

ART ON THE HILL

July 2012, Issue 14



This issue features Michelle Stump, owner of The Harp of The Spirit Publishing Company. She was my first client when I opened my freelance writing business in 2008. She was so passionate about her work, and about making connections with other artists. It was easy to tell her story.

Art in the Hill would not exist without Michelle. Working with her taught me how rewarding it is to meet artists, find out what inspires them to create and tell their story.

Mandy Marksteiner, Editor
www.mandymarksteiner.com

Rediscovering the Magic of the Land of Enchantment

Michelle Stump reconnects with the Creative and reopens The Harp of the Spirit Publishing Company

Early in the morning Michelle Stump set out on the north side of the Pueblo Canyon Rim Trail, which starts next to the dog park near the Los Alamos Animal Shelter. She had her camera and new wide-angle lens with her and was surprised at how easy and accessible the side trail to Graduation Point was from the Canyon Rim.

Once she had hiked into the upper part of the canyon, before her was a tremendous drop and the view was just magic. The glow of the early morning sun was pink and hazy over the distant mountains.

She was looking at the vista from Graduation Point, the place where the schoolboys would go to celebrate after they graduated from the exclusive Los Alamos Ranch School back in 1917.

Stump said, "It makes you understand why Oppenheimer wanted the lab here, doesn't it?"

Stump is an award-winning photographer and digital artist with a gift for capturing pure magic with her camera. Her company, The Harp of the Spirit, is once again open for business after a two-year break. Her line of fine art greeting cards are available in Los Alamos at Uli's, located at 800 Trinity Drive, across from Smith's.

Whether she is capturing a soulful landscape, the sun shining through leaves like stained glass, or collaborating



above: Rio Grand Rift, bottom: Skyward Dreaming both by Michelle Stump

with other artists, Stump has taken an artistic approach to her business. Her first greeting card, "The Dancing Princess," was awarded honorable mention in the portraiture category at a juried show sponsored by the Imaging Professionals of the Southwest. "The Rio Grande Rift Valley," her most famous and best-selling image, captures the sprawling magnitude of the layered cliffs of the mesas outside of Los Alamos.

In 2008, she was named the Small Business Development Center's Success Client.

"We love her cards, and love to sell them," said Uli Campbell, who was the original storeowner to carry Harp

(continued on back page)

ART ON THE HILL

Seven Years in St. Lucia—What the Caribbean Taught Ryan Finn about Music



Ryan Finn, a trombone player who graduated from Los Alamos High School in 2000, recently moved back to White Rock after studying music education at Loyola University in New Orleans and teaching and performing music on the island-nation of St. Lucia in the West Indies.

People who have heard The Ryan Finn Quartet perform at the CoffeeBooth Café, The Blue Window Bistro, Buffalo Thunder, and Fuller Lodge, among other places, would easily agree that his time in the Caribbean has made him into an entertaining musician. That's because when Finn was away he learned a few important things about music.

"In the Caribbean I could see the connection between fundamental parts of music and jazz," said Finn. "The first thing that I learned is how important off-beat syncopation is in establishing the groove. The second thing is the effect of call and response. Also, I finally came to appreciate how for every style of music there is a different style of dance. When I went to music school, I always thought that music was the most important thing. But now I realize that music is often plays a supporting role to dance."

READING MUSIC VS. PLAYING BY EAR

Teaching children how to read and write music is clearly important. However, Finn found that there are a lot of musicians in the Caribbean who believe that if you read music you're not a "real musician."

"Reading music can open a lot of doors. People who can read music can learn how to play something correctly in five minutes rather than take an hour to work it out by rote," Finn said. "You can't do everything by ear in a band or orchestra. It's impossible."

On the other hand, many ensembles in the Caribbean play completely by ear.

"None of the steel pan players read music," said Finn. "It's physically difficult to read music while playing the steel pan. All the music is learned by rote and by ear. If you were to write out what they were playing it would look absurdly hard."

I asked him which is worse . . . Being able to read music but not play by ear, or being able to play by ear and not read music. My husband pointed out that asking a jazz musician that question is a bit like

(continued on back page)



The music of The Ryan Finn Quartet incorporates calypso, salsa, bossa, samba, and other caribbean elements within a jazz context. Playing with him are: Russell Scharf, trumpet; Robin Holloway, piano; Andy Zadrozny, bass; and Loren Bienvenue, drums.

These photos, by TK Thompson, were originally published in the Los Alamos Daily Post and are part of Thompson's "Faces of Jazz" show currently in the Portal Gallery at The Art Center at Fuller Lodge.

Karen Wray Fine Art Gallery and Studio

Exciting New Classes

505-660-6382
2101 Trinity Drive, Suite B-2
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

Visit www.karenwrayfineart.com
for class schedule

Home Yarn Shop
Call for an appointment!

Snowflake Cottage
Industries, Inc.

Stephanie Hagelberg
(505) 662-7335
1360 Sioux Street

Lots of knitting needles,
crochet hooks and YARN!

Upcoming Exhibition Features the Work of Two Friends who See the World Differently

NO TWO PEOPLE SEE THE WORLD THE SAME WAY.



Janice and Sheridan Brown

"Janice Parker Muir and I have been friends for a long time," said Sheridan Brown. "We've had a lot of fun going out and painting together. We see different things even when we're in the same place."

The upcoming show at the Karen Wray Fine Art Gallery, "Two-Artist Exhibition: Sheridan Brown and Janice Parker Muir," will show how two artists can have a completely different interpretation of the same view.

Join the artists at the opening reception that kicks off the exhibit on Friday, July 13, from 5–7pm. The show will continue through August 24.

"The paintings are done," Muir said, via Facebook. "Now we need to see if we can mesh our two styles together. Sheridan Brown and I are both excited about our joint show. It will be an interesting mix of animals and landscape. Hope we can figure out how to hang it."

According to Brown, the friends have often joked about collaborating on a painting where Muir (a passionate sky watcher) would paint the background and landscape while Brown (a devoted birdwatcher) would add the foreground details.

Brown said hanging their paintings in close proximity might produce the same effect: "You'll be able to imagine my birds flying past Janice's skies."

ATTRACTING HER ANIMAL SUBJECTS

Brown, who does commissions of family pets, has two chocolate labs and three cats. "I love doing animal portrait studies," she said. "They're very expressive."

But she has to work a little harder to find birds to paint.

She moved into a house where the trees were all cut down and the yard is covered in landscaping rock. In order to attract birds, she added feeders and several birdbaths. She grows bird-friendly plants, like sunflowers, that the birds to perch on. She goes to Wild Birds Unlimited to pick out foods that attract certain birds, like goldfinches (which are her favorite).

Once they're in her yard she has to move fast. She studies them to watch how they move, sketching their fine gestures and refining it in her paintings.

GROWING AS ARTISTS—TOGETHER

Although their styles are different, Brown and Muir enjoy sharing ideas and finding opportunities to grow as artists.

Together they recently attended a workshop at the Fechin Institute north of Taos, with Kim English, and artist who does high-contrast landscape work. Brown explained, "We were talking about sunsets and about how you only have a few minutes to capture a sunset. Kim came by, giving tips on how to make the clouds more intense by darkening everything else when he suddenly looked at the sunset and said, 'I've got to paint that!' He whipped out his stuff and in five minutes he painted it."

Brown has work in the Wilde/Meyer Gallery in Scottsdale, AZ, and has a BA in fine arts from the University of New Mexico in intaglio printmaking (etching). She is a signature member of The Pastel Society of New Mexico and an associate member of Women Artists of the West.

Muir is a signature member of the Women Artists of the West, the Pastel Society of the West Coast, the Pastel Society of New Mexico, and the Pastel Society of Colorado. She is also an associate member of the Oil Painters of America.

▲ Karen Wray Fine Art, Gallery and Studio is an artist-owned and operated gallery in downtown Los Alamos, New Mexico, that proudly features art created by Los Alamos artists, inspired by our spectacular surroundings. They offer painting classes taught by local artists. They're open Monday–Friday from 12–4 pm and Saturday from 12–3 pm. Call (505)660-6382 for details. Located at 2101 Trinity Drive, Suite B-2 (across the street from Ashley Pond).





The Ryan Finn Quartet perform at the CoffeeBooth Cafe, Photograph by TK Thompson.

(Ryan Finn story continued from page 2)

asking whether a zebra is black with white stripes or white with black stripes, but Finn's answer revealed an important quality of his teaching style.

He said, "In education, both skills need to come simultaneously, so one skill does not develop ahead of the other. Small children need to start out playing by ear, especially at a young age. Then, gradually, introduce written music."

Finn navigated the balance between reading and listening when he taught band, orchestra, jazz band, music theory, and private wind lessons at the St. Lucia School of Music. He said, "I tried teaching mainly by ear with a wind band in St. Lucia. The kids naturally played really sophisticated syncopated rhythms, like the stuff that they were listening to. But when we moved on to the written music they had to start with basic stuff like Hot Cross Buns. It was frustrating for them."

This fall, Finn will be teaching in three different schools in Santa Fe. His classes will include students in grades 4-12 and he will teach steel pan and concert band. His students will benefit from his experience teaching by ear. Instead of leading students to read a warm up "exercise," as some band directors do, he will teach ear training during the daily warm up by playing melodies that the students will play back, and he will tell them what notes to play to form chords.

(Michelle Stump story continued from page 1)

of the Spirit greeting cards when Stump first went into business in 2000.

For the past three years Stump worked as a contractor at Los Alamos National Laboratory. She is looking forward to refocusing on her business and her creativity. She said, "I look at art as a part of the human spirit. It's part of what mankind is."

Stop by Uli's to see the display of The Harp of the Spirit greeting cards and to buy her newest "Graduation Point" greeting card.

JANICE PARKER MUIR

.....

Los Alamos artist working in multi-media.

Signature member of the Women Artists of the West
Available exclusively at Karen Wray Fine Art Gallery
2101 Trinity Drive, Suite B-2
<http://www.jpmuirarts.com/>

GET AMAZING RESULTS FOR YOUR BODY!

Private Pilates instruction is now available at Blue Sky Pilates.

Call Mary Lutes to set up an appointment.

Mention this ad and receive 10% off your first private session.



Follow the QR code for more information or visit www.blueskypilates.com

2101 Trinity Drive, Suite G
Los Alamos, NM 87544
505-412-5762
info@blueskypilates.com