



PLEIN AIR PAINTERS OF NEW MEXICO



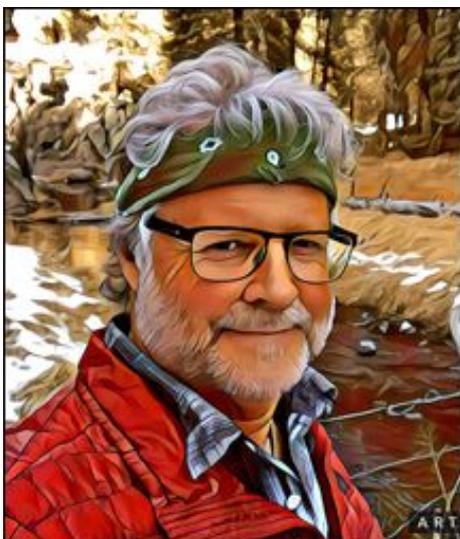
PAPNM

2018 Newsletter 1st Qtr

President's Message

It seems like we just celebrated the New Year a couple of days ago, and yet we are already nearly 1/6th of the way through 2018! Where has the time gone? Well, our volunteers have used some of it getting the year off to a great start for PAPNM.

We began 2018 with a full complement of nine Board members and more volunteers in place than ever before! We are trying to take advantage of this energy and excitement by attending to some long-needed housekeeping to make things run more smoothly. Hopefully, putting in the extra work early in the year will allow us a lot of time to socialize and paint during the prime painting season, and will make it much easier for members to step into volunteer roles in the future.



We have many big plein air events happening this year in New Mexico. In chronological order, first up is the national Plein Air Convention and Expo (PACE), to be held at Buffalo Thunder Resort outside of Santa Fe, in mid-April. They expect to host 900-1400 plein air painter attendees from all over the world this year! PAPNM will have a vendor's table at the convention to meet people, recruit members, and provide information on painting in New Mexico, from the local point of view. We are designing our table to be as self-serve as possible, but plan to have our members help provide a friendly face, as often as we can. Unfortunately, since it will be within the paid convention area, any table sitters must be paid convention attendees. If you

are attending the convention and are willing to donate an hour or two of the convention week to help us sit the table, we would love to have you join us. Please email me at meister1@comcast.net and I will add you to the list of attendees to receive more information. Be sure to check out the April/May Issue of Plein Air Magazine to see PAPNM's multi-page advertising in the special section on Painting New Mexico. The publisher

plans to print 3000 extra copies of this section to hand out at the convention. Our advertisement promotes our upcoming PAPNM Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta, occurring two weeks after the PACE convention.

Speaking of PAPNM's Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta (SFPAF)... it's back this year at the end of April! PAPNM will host 51 juried artists from all over the country for this week-long event. Santa Fe's Sorrel Sky Gallery will graciously host our exhibition of paintings that will open at the end of the painting week and run through May. We will have advertising in the May issue of Southwest Art Magazine to promote this exhibition, as well as the earlier mentioned ad in Plein Air Magazine. Watch the website and paint-out announcements for information on where the SFPAF sponsored paint-outs will be held during the event. We encourage ALL members to join the juried painters for the paint-outs. Thank you to co-coordinators [Alma Rosa Delgado](#) and [Jane Chapin](#) for organizing this event!

In mid-September, thanks to coordinator [Marilyn Wightman](#), PAPNM will have a Non-Juried Members Paint-out and Show at the Fuller Lodge Art Center, in Los Alamos. Then, in early November our 10th Annual Juried Members Show will return to Sorrel Sky Gallery, in Santa Fe. We are still looking for a coordinator(s) for this event. Please contact me if you would like to step up to this task. One of last year's coordinators, [Lee MacLeod](#), knows the skinny and will assist in an advisory role. Thanks Lee!

Sprinkled throughout the year, we will have paint-outs around the state, thanks to our paint-out coordinator [Laverne Bohlin](#), and four seasonal online plein air painting contests, thanks to [Karen Halbert](#), who is coordinating those this year.

As you can see, 2018 will find New Mexico buzzing with outdoor painting activity! Isn't it a great time to sharpen a pencil, grab a stick of pastel, or get a brush wet and join us outside?

Our web team is second to none and the PAPNM Website at papnm.org is full of helpful information on all our happenings and member benefits, as is the PAPNM Newsletter which you are reading now, thanks to our editor, [Tom Blazier](#). On a personal note, I would also like to thank Tom for entrusting me with PAPNM, after his excellent service as its President last year!

To all of you, if I can help you get more involved with PAPNM activities, in any way, please feel free to contact me through my member contact information found on the website. Have a great year en plein air!

Cheers!

— [John Meister](#)

PAPNM Announcements and Member News

Mark your calendar for the Members Non Juried Paintout & Show

Los Alamos and surrounds is the location of the 2018 Members Non Juried Paintout & Show September 14,15, and 16. You'll love the vistas and terrain that is available to paint in this area. Participants will select their best work to hang in [Fuller Lodge Art Center's Gallery](#) with a "meet the artist" reception on Sept 22. Volunteers are needed to help with the event. Contact [Bob Santandrea](#) or [Marilyn Wightman](#).



PAPNM members make plein air expo faculty list

Congratulations to PAPNM members Joe Anna Arnett, Damien Gonzales, Albert Handell, Karen Ann Hitt, Jane Hunt, Peggy Immel, Margi Lucena, Meridee Mandio, Susan McCullough, Lee McLeod, Mike Simpson, Susie Hyer and Clive Tyler who will be among the faculty presenters at the 7th Plein Air Convention and Expo in April. See the [PACE Artists and Speakers page](#) for the complete list of faculty and bios.



Three PAPNM members to participate in studio tour

PAPNM artists [Janet Amtmann](#), [Bob Santandrea](#) and [Marilyn Wightman](#) will be among the more than 90 artists (and 60 studios) who will participate in the 27th Annual Eldorado Studio Tour May 19 - 20 in Santa Fe. Download the brochure and tour map pdf [here](#)



2018 Santa Fe **PLEIN AIR FIESTA**

Sorrel Sky Gallery | 125 W. Palace Ave. | Santa Fe, NM



BEST OF SHOW | RICHARD ABRAHAM | "Approaching Storm"

PAINT OUT DATES

April 28 - May 2, 2018

SHOW DATES

May 4 - 18, 2018

OPENING RECEPTION

May 4, 5-7:30 pm



For more information visit: PAPNM.org or SorrelSky.com

Congratulations to the 51 artists who will participate in the 2018 Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta. A directory of artist participants is on the PAPNM website: <https://www.papnm.org/page-1860510>. See general information and show calendar on the PAPNM website. All PAPNM artists are invited to paint along with the event participants.



Members needed to help with PAPNM events and media

Volunteers are needed to assist with the 2018 Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta. Contact [Alma Rosa Delgado](#) or [Jane Chapin](#).

Two coordinators are needed to organize the PAPNM 10th National Juried Members Show. Most of the heavy lifting for this year's event has already been done. Sorrel Sky Gallery in Santa Fe has agreed to reprise its role as host for the November event, and advertising has already been planned. Last year's coordinators, Lee MacLeod and Cecilia Robertson, have created a "How To" guide for organizing and have agreed to help volunteers learn the ropes. To volunteer, contact [Susan Vigil](#). If you have questions about the position, contact [Lee MacLeod](#).

Use your writing, editing and design talents and skills to help produce the PAPNM newsletter.

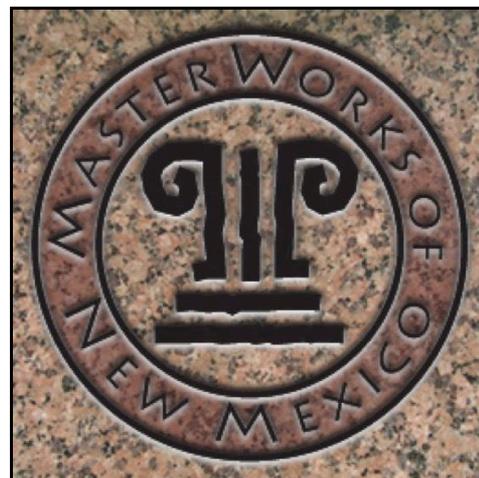
Publishing the quarterly newsletter is a fun and creative activity. Editor Tom Blazier is looking for assistance in selecting stories, writing and editing and designing (or any combination of these) the newsletter. If this announcement resonates with your inner journalist, please contact [Tom Blazier](#).

FYI: Social media guru needed for PAPNM Facebook pages, Twitter and (?). LOL Our pages need someone who is talented and willing to manage and create, as needed, the various organizational social media. If you would love to maintain social media pages, that would be "awesome" ... IMHO. MTFBWY. Contact [Anita Blythe](#).



April event is largest annual exhibition of 2-D works by NM artists

Plan to see PAPNM members whose works will be exhibited in this year's [MasterWorks of New Mexico](#), the largest annual juried show of 2-D artwork produced by New Mexico artists. Now in its twentieth year of exhibition, the show will feature oils, watercolors, acrylics, pastels, pencil and ink drawings as well as a separate miniatures exhibition, all under one roof. Masterworks of New Mexico is in fact four separately juried shows, which are hung together after judging and the awarding of ribbons and prizes. The annual event exhibits April at Expo New Mexico in the Hispanic Arts Building. The Opening Ceremony and Preview will be Friday, March 30, 2018, 5 - 8 p.m. at the show venue. The show will remain open to the public April 1 - April 21, 10 am - 5 p.m., except Mondays and Easter. There is an Open House/Artist Paint-in April 8th and numerous other scheduled events throughout the month including workshops in most media, artist demonstrations, educational events and other presentations.





Rowe Mesa, 11"x14", pastel, by Janice St. Marie is headed to Masterworks of New Mexico.

Gallery at Abiquiu Inn to host solo show for Janice St Marie

[Janice St. Marie](#) will have paintings represented in two shows this spring, one in Abiquiu and the other in Albuquerque. A solo exhibition of her work will be in Galleria Arriba, the upstairs gallery of the [Abiquiu Inn](#), 21120 US-84 Abiquiu, NM. The show will be in May with an opening reception, 4-6 p.m. May 12. Consider taking a day trip to the Ghost Ranch area that Saturday and popping in to the gallery for the opening reception, refreshments, and homemade chocolate chip cookies afterward. To get to the Abiquiu Inn from Santa Fe: Take US-84 W/US Hwy 285 North and follow to Abiquiu Inn, on the right, about 48 miles. Janice will also have a large work exhibited March 30-April 21 in [Masterworks of New Mexico 20th Annual Fine Arts Show](#) in the Hispanic Arts Building, Expo New Mexico, Albuquerque. Opening Reception and Awards Presentation is 5-8 p.m. March 30. Hours are daily, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (closed Mondays and Easter).



Invitation open to paint in North Pole, Fairbanks

[Anne Aleshire](#) will be spending her summer in Fairbanks, Alaska again this year. If anyone is traveling to Alaska and is in need of a painting fix they can email her at anne@annealeshire.com. Anne says her favorite months in Fairbanks are June and September. Some years can be rather rainy. A good resource for more info is ALASKA.ORG | Alaska Vacations & Travel Advice from Trusted Alaskans: <http://www.alaska.org>.

Anne and her husband, Charles, will be staying at their home in North Pole this summer. They have one guest bedroom and an art studio set up in another room.

"There are many local painting locations, but a vehicle is a must as there is only limited bus service in Fairbanks/North Pole," says Anne. "Keep in mind that Fairbanks is in the interior of Alaska with rolling hills, as green as it is brown during the New Mexico winter."

The [Fairbanks Watercolor Society](#) has local paintouts in July and August the third Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. They also organize a Labor Day paintout. The location is to be determined, but most likely will be Trappers Creek, which is 245 miles from Fairbanks.

Plein Air Painters of Alaska are active in the Anchorage area. They can be found on [Facebook](#).



Exhibition and sale to showcase works by Depy Adams

Depy Adams will have a solo show at Jemez Fine Art Gallery, 17246 Hwy 4, Jemez Springs, NM from April 20 to May 3. The opening reception of the show will be April 21 from 1 pm to 4 pm. The gallery is located just south from the village of Jemez Springs and is open Tuesday-Sunday 11 am to 5 pm. Depy is moving to Amelia Island, Florida this summer and is using this opportunity to display some of her Southwest landscape paintings that she has produced during her twelve years living in New Mexico. There are plein air and studio paintings in the collection. Depy will have pastel, gouache, and oil paintings in the show and is doing special pricing for many of them for the duration of the exhibit. She will be at the gallery most days. The gallery phone number is 575-829-3340.



Taos Blues, 9" x 27", pastel, by Nancy Silvia will be in the Pastel Society of New Mexico National Show.

Artwork by Nancy Silvia to exhibit in three spring shows

Paintings by [Nancy Silvia](#) will seem ubiquitous this spring with three shows: Pastel Society of New Mexico National Show, Masterworks of New Mexico and at Canyon at Palace Fine Art. The PSNM show opens March 2 at Sorrel Sky Gallery, 125 W. Palace Avenue in Santa Fe. Opening reception for the PSNM National Show is Friday, March 2nd, 5 to 7 p.m. Two of Nancy's pastels will be shown in the MasterWorks of New Mexico show during April at the Hispanic Arts building at EXPO in Albuquerque. Opening reception for MasterWorks is Friday March 30th, 5 to 8 pm. She will also show new work from May 21 until June 4th at Canyon at Palace Fine Art,



Host housing needed for 2018 Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta

If you, or someone you know, would like to graciously open your house to a participant artist during the Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta 2018, please contact [Alma Rosa Delgado](#) for details. Out-of-state participants and participants from the far reaches of New Mexico will especially need a place to stay while attending the event. The time period may vary within the period from the last week in April to the first week in May.



Notice of member passing

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of PAPNM member [Jeanine Christman-Handell](#). Condolences have been sent to Jeanine's husband and PAPNM member Albert Handell.



Paintout opportunities abound this spring

With the exception of a few cold days, paintout participation has been up due to mild temperatures, no moisture and sunny days this winter. Many thanks to the hardy souls who braved the chilly weather for the Michael Chesley Johnson demo. The large turnout was greatly appreciated by Michael!

April's Plein Air Convention and PAPNM's Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta will offer numerous paintout opportunities. The paintouts in conjunction with the Santa Fe Plein Air Fiesta will be sent in a separate email blast to members. Regularly scheduled PAPNM paintouts will be listed under the paintouts section on our [website](#). Follow the directions in the box.

Ready for spring? Daylight Savings Time begins March 11! Celebrate the return of longer days at a sunset paintout located at Elena Gallegos Picnic Area in Albuquerque. The "Winter Wonderland" contest ends March 10 and the "Spring" contest begins March 22. Look for the "return of color" with paintouts at the Santa Fe Botanical Garden and Lenora Curtin Wetlands.

Paint the 360 degree views at the Placitas Open Space Saturday, March 24. There are beautiful views of the Jemez and Sandia Mountains along the loop road. Afterward, join other PAPNM members for lunch at the funky Placitas Café.

Looking ahead, Carla Forrest's demonstration on setting up her SUV as a tailgate painting studio has been rescheduled for Saturday, June 23. Plan on starting the morning with a 10 a.m. tailgate potluck brunch before the demo begins. After the demo, stay all day to paint the spectacular scenery at Lower La Cueva Canyon in Albuquerque.

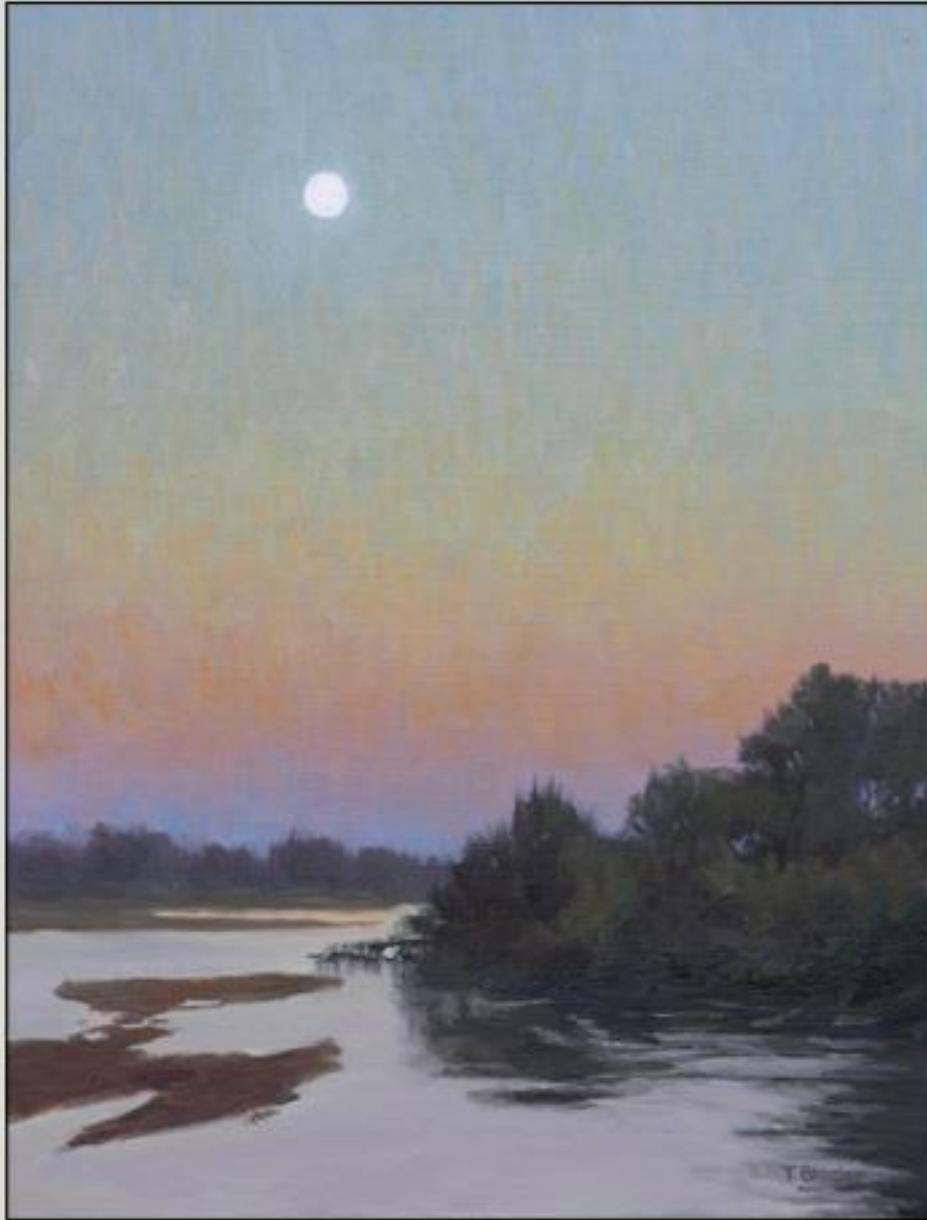
Thank you to members who have graciously offered to demonstrate, host a paintout or have suggested a new paintout site. If you are interested in hosting or know of a new location, please contact Lynnett Fink or Laverne Bohlin through the PAPNM website. Happy painting!

How to attend a paintout:

- You must "log in" with your user name and password to access the paintout page.
- After logging in, look for the box in the upper left hand corner that is labeled "Paintout".
- Click on that box to access the PAPNM Member Paintouts page.
- View the scheduled paintouts by clicking on the "Calendar".
- Choose the upcoming paintout you would like to attend, click the red "Register" box and follow the prompts.

If you would like to get in touch with other participants, you can contact them by clicking on their name which will be listed on the "Registered Attendees" page.

Keep in mind that not all paintouts are hosted and are rarely cancelled. If you would like to know if a scheduled paintout is cancelled, contact the paintout coordinator, Laverne Bohlin, through the PAPNM website or at 630-809-1839.



NOCTURNE

AN OIL PAINTING CLASS • TOM BLAZIER

5:30 - 8:30 p.m. Thursdays, April 5 - May 24
New Mexico Art League, Albuquerque, NM

Register online at www.newmexicoartleague.wildapricot.org



Four online contests slated for 2018

Artist Members, Signature Artists and Master Signature Artists are invited to participate in the PAPNM plein air online contests. There is no entry fee! There will be a contest during each of the four seasons and are titled as follows: *Winter Wonderland*, *Signs of Spring*, *Cloud Appreciation Day* and *Color Passages*. Suggested locations are paintouts as given on the Paintout Calendar page, although participants may paint any place of their choosing. See the [Online Contest Calendar](#) page for details.

One painting may be submitted for each contest. PAPNM members will vote for their favorite painting after each painting period. The name of the contest indicates the expected theme of the submitted painting.

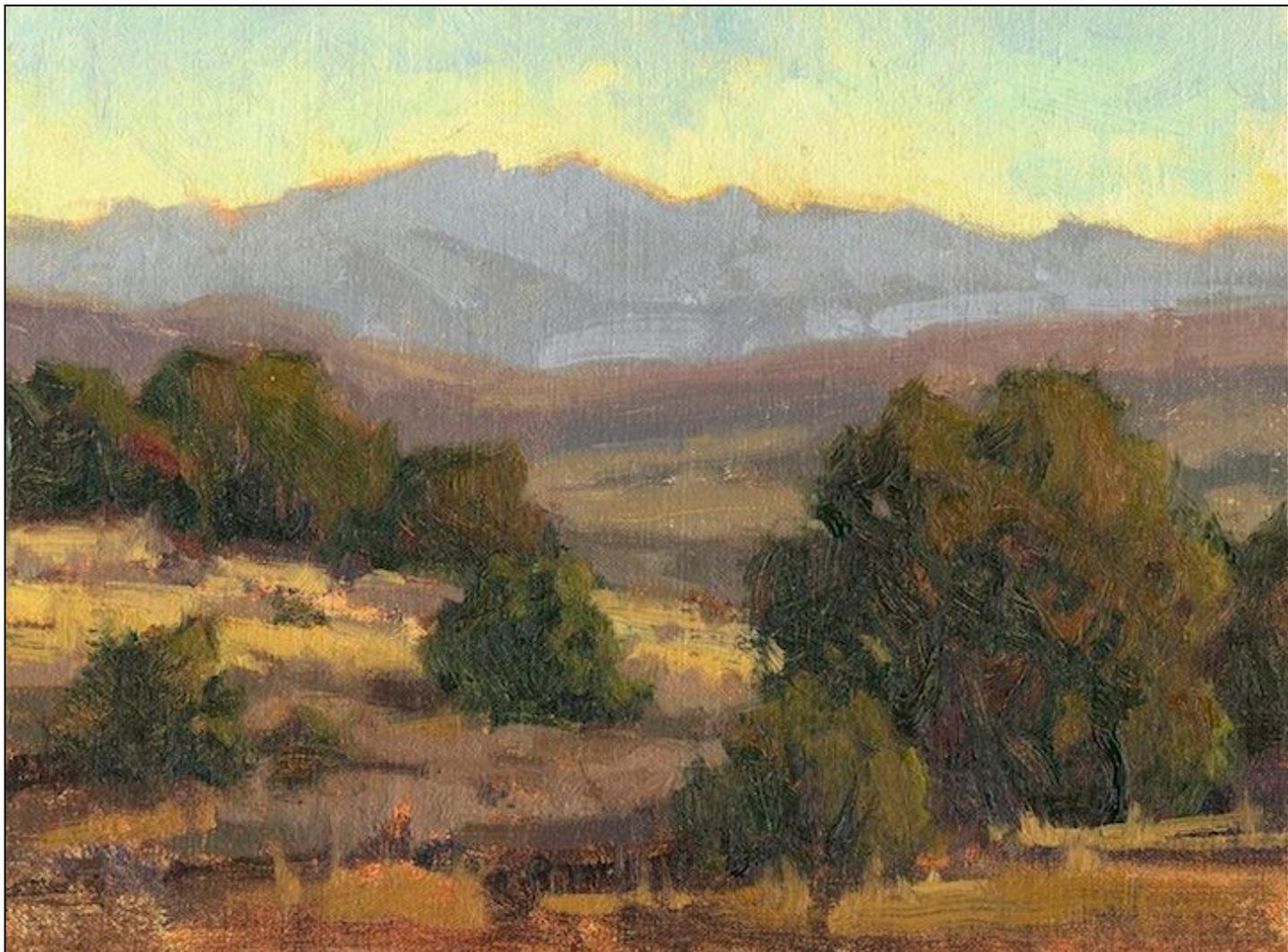
Benefits of entering the contest:

- The winner receives a prize - art magazine subscription or art book (to be announced as the contest ensues).
- A contest album of submitted images is kept on the website.
- The winning image is displayed on the PAPNM home page for a month, and until the next contest winner is chosen, displayed on the Contests page.

For those of you who were fortunate enough to find some winter painting subject matter, this is a reminder that the Winter Wonderland Online Contest entry deadline is March 10. See the PAPNM website [Winter Wonderland page](#) to upload your entry.

Mark your calendars for the Signs of Spring online contest, the painting period of which begins March 22. See details on the [PAPNM website Signs of Spring online contest page](#).

— [Karen Halbert](#)



Ribbons of Light, oil, by Cecilia Robertson

Santa Fe artist Cecilia Robertson hits her stride

By [Chris Miller](#)

In January 2017, Santa Fe artist [Cecilia Robertson](#) stood in the southern California desert near Borrego Springs watching the early morning light turn golden as it massaged the surrounding hills, creating a wonderful play of light and shadows. The palm trees and creosote sparkled in the light, creating rich colors. Taking in this natural symphony were fellow artists, also entranced with the scene as they worked quickly to capture on canvas the magnificence before them.

It was perhaps Cecilia's best and most memorable moment as a plein air painter. And it was a far cry from her worst experience plein air painting several years ago near Ouray, Colorado. On that day, frustrated after looking unsuccessfully for a good place to paint, she and her painting buddy set up their easels close to a dirt road that soon filled with horse trailers and off-road vehicles, spewing dust. And then biting black flies swarmed them.

But back to her best day of plein air painting near Borrego Springs, California.

"I was surprised to see the quality of the color and light. It was gold and glittery," she said. "And there were bunches of colors as the light hit the palm trees and the creosote on the ground."

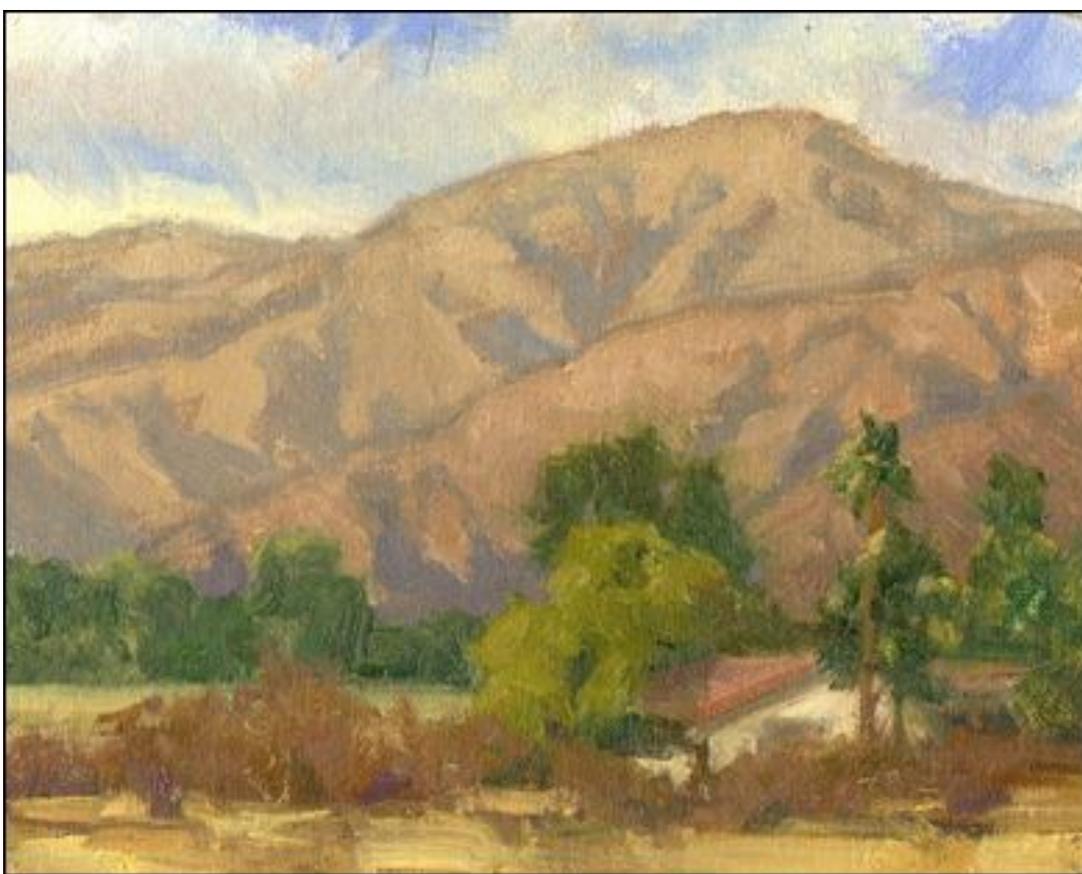
And then it got even better.

(New Mexico artist) Lee MacLeod saw five male, bighorn sheep munching on ocotillo that sprouted overnight after a welcome rainfall. "We enjoyed the presence of these guys all morning," Cecilia said.

Cecilia, who has lived and painted in oils full time in Santa Fe since 2012, said plein air painting is a fundamental part of her painting life. "It's important in terms of the information I get and because of the pleasure it brings me. I just love to be outdoors." Combining painting and the outdoors, she said, "is like Christmas to me."



Cecilia Robertson



Borrego Cityscape, oil, by Cecilia Robertson

But like many established artists, Cecilia is humble when it comes to describing the results she gets from plein air painting. She said she's delighted to get a finished, possibly frameable painting while plein air painting, but that's not her only goal. Producing a quality study based on close observations of the motif and striving to capture the colors and values is the most important thing, she said.

"I usually try to give myself a chance at getting a completed painting most times I paint outside, but I don't want to do that in place of getting accurate information in terms of color and value," Cecilia said. "So, many many times I fail to get

anything worthy of display but might come away with decent reference material for a studio piece. And there are times when I shift my attitude and expectations and intentionally don't try to get a finished piece, but instead will slow way down and go for accurate color notes and less of a painting."

Plein air painting, she said, is an essential part of her development as an artist.

"My favorite way to work is to have a plein air study and a photograph when I paint in the studio because the information is then much more accurate when I produce a studio painting," she said. "My favorite paintings are those that I've done outdoors or those that were created from a plein air study."

Cecilia said she paints outdoors about two to four times a month, although that sometimes can increase greatly when she travels on a plein air painting trip. She often paints with longtime Santa Fe artist Bill Gallen, with whom she has been "sweethearts" for five years. She also occasionally paints with other artists from New Mexico and nearby states. "One of the great benefits of plein air painting has been the friendships it has fostered," she said.

As with many artists, Cecilia's road to becoming a full-time artist began with a childhood interest in art. But whether it was the influence of her parents, who viewed the career of an artist as very competitive and unstable, concerns from other adults, or her own fear of becoming the proverbial starving artist, she opted to pursue another passion that gradually developed in her mid- to late 20s.

While working at a psychiatric hospital in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, believing she would become a nurse, she said she fell in love with mental health and psychology. In her late 20s she returned to school to get a graduate degree in clinical psychology. "It was a career I felt tremendous passion for and it was a good fit for me for 25 years," she said.

But art was never far from her mind. "Around age 40 a friend of mine called and said if we don't start art soon we're going to be old," she said. So she soon began taking Saturday courses in soft pastel, but remained very much a weekend painter. And she continued to work full time in Texas.



Shadow Color, oil, by Cecilia Robertson

Cecilia said she began learning how to work with oil paints in 2001. She studied with some very good Texas artists, and then was introduced to plein air painting in 2005. "I was trying to cut back on psychology work a bit to allow more time for painting, but that wasn't working out," she said. "Finally in 2012 I decided to go into art full time. I moved to Santa Fe deciding I needed to see more of the work I was attempting to create. I just love Santa Fe, the light, the landscape, and it has a wonderful artist colony."

Cecilia said she had been visiting Santa Fe for 30 years prior to her move. She loved visiting its art galleries, but was

intimidated at first since she felt each time she entered a gallery she was obligated to purchase something. An artist friend quickly disabused her of that precept.

Cecilia's career as an artist has developed considerably over the past two to three years. Among her most recent achievements is getting three paintings in the annual Plein Air Painters of New Mexico show in the fall of 2017 at the Sorrel Sky Gallery in Santa Fe, and selling two of them.

Her work also was shown at the Borrego Art Institute early this year along with the art of Bill Gallen and Lee MacLeod. Their work in the show was featured in a story in the January issue of *Southwest Art* magazine. The show included 28 pieces—a combination of plein air paintings and works completed in their studios, all derived from their visit to Borrego Springs.

"There's a very different air quality there that's kind of dusky and hazy, and it's very different compared to the clear atmosphere we're used to in New Mexico," Cecilia was quoted as saying in the magazine.

In addition, about a year ago, Cecilia became part owner of 7 Arts Gallery, 125 Lincoln Avenue, Suite 110, about a block west of the Santa Fe plaza. She shows her art there with fellow artists and owners Tom McGee and Angel Wynn, also 2-dimensional artists, and Dayna Fisk-Williams and Karen Waters, who are fiber artists.

As for her recent success as an artist, Cecilia said, "It's almost like the process of reaching critical mass. I was plodding away, but keeping up the pressure and I think the momentum just built to this point."

Besides her continued focus on her work, Cecilia gives credit for her success to participating in a critique group consisting of nine people that has met once a month for the past two years. "That supplied the momentum to bring something each month and to take seriously the feedback that I get," she said.

Also, owning and showing her art, first in a gallery on Canyon Road, and now in 7 Arts Gallery, has amplified how she views her art and its development with a more urgent need of professionalism. "Having that pressure to put things on a wall has definitely supplied a fair amount of momentum to my art," she said.

As for sales, Cecilia said they have increased over the past few years with a place to regularly show her paintings. She said she is forever gratified that people are willing to part with their hard-earned money to purchase her paintings.

Meanwhile, it's the beauty of the landscape and the opportunity to translate what she sees on canvas that compels her to continue as an artist. "I look for what grabs me. I hope to translate that emotion to the viewer in a way they can enjoy as much as I do," she said.



Grace in the Desert, oil, by Cecilia Robertson

Cecilia describes her painting style as "direct painting". She said she attempts to paint smaller paintings alla prima. "And while the larger paintings can't be alla

prima, I try to make them look like they are in the sense of immediacy and the way the paint is applied," she said. "I want texture and lively gestures in the brushstrokes. I strive for energy and I try to keep it loose."

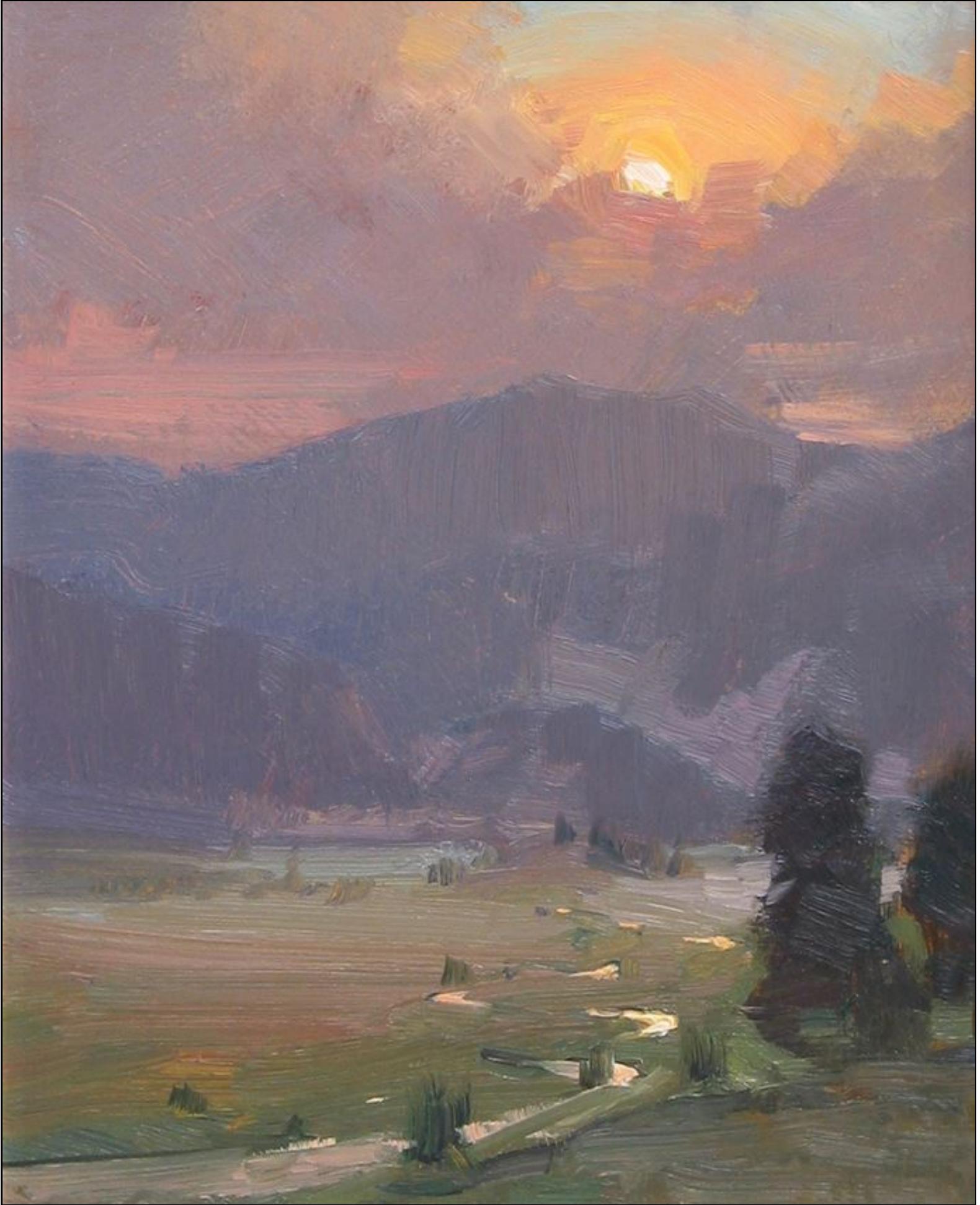
Cecilia primarily paints in New Mexico. Among her favorite places to paint are the Peñasco area with its old farms and distance mountains, and much of the area around the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico. "I love what happens with atmospheric perspective; the changes with the values, the colors."

Cecilia describes her future goals as "taking it to the wire".

"I want to take my skills as far as they can go, trying to be the best painter I can be, to paint as well as I can for as long as I can," she said.

In addition to working hard and reaching a level of professionalism with her art, Cecilia said she will never let go of the idea that art is fun. "Painting needs to be fun. It's the best form of play," she said.

[Chris Miller](#) is a regular contributor to the PAPNM newsletter.



Morraine Valley, oil, 8" x 10" by John P. Lasater

Anxieties plague trek in new painting environment

by [Jason Sacron](#)

Some years back, my best friend, [John P. Lasater](#) and I were invited to Estes Park to participate in one of our first juried invitationals. We had not really painted in such mountainous terrain before, and it was very different for us to say the least. We didn't know what to expect. Would we encounter bears? Wild Cats? Big Foot? What were we in for? Well, we arrived, and right off the bat, I stepped out of the car, lost my balance

and fell right on my toosh. Altitude...what is that? I acted like I was okay, and John and I had a good laugh.

We painted for about 10 days, and it was nice having that much focused painting time in one area. The problem was that we were so unfamiliar to painting that kind of terrain that we were uncomfortable with most of what we were creating. It was a struggle. I felt more confident about my work than John did his, having a few successful moments. John was really having a hard time of it. I thought he was doing great, but you could tell he was just eaten up by anxiety about his effort, and it was getting worse as each day passed.

During our 10 days of painting, we encountered various wildlife. I had to abandon one painting because a herd of elk sauntered right up to me while I was painting, and one individual was really interested in my palette. One night when John and I and another artist were returning to our host house after a nocturne painting session, we came upon a black bear. It spooked up a tree and the limb bent right onto the 2nd floor porch. It was almost comical. Thank goodness there was someone there with a bear whistle to scare the big guy away.

Another frustration was when I left a mark on the landscape. Somewhere out in the forest is a huge boulder with my palette of colors all over it thanks to a high gust of wind that blew over my easel. I tried like crazy to clean it all off, but it stained the rock with a rainbow of colors.

We had several other stories like this. But the one that sticks out to me on this trip actually is all about John.

After all those days of frustrating painting for John, we decided to head out to Moraine Valley Park around sunset. Not only was the sun getting lower on the horizon (a very high horizon), but storm clouds were barreling in. So I decided to be play it safe and paint about three feet from the car. John, however, proceeded up the side of a mountain. I watched as he became progressively smaller to where I could barely see him. It had to have taken 30 minutes for him just to find a perch in which to set up. And he couldn't have had more than 45 minutes painting time before it began to pour. I quickly secured my gear and scrapper (failed painting) and sat in the car. Soon afterward, John became visible through the rain and he stuffed his gear in the car. I assumed the session was a no go for him as well, so we didn't really speak about it...we just drove off.

The following day we were to turn in our competition paintings. John showed up with 10 to 15 or so paintings and lined them up along the wall trying to choose his two or three competition works. Like I said before, I thought John had done a good job with his painting. But he didn't feel the same way. Knowing John as I do, he can be very hard on himself, even with his more successful pieces. He is an artist that needs time to reflect on his work until he is comfortable showing it. I believe we all do actually, but with John, it was evident even back then.

Looking at John's work, everyone had a favorable opinion to share, including me. And all of a sudden a big fuss erupted over a little 8"x10" that John had placed over in the corner. I heard an artist say, "Why aren't you considering this one?" And everyone there agreed it was very strong. To be honest, I didn't remember seeing it before then, and I was with John when he framed it I am sure. It might of been its small size or the situation, or John's quiet humbleness about the painting ... but for what ever reason, I hadn't noticed it before that moment. It was an amazing painting to say the least! It was a moment of spontaneous genius that could only happen in a crazed chaotic situation by a sensitive and poetic hand. The painting, *Morraine Valley*, although a David among many Goliaths, not only won the Best of Show, but the coveted Artists Choice Award. If I am not mistaken it sold before the show even opened!

During the few minutes of daylight before turn in that last day, I reflected on the various challenges and travails of the past 10 days, not the least of which was my friend running up and down a steep mountain, struggling with anxiety, self doubt and the natural elements and painting on a tiny canvas. Despite all of that, John did it! I will never forget that trip!

Do you have stories to tell about your experiences painting in the out-of-doors? Email them to the newsletter editor: tblazier@hotmail.com. Write "PAPNM newsletter" in the subject line and include any accompanying photos as attachments and not embedded in Word files. (See details at the end of the newsletter.)



New Mexico Road Trip

(Part 2 of 2)

By [Chris Miller](#)

Painting the state often entails a road trip — to get photos and/or to paint plein air — and most artists have their favorite routes. This article, the second of two parts, describes one of my favorite routes for a New Mexico road trip.



Leaving Cuba, I am on Route 550 headed north. I travel about 5 miles and turn right onto State Route 96 headed toward Abiquiu Lake and the Ghost Ranch area.

The scenery along the approximately 60-mile Route 96 is incredible. I pass through the small towns of Gallina, Arroyo del Agua, Coyote and Youngsville. Farmhouses, streams lined with cottonwood trees, fields of sage and chamisa, steep colorful cliffs, rolling hills, and nearby mountains provide a dream for any landscape artist.

I pass by the Cerro Pedernal, made famous by the paintings of

Georgia O’Keeffe, and begin to see the cliffs of Ghost Ranch to the west as I approach Abiquiu Lake. Upon reaching U.S. Route 84, I turn north toward Ghost Ranch. The red and white cliffs surrounding Ghost Ranch are an artist’s delight, and a tour into the restricted part of the area takes you by Georgia O’Keeffe’s house and provides excellent views of the motifs she painted.

If time allows, I recommend traveling another 15 miles to the Benedictine Abbey of Christ in the Desert monastery along the Chama River. To get there, travel on Route 84 about two miles north of the turnoff to the Ghost Ranch Education and Retreat Center. Right after mile marker 227, there is a sign pointing left that reads “Monastery.”

Turn left and head west on U.S. Forest Service Road 151. Forest Service Road 151 is winding, steep and narrow at some points and is mostly gravel, with sections of dirt and clay. However, the drive is definitely worth the trouble. Much of the road follows the Chama River as you drive north.

On the drive south back to Albuquerque, a stop along Route 84 provides one of the most iconic views of New Mexico. The view appears when heading down the bluff from the Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu Lake areas. Park your car midway down the hill and get out to take a look at the Chama River where it makes a sharp curve from northwest to south before turning back to the northwest toward Abiquiu Lake. Looking out, to my left is a valley of lush open fields and cottonwood trees, and straight ahead the river runs through colorful cliffs with more cottonwoods lining its banks.



The route south on Route 84 includes many more wonderful areas to paint, with the Chama River valley on the east and hills and cliffs to the west. One of my favorite locations appears on the right and includes the three hills painted by Georgia O’Keeffe. While I’m fascinated with the three hills, I believe another area of hills and cliffs a few hundred yards to the north is just as beautiful, if not more so.

A couple of miles south of the outlook and just before you come to Abiquiu, the Chama River flows under the highway. A quick, short detour to the right provides a wonderful view of the river.



About 10 miles north of Santa Fe is another one of my favorite painting locations. The village of Tesuque and its surroundings offer a variety of narrow street views, interesting structures, big trees, views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and wonderful arroyos lined with juniper, sage, and chamisa. New Mexico artist Bill Gallen introduced me and potentially hundreds of other aspiring artists to the arroyos of the Tesuque area and I have dozens of paintings to prove it.

Of course, Santa Fe and the drive south from Santa Fe to Albuquerque provide many, many more motifs for painting, but I’ll leave it for you to continue to explore and find those spots. This 300-mile loop is just one of potentially hundreds of different road trips around the state just waiting to be explored and painted. Have fun doing just that!

[Chris Miller](#) is a regular contributor to the PAPNM newsletter.

after images



A dusting of snow on the Santa Rita mountains in Southern Arizona serves as backdrop for a painting by [Karen Halbert](#) who spent part of the day painting Madera Canyon in the company of Diana Stauffer recently. High winds put an abrupt end to the session, however. Karen is shown sporting her heavy duty painting apron. The photo was taken by Dianna.

About the Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Tom Blazier; Contributor: Chris Miller

The 2018 PAPNM Newsletter is published quarterly and emailed to members on the following dates: February 24 (submission deadline: February 18); May 26 (submission deadline May 20); August 25 (submission deadline August 19), November 24 (submission deadline November 18). All submissions must be emailed to the editor on, or preferably, before the deadlines listed above.

When sending announcements and other submissions, please follow these guidelines carefully:

1. Write "PAPNM Newsletter" in the subject line of the email.
2. Email submissions to Tom Blazier: tblazier@hotmail.com.
3. Include your email, phone number and web address.

Text: Please do not use tables, tabs or formatting which cannot be copy/pasted into html.

Images: When emailing photos or graphics, send 72 dpi files as attachments and NOT embedded in the email or as part of a Word document.

The editor will image photos and edit text as needed for publication. Please contact the editor if you need help preparing a submission.

Issues of the newsletter are archived in downloadable PDF files on the [PAPNM website](#).

For information, contact tblazier@hotmail.com or call 505-323-2246.

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OUR MISSION

Plein Air Painters of New Mexico was organized in 2008 as a 501(c)(6) non profit to promote and help member artists to show and sell their work and as a networking organization to promote the artists' businesses.

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Thanks to these and many other volunteers who assist with paintouts, exhibits, advertising and general help.