

A Closer Look at Three Outstanding Gualala Arts Volunteers

The special Art in the Redwoods insert enclosed with in August 18 *Independent Coast Observer* listed the many volunteers who collectively make this event more successful each year, but just listing names doesn't tell the whole story. A brief glimpse at three longtime participants can reveal how vital volunteers are to the success of the festival.

Harriet Wright

Harriet Wright has been involved with Gualala Arts at both The Dolphin and the arts center ever since she moved fulltime to her Sea Ranch home ten years ago. She has served six years on the Board, been a 2nd Vice President, and in charge of the Auxiliary, which means she has managed the docents for the exhibits all year. For Art in the Redwoods this year she was official greeter as she steered the exhibiting artists to their proper intake stations.



Throughout AIR Harriet was responsible for organizing the staffing schedules and managing the Sales Desk. A staff of thirty-five plus was on hand to assist visitors interested in purchasing the art on display. This year sales totaled \$15,271 in the first three days of the exhibit.

For Harriet the benefits of volunteering are many. She commented that she enjoys working with people and getting involved in a project. It is also a great way to know the community. She stresses that everyone is welcome and there is a job to fit every talent on any time schedule whether one is a long time resident or new to the area.

Duane Gordon

This year's winner of First Place in Watercolor and second-time winner of Best in Show, Duane Gordon started helping out when Gualala Arts was a rented space at the Gualala Airport. When tents were added to house expanded entries, he helped take down the art each evening so the dew soaked canvas didn't damage the exhibit.

Over the years he has designed the Gualala Arts logo, helped Karel Metcalf with the signage at the entrance to Gualala Arts, served on the board, and found time with his wife, Kathi, to publish the Sea Ranch quarterly newspaper, *Soundings*.



The original design by Duane Gordon.

Duane fondly recalls when the trees cut down on the grounds were milled into boards and used to construct the current arts center. He commented, "This building was paid for by the community and 80 percent built by volunteers on land donated by Gualala Redwoods." He has been less active in recent years, but still paints and has pieces for sale at Henley's Gallery in Gualala.

Lee Kosso

Lee Kosso is not sure how she got the job of hanging all the ribbons on prize-winning pieces, but thinks she inherited it from former director, Karel Metcalf, five or six years ago. She starts early on Friday morning assisting the judges who assess each of the eleven categories separately, starting with those that have fewer entries.

Once judges reach a decision on first, second and third place winners, Lee places the appropriate ribbons next to the art, then must do the judges awards, special environmental awards, Best Local Artist and Best in Show awards. It's an all day effort and one that follows a day when volunteers take in the art and more volunteers hang the show itself.

Since moving to the area in 1993 Lee has served two terms as a Gualala Arts board member, worked at the Dolphin, and has served on the Chamber Music Committee, the Membership Committee, and the AIR Exhibit Hanging Committee. She always enters the Fine Art Exhibit with her floral watercolors.

A graduate of Pratt Institute in New York, Lee had a career as a textile designer. Today that work is done on computer, but those days she sat in a room with a sketch pad and paints. Lee agrees with both Harriet and Duane that the most striking change in recent years has been the improved quality of the works presented. She thinks the beauty of the Gualala Arts Center itself is an influence.

All three commented that the show is attracting greater recognition in a broader art community. They all emphasized that this growing success must be balanced by the non-juried structure that welcomes local participants. One thing is certain, without volunteers like these three persons, Art in the Redwoods would not exist.

