

MEETING KATHI AND DUANE GORDON – VOLUNTEERS

Jane Reichhold: The first thing we want is for you to tell us about the painting you are donating to Gualala Arts that will be auctioned off at the big kick-off gala dinner to this year's Art in the Redwood festivities.

Duane Gordon: It will be a watercolor combined with ink, a technique I often use. The motif will be the Meditation Circle, sometimes called the Fairy Circle – that grove of ferns and redwood stumps behind the Arts Center. It will be framed, under glass, with a neutral wooden frame. The colors and subject matter should fit into almost any home.

JR: I am assuming that Sketches readers know you and your work, but in case someone's mind needs refreshing, where can they see your work?

DG: I always have work on exhibit at Henley Gallery in the Cypress Village in Gualala and at the Douglas Purdy Gallery in Gold Beach, Oregon. At the Gualala Arts Center are three of my paintings. Just to the right as one goes into the office is a view of the town of Gualala painted as if the observer is standing on the beach looking east at the town. It is a very accurate documentary of what the town looked like when I painted it. The other one is above the landing as one goes upstairs. Another, larger painting is in the Conference Room.

JR: I know that one! It is a very realistic up-close view of a rocky shoreline. I often choose to sit on the other side of the table during staff meetings, just so I can gaze at that picture. My mind switches from believing it is a photograph and then admiring the painterly quality of each rock. Your painting gives me endless hours of delight and pleasure, as well as lessons in handling watercolor.

DG: Thank you. I am glad my work pleases you. I also did a painting of the final view of the Arts Center when it was still only studs and foundation. By using blueprints and elevations, I imagined the building into being. That painting was given as a gift to the President of Gualala Redwoods, Inc. as a token of appreciation for their giving Gualala Arts the eleven acres for the building.

JR: So tell us why you are living up here and doing such marvelous paintings.

DG: All of my life I was in the graphics business – I was the Art Director for a studio in Los Angeles and taught design at the Art Center School. We had decided that the year our youngest child finished college we would retire to the Sea Ranch. This was in 1982 when we bought the land. Then the moratorium went into effect and we could not build. It was six years before the coastal commission and Sea Ranch got that resolved and we could build. As soon as our house was built, we moved up here full time and have never thought of living anywhere else. With my retirement came the time to do the large and involved paintings I had always wanted to do. Here was all the subject matter I needed.

JR: Along with your painting, you also did a lot of volunteering, didn't you?

DG: Yes, for years I was a volunteer for the Sea Ranch Fire Department. Kathi and I also did the newsletter, *Soundings*,

for the Sea Ranch for twenty years now. She was the editor and I did the lay-outs and production. We did 95 editions.

Kathi Gordon: The paper was started by Ginny Trumbull and when she had to give it up, we took it on. But now we are ready to pass it along to other hands.

JR: Both of you have been volunteers at Gualala Arts for years, haven't you?

KG: Yes, we were both on the hanging committee back when Art in the Redwoods was held in the hanger at the Ocean Ridge Airport. We worked with Bob Holmes, Dick and Sonja Halley and Dick Warren. When the hangers got too small, we rented a huge tent that was put up just across the tarmac.

DG: Each night we had to take down all the paintings and carry them back into the hanger because the fog would condense on the plastic wall and run down onto the works.

KG: We were among the many volunteers who helped take the plans for our own place from plans to building. I held a couple of workshops. One was for the board members on defining our goals. It was not easy to find a plan that all of us could agree on and with which we could move forward. Later after the building was started I had a workshop on landscaping the grounds. First we did a walk about just to see the spaces and get a feel for what was needed. Then we met to discuss and plan the particulars.

JR: I just recalled another piece of artwork you have given to Gualala Arts! You made the logo of the trees and paintbrush that we put on everything that comes out of our office!

DG: Yes, I designed that for a poster advertising Art in the Redwoods. When I first did it, there were no words on it. Later when it was decided that it should be used as the logo, I added the words, "Gualala Arts."

JR: In the font face "Denmark."

DG: Yes, I liked the strength and boldness of the font and yet with the rounded corners it had a softness that I wanted.

JR: Any last words you would want to say about volunteering?

KG: I find volunteering the very best way of meeting your neighbors. Each group or organization brings together a different and special group of people. You really do not know someone until you have worked with them.

DG: I feel the volunteers who deserve the most credit are the men and women who worked on the construction of this building. They did a magnificent job and such a huge one. The greater miracle is that some of them are still working to maintain the building, make repairs and upgrades like Ben Klagenberg, Walt Guenther, Art Dreyer and many others.

boom!
the dark sets free
the fireworks

haikujane