in the country so we took it. We are very isolated physically but I am on the phone all day with people in NY, LA, Berlin etc. I spend Fridays at the print shop in Pittsburgh and teach as an

adjunct professor at St. Vincent College in Latrobe. I also try to get to New York every couple of months so there is a lot of contrast in my life right now.

**K:** Can you give a concise piece of advice to illustrators on becoming successful?

**J:** Develop your own vision by traveling, reading and having an open mind about others and the world in general. Oh...and work your ass off.

**K:** Do you ever experience a creative block and what do you do about it?

**J:** My creative process goes like this: I read the material, check Craigslist for vintage motorbikes, have snacks, lie down on my 70s corduroy couch, sleep for ten minutes and I usually wake up with a direction. I generally find a solid conceptual solution once I get started exploring source material. I make word lists and then translate them into metaphors and symbols when I get stuck.

**K:** Your web site at [www.ritterillustration.net](http://www.ritterillustration.net) is sensational. I see that you are working on a new site at [cargocollective.com](http://cargocollective.com) which is more navigable for your art buyers. Do you feel that investing in a great web site design strongly enhances an artist's marketability?

**J:** Thank you for the compliment. The flash site is about six years old and I have decided to take a more minimal and direct approach with the cargo collective site. To answer your question, sure, the way a visual artist presents him or herself online is critical. It is a close second to the work itself. Personal and social skills are very important as well. I don't think of myself as the smartest or most talented artist but I work hard, have fun and treat people with respect. Very old school, I know.

An earlier interview with John Ritter can be found in the May 2009 issue of PSInside: [www.pittsburghillustrators.org](http://www.pittsburghillustrators.org)



Two friends and fans, **Jacob Thomas** and **Taylor Gallery**, were present for the September 9 opening of John's show and shared these remarks:

**Jacob Thomas:** John's show was fantastic! I could see the attention to detail in everything from the framing to how it was hung and, obviously, in the work itself. A variety of techniques were displayed—oil painting, silk screens on paper, wood and metal as well as prints on canvas and paper. It was inspiring to see different ideas of how to get it out of your computer and on to a surface. All very well thought out, which is something that I've come to know about John, he's always thought things out. Plenty of eccentric New Yorkers showed up as well as some well-known illustrators and art directors. I chatted with Andy Friedman [www.andyfriedmanillustration.com](http://www.andyfriedmanillustration.com) for a bit and had fun talking illustration with Tom Alberty, GQ's art director, all night. One of John's pieces sold before I even got there, always a good sign for an opening night. All in all, I walked away proud of John for what he's accomplished and excited for his future. I think it was an excellent introduction to the New York art scene.

**Taylor Gallery:** The show was a great experience buzzing with good people, strong energy and, above all, filled with John's outstanding work. All of these elements set against the backdrop of New York made it something special to witness and enjoy as a fan of art. It's easy to fall in love with John's work, and this show made me fall in love all over again. He works extremely hard to accomplish his tasks, and it feels really good to see all of the effort pay off in such a great venue. The show inspired in me that with hard work and determination, anything is possible. I am very proud to have been in the audience of such a remarkable show. Many congrats to John!



## INTERVIEW

## In Touch with...

**MARK BENDER**

It's not easy to ignore any of Mark's images, some of them large enough to surround you with their wealth of color. Mining past art movements has resulted in work that fills some very contemporary settings, providing a rich experience for today's viewers.



**Q:** How would you describe your personality and lifestyle?

**A:** My wife Cheryl and I live with our 12-year-old daughter Maddie, Dexter the cat and a Westie puppy named Trevi in an active stone cottage in Mt Lebanon. My studio is in the back. It's a creative home with my wife, a graphic designer turned Director of Global Marketing for Mylan, and a very artistic daughter. We're a noisy house in a quiet setting.

**Q:** Was there a significant turning point or detour in your career?

**A:** After more than 25 years, you have a lot of turning points. As a student, Saint Dave Bowers got me into the '84 NYSI student scholarship show, and that visit to New York sealed the deal for me wanting a career in illustration. Another bench was receiving a Silver Medal from NYSI in 2008. I've been an instructor at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh for the past 11 years, and that interaction

with faculty and students continues to change my views and techniques. "When you're through changing, you're through." (That's a Martha Stewart quote, of all people).

**Q:** From what illustration assignment did you learn the most about yourself?

**A:** Last year I completed a mural for the new Children's Hospital that was 6' tall by 185' long. I worked traditionally in my studio on reduced scale 8' panels. The planning, design and acrylic painting took about four months and was one of the toughest projects I've worked on. I enjoyed the challenge, and when

I finished, I took a portion of the check to buy a 27" monitor and hid my paints. I work digitally now.

**Q:** What's the one aspect of illustration that most inspires or motivates you?

**A:** For me it's being able to move people. Whether it's to inform, give an opinion, a call to action or just to encourage reading, we have a chance to motivate. That's an admirable profession.

**Q:** What was the most constructive criticism that you ever received?

**A:** At Syracuse University I had a class with Hall of Fame Illustrator C. F. Payne. He looked at my thumbnails and said that a beautifully rendered bad idea was a polished turd. You don't forget that kind of imagery. It was a great class and I made sure the piece was clever as hell. We laughed about it over a few Scotches by the end of the week.

**Q:** What advice would you offer to those who admire your work and want to learn from you?

**A:** Chair of Syracuse and Harford Masters programs, Murray Tinkelman once told me that "you should only work for people you love, and find something to love about everyone." What he said.

**Q:** Does the artwork that you do for yourself differ from the artwork that you do for your clients? If so, how?

**A:** All the big jumps in your work happen in the personal stuff. It's really the test flights for what's to come.

**Q:** What do art directors like about your work?

**A:** I'm a firm believer in the process. A professional doesn't skip steps. My thumbnails are extremely tight. It gives the art director confidence and they, in turn, give you the freedom to create.

**Q:** Who or what has been the biggest influence on your work?

**A:** Lately I've been looking at an Austrian graphic artist Joseph Binder (1898-1972). Has a wonderful 30s poster feel. I am always looking at WPA posters too.

I've had the opportunity to receive instruction from Gary Kelley, Anita Kunz, David Bowers, Nancy Stahl, Chris Spollen, John Thompson, C. F. Payne, Ted and Betsy Lewin, Murray Tinkelman, Teresa Fasolino, Greg Schooley, and Alan Hassinger. That's a pile of medal winners and hall of famers...I should be way better than this by now.

**Q:** What would you do with ten million dollars?

**A:** I would pay off some family and friends mortgages (wouldn't that free people up). I would also love to travel more.

**Q:** What one thing would you like to learn to do?

**A:** I had a chance to go to Rome, Florence and Venice with my wife and daughter last summer and we all fell in love with the country, food, drink and the people. I've got to learn Italian and get back there soon. It's also why our dog is called Trevi.

You can peruse samples of Mark's work on these websites:

[www.benderillustration.com](http://www.benderillustration.com)  
[www.illoz.com](http://www.illoz.com)



## QUESTION OTM

# What do you read and enjoy first in the PSInside newsletter?

**Kathy Rooney:** I look at Behind the Brush first to see what everyone is working on and I'm always impressed!

**Jack Puglisi:** The first thing that I read in the newsletter is My Spot on the first page with the information on what is happening currently with the members. I'm methodical so there is no great mystery as to how I would go about reading it. First page to last page.

**Cara Armstrong:** I have a top four: 1. On Exhibit, so I know what's going on where and can see how illustrations are being presented and displayed; 2. Book Happenings, so I know what books to look out for -- and who to be jealous of (go, **Nora Thompson!**); 3. New Members, so I know who else is out there and new to the community; 4. Behind the Brush, for inspiration.

**Fred Carlson:** I read through Behind the Brush first, because that is what is most inspiring to me. I can also tell if the economy is improving by the volume of projects going on! I love seeing the creative growth of our membership as people learn and grow from being exposed to all this great work. I then read the Question of the Month because that reminds me of our social nights where everyone comments on an issue or a question. The community of PSI always has something to say! I also print the whole PSInside doc out so I can carry it with me the next few days in my briefcase, show it to clients, read it when I have to wait somewhere, and make sure I read every word.

**John Hinderliter:** I start at the front and go to the back. I understand the Japanese do it the other way around. I really enjoy seeing the work everyone is doing.

**Vince Ornato:** I tend to scan through quickly first to see if there is something about an artist who I know well as a friend. Secondly, I guess I am looking for work that "pops" to me personally, usually more traditional painting or drawing...sometimes, your nudes.



Illustration by Dave D'Incau

After that, I am reading from top to bottom, and sometimes print it out for later.

**Ilene Winn-Lederer:** I tend to look at current interview, then Behind The Brush, then personal news items. I enjoy the interviews for the chance to know a bit more about my PSI colleagues. BTB to learn how other creatives approach assignments and express personal visions. News items, well, no one likes to be out of the loop, so I enjoy catching up on members' updates.

**Rick Antolic:** Maybe I'm just really obsessive compulsive, or anal, or whatever term you care to use, but I tend to read the PSI from cover to cover, in the order in which the sequences appear. I don't jump to a certain spot, and then backtrack. The first thing I read is Anni's introduction; it's kind of like watching the previews on a dvd before the main feature starts! It's also short. My favorite part of PSInside is something we've been doing ever since our man **Ron Magnes** turned the newsletters from photocopied print-outs to the wonderment of digital spectacles—looking at what our members are working on or have recently finished. I think that aspect of our newsletters really makes me feel connected with other members more than anything else. As I'm plowing away at my art in solitude,

along comes the new issue of PSInside, and I see that I'm not the only one who had been drawing or painting pictures! It's not just a common membership that connects us, it's the thing that we all do that connects us, though the styles and subjects vary.

Overall, the best part of PSInside, is that there is not one weak element in the issues. All the features, the little odds and ends, are all relevant and/or entertaining. Like most members, if not all, once I'm done making my way through the new issue, I'm already looking forward to the next one!!

**Mary Dunn:** My Spot by **Anni Matsick** first, because it gives an overview of what is coming up and a general run-down of what is in the newsletter. That way I get to focus on some of the special pieces inside. My next section is in regard to the members and their accomplishments. I love to hear about what others are doing and I enjoy perusing their works. Last, I like to see the new members in the group. I always appreciate when they have a web site and I can look at their work. It is inspiring for me as I consider myself more of an artist than an illustrator. However, I would like to learn more about illustration and how it is accomplished. Illustrators are artists as well, but their detail is what is so amazing to me. Illustration is the foundation to a good painting.

**Pat Lewis:** I usually read the newsletter in order, front to back, holding off on Behind the Brush until last. That feature always has the most to digest and I like to save that until I have enough time to really consider the members' answers and how they fit with my own thoughts and experiences as an illustrator.

**Anne Trimble:** I always read the PSInside from cover to cover as soon as it's available. I especially enjoy seeing new projects by our many talented members, and I'm always inspired by the interviews. It's great to get to know individual artists, their background, quirks, and inspiration.

**Johann Wessels:** I read the newsletter from start to finish as it's the only information I really get about fellow PSI members (apart from some Facebook chatter). I just consume the whole thing and try and get to know everyone better.

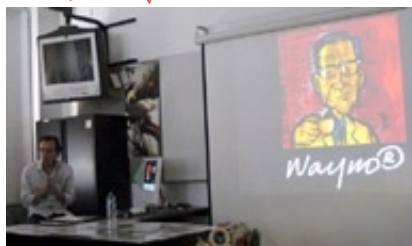


## Question OTM continued

**Katie Koenig:** When I open the PSInside newsletter, I typically read News Flashes first. I really like to see images members have worked on and to read about the destination of those images, whether they are featured in a gallery exhibit, entered in a competition, or end up being sold for a cover of a magazine. As an illustration rookie, it helps me to see the work and exposure that my peers are getting, enabling me to start thinking of ways to establish myself in my career.

Of course, reading the Interview each month really helps me to understand how the careers of some very successful artists have unfolded. The interviews also allow me to get to know my fellow members by reading about them and I thoroughly enjoy that part of it.

**Wayno:** I always go to the illustrator interview/profile before reading anything else in the PSI newsletter. I enjoy learning more about fellow PSI members and seeing photos of them in their workspaces. But, to be honest, the first thing I look for is whatever I submitted that month!



**Mark Bender** invited **Wayno** to speak to his Advanced Illustration class at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, in August. Students from several classes and AIP faculty also attended, making for a full house! (Photo by Jessica Heberle)

## FUN LINKS



*F is for Fail*, a short film about the creative process by Brent Barson:

[website](#)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Tri-Regional SCBWI Fall Conference Gettysburg, November 11-13

Registration is open for *Roads to Publication*, the tri-regional Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) conference set for November 11-13 at the Wyndham Hotel in Gettysburg. Western Pennsylvania region will combine with Eastern Pennsylvania region and Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia region for this year only, resuming its Fall Conference in Greentree for 2012. The event includes a long slate of notable speakers, including several of particular interest to illustrators:

**E.B. Lewis** has illustrated over 50 picture books. He studied at Temple University Tyler School of Art where he found his preference of medium was watercolor. He taught art in public schools for 12 years and currently teaches at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Lewis' long list of awards include the 2003 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award for *Talkin' About Bessie*, two 2009 Coretta Scott King Honor Awards for *The Bat Boy and His Violin* and *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, and a 2005 Caldecott Honor for *Coming On Home Soon*.

**Lindsay Barrett George** is widely recognized for her striking illustrations of animals, birds, and fish in their habitats. She is the author-illustrator of *Maggie's Ball*; *Alfred Digs*; *The Secret*; *Inside Mouse*, *Outside Mouse*; *In the Garden: Who's Been Here?*; and four other *Who's Been Here?* titles.

**Chad Beckerman** is art director and cover designer for Abrams Books for Young Readers and Amulet Books and Abrams ComicArts.

Portfolio reviews are available at \$40.

New this year is First Looks—like First Pages, but for artists! Faculty will be reviewing a limited number of illustrations in a slideshow. Guidelines:

- Please submit three related—and preferably consecutive, as in a story—illustrations.
- Electronic submissions only; images should be saved in .jpeg format, at 72 dpi, 10" maximum on a side.

- Do NOT put your name on the illustrations.
- Email your images no later than November 1 to: Susan Detwiler at [susandetwiler@comcast.net](mailto:susandetwiler@comcast.net) and put FIRST LOOK in the subject line.
- Any questions can also be directed to her by email.



Western PA region attendees will receive the 2011 Lapel Pin designed by **Anni Matsick**. The first one distributed in 2010 was designed by **John Hinderliter**. **Nora Thompson** will

attend as Illustrators Coordinator for the WPA region. For full details, to register online or download an application: [www.scbwieasternpa11.camp7.org](http://www.scbwieasternpa11.camp7.org)

### SRU Exhibit Update

**June Edwards** thanks members who are participating and invites everyone to attend the *Exhibit of PSI Artists* at Slippery Rock University.

Opening Reception: Tuesday, October 4th, 5-7 pm. Please let June know if you will be able to attend by replying to [june.edwards@sru.edu](mailto:june.edwards@sru.edu)

The exhibit closes on Friday, October 28.

Martha Gault Art Gallery, 102 Maltby Center (at the corner of Maltby Drive and Campus Drive), Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock. Gallery Hours: M-F noon-5 pm.

Illustration: John Hinderliter



### Weekly Figure Sessions

South Arts building  
[www.southartspgh.com](http://www.southartspgh.com)

Wednesdays, 7-9 pm **\$10.00**

No instruction, just a group of talented folks working in whatever medium they like. It's a casual, friendly group with music playing while they work.

## BEHIND THE BRUSH

### See what members are working on this month...

Here's an interior of a musical card for American Greetings, done by **George Schill**.



**Vince Dorse** sent this report with his artwork: "I was given a tight deadline for this piece. One night to finish the pencils, after which they waited a week and said, 'Ok, ink it and color it by tomorrow morning.' Which is fine. Because I'm a pro. And I didn't have to letter it, thank goodness."

It's going to appear in the Gameday Magazine during five Steelers home games. I couldn't negotiate printed credit, but I managed to squeeze my signature into the bottom panel. That's just another example of the kind of crack marketing I do and why I obviously can't afford heat this winter.



There's a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) where you can suggest your own ending to the story

and, if I didn't annoy the ad agency too much with my whining, I'll get to draw the conclusion as well. I'm kind of hoping the winning entry says, 'Troy decides to avoid all the trouble at the stadium and, instead, has a tea party with talking bears in a magical woodland setting.' Because, frankly, I know nothing about sports and a whole lot about talking bears."

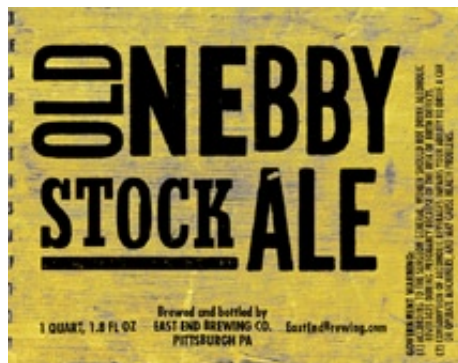
**Jim Zahniser** sent this recent piece done for himself of a character named Chloe from a freelance job he did a few years ago. He is hoping to do a series of related drawings of her.



Jim advises: "Starbucks on Carson Street offers wall space for artists, and I have my Icons portraits there until the end of October. I sold two already."

Jim also created a Facebook page for his freelance business. If interested, click to "like" Red Robot Design & Illustration.

Here is **Wayno's** Old Nebby label art for the latest hand-bottled beer from East End Brewing Company.



This poster for **PIX** (The Pittsburgh Indie Comics Expo) was done by **Wayno**, who will be a guest there, selling books, prints and sketches.



He has almost completed another set of cartoons for his second run as guest cartoonist in Dan Piraro's daily comic Bizarro. They haven't scheduled the exact publication date yet.

**Dave D'Incau's** art appeared recently in Bicycle Times magazine.



continued on page 14



## BEHIND THE BRUSH *continued*

**Anne Trimble** just completed an 8' x 4' mural depicting American military conflicts between 1847 and 1916 for a cowboy reenactment event.



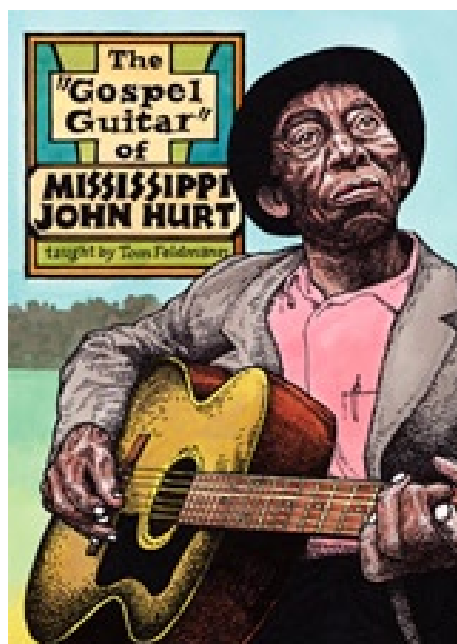
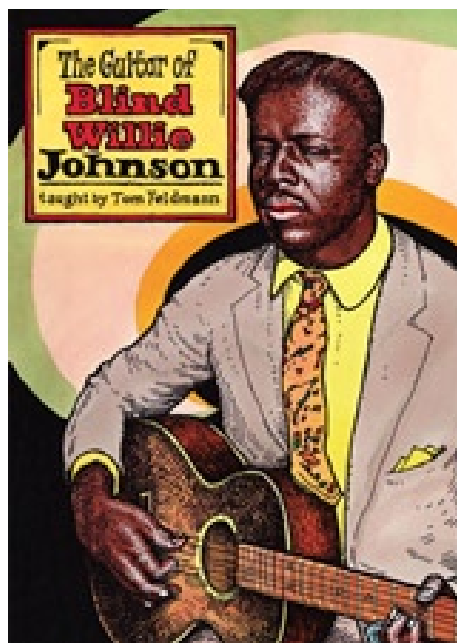
Here is new work **Terrelle Lewis** would like to share. The intriguing titles are "B. Rabbit vs. Lotto," "New Shoes," and "Racial Profilin."



The next portrait in **Fred Carlson's** series for Philips-Exeter Academy is PEA alumnus General Krulak, former commandant of the Marine Corps, Joint Chiefs member under Bill Clinton, and now college president at Birmingham Southern College. Fred's three DVD covers for



PSInside in sketch form, and here are the finished painted versions.



Guitar Workshop taught by slide phenom Tom Feldmann have been produced. These featuring Blind Willie Johnson, Mississippi John Hurt were earlier seen in

**John Blumen** calls this latest sample image for his ongoing marketing effort "Long Live the Queen." John says, "If the queen looks somewhat familiar It's due to **Jane Popovich** generously offering her time to be my model and muse."



**Brad Blahnik** has been working on this image of a singing bird.

