

Friday Morning Happy Class

Spotlight On Art



Cynthia Berresse Ploski

Special to the Chronicle

Imagine a college classroom with coffee brewing next to a buffet of treats, a dozen people chatting and listening to music, a place where a grandma can even invite her

grandchildren to visit for a morning of fun.

This class bears no resemblance to memories of my own college days, when tart-tongued professors handed out nasty pop quizzes, and late night hours studying for dreaded finals were fueled by revolting instant coffee made with tepid tap water. Nevertheless, this airy room on the 3rd floor of TSJC's Berg Building is every bit as much a place of learning as those in those not-so-good old days of the last century.

In my head, the resident truth dragon drools out a time worn maxim: "Learning is tastier when it's fun!" Making it tastier for adults in the Trinidad area is one of the objectives of Trinidad State Junior College. Much praise to TSJC for its Community outreach, a rich resource

available to all.

The delicious elixir of learning is why every Friday morning "Painting for Pleasure" students gather in that third floor classroom under the wise tutelage of artist Amanda Thompson to study how to solve the challenges of making works of art.

This class is one of the many Continuing Education courses that can be taken either on a credit or non-credit basis. Only three of Amanda's students are receiving college credit. The majority are doing it simply for enjoyment and camaraderie.

I say enjoyment, but those who have never tried to paint don't realize the challenges of assembling elements of line, color, form, light and shadow, perspective, etc., into meaningful harmony on a flat piece of paper or canvas, with a brush, a pastel stick or a finger tacky with sticky bun.

To help them sort it all out is the function of teacher/mother-hen Amanda, passing among her chicks with a wise eye and empathetic direction, pointing out solutions and offering praise and encouragement.

Her students range from beginners who have never painted before to professionals whose art may

be seen in local galleries. Most of the class members work in watercolor, but others use pastels, acrylics or oils.

This diversity of media produces a rich variety of art, all of which is placed in the front of the room for helpful critique near the end of the morning's work. In that way the students benefit from supportive observations and suggestions from the many points of view of other students.

The public is invited to see and purchase finished pieces at each semester's art show in the College library, along with the work from all classes in the art department and artworks created by faculty members. This semester's show is tentatively scheduled for the end of April through graduation week.

Check the "Fine Print" notices in *The Chronicle-News* for specific times and dates as the event approaches.

For information about this class or any TSJC art courses, contact Doug Holdread, chairman of the TSJC Art Department at 719-846-5563 or doug.holdread@trinidadstate.edu

Meanwhile, you are welcome to drop in any Friday morning and see the students in action. You might be tempted to pick up a brush and launch a new career.



Donna Litt (left) and Rhonda Johnson (right) encourage Rhonda's daughter Lace and grandsons Caylor and Caleb to learn watercolor techniques. (Photos courtesy of Cynthia Berresse Ploski)



Paul Diaz paints one of his series of dragons.



Deb Bernhardt shows her Stonehenge painting to Julie Lopez.



Emmie Kleinbach pours mineral spirits for her oil painting.



Paul Diaz shows some of his paintings.

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