

ROYCROFT CAMPUS CHRONICLE

PUBLISHED ONCE IN A WHILE BY THE ROYCROFTERS-AT-LARGE ASSOCIATION

:: OUR MISSION ::

The Roycrofters-At-Large Association was formed over 30 years ago by a group of East Auroran's that included several descendants of the original Roycrofters, including Elbert Hubbard's granddaughter. The Roycrofters-At-Large Association, Inc. has been entrusted with educating, fostering and inspiring through the continual evolution of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

■ SUMMER 2015 ■



ROYCROFT CAMPUS CHRONICLE

Enjoying the light through the trees with Laura Wilder

By Joe Kirchmyer

If you were to visit the website and Facebook page of Roycroft Master Artisan Laura Wilder, you'd likely notice several references to enjoying and capturing the "simple life." And while her life isn't always as simple as she may like, you do tend to see a reflection of that philosophy in her work, which frequently highlights the beauty found all around us.

A resident of Rochester, N.Y., Laura found her true calling as an artist when she discovered the Roycroft way several years ago. Following is our conversation, which hopefully shines a light on the person, the artist, the past and the future.

Q: Your art often reflects nature and/or a simpler lifestyle. Is that an accurate reflection of your life as well?

A: Not really. My art is a reflection of the things I find most beautiful, but don't get enough of.



Laura Wilder

Q: The Roycrofters-at-Large Association recognizes your work in two media — printmaking (master) and painting (artisan). Very few Roycroft artisans have accomplished that feat. As an artist, are there any other talents we may not know about?

A: My daughter suggested I answer, "Yes, parkour." I probably should skip this discussion because this year I decided not to re-apply for the mark in painting, because in 2014 there wasn't time to get many new paintings done. I don't want to put the RR mark on my paintings if I'm not painting regularly. I hope to do more this year.

But being both a painter and a printmaker is common; many of the most famous painters in history were also printmakers. This may not be well known because paintings get more attention than prints. Same ability, just different tools and techniques.

Q: You dedicate a lot of time and effort to keeping the tradition of block print alive. Why is that so important to you personally?

A: Sometimes it isn't! Block printing is really hard. I burn out on it periodically and temporarily switch to painting or poster design to get a break. But I always come back to it. Possible reasons: 1) It's so thrilling when it comes out well, 2) You paint for three weeks and get one handmade piece, you make prints for three weeks and get a stack of handmade pieces, 3) It's really fun to teach block printing workshops, and no matter how much someone struggles they always end up with a great looking print. You combine a color with black on white paper, with those hard, hand-cut edges, and it's going to pop!



For a few precious weeks every year, my husband and I do get to live a simpler lifestyle when we're at our rustic country house in Vermont. The pace of our days slows way down. It is quiet. We don't have TV, internet or cell service. He does home repairs and I cook meals in a simple 1930's style kitchen. We take walks down a dirt road, through woods and enjoy mountain views. I guess I'm trying to capture some of that beauty and serenity in my art.



2015 CALENDAR

CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
June 6th - 8pm
June 7th - 7pm
June 12th & 13th - 8 pm
St. Matthias Episcopal Church
Maple & Main St., East Aurora, NY

ROYCROFT WINTERFEST SHOW
December 5 & 6
10am - 5pm
Main Street School



ROYCROFTERS-AT-LARGE ASSOCIATION

ROYCROFT SUMMER FESTIVAL 2015

PARKDALE ELEMENTARY
141 GIRARD AVENUE
EAST AURORA NY

WWW.RALAWEB.COM JURIED ARTISANS 716.655.7252

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
LIVE MUSIC & FOOD JUNE 27 & 28 10 AM TO 5 PM
SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDED BY ABSOLUT CARE





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Board Meetings
Board meetings are regularly scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month. The first 15 minutes of the meeting is reserved for member comments, after which the board will enter a closed session. Contact the RALA Coordinator for details.

Join us on Facebook 



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Roycrofters-At-Large Association has undergone some changes as of late. We welcomed in seven new Artisans whose work was deemed of high quality at the Masters Jury in April. I would like to personally welcome Evelyn Dombkowski (jewelry), Kateri Ewing (watercolor/ink), Anne Fischer (fiber), Michael Gotthelf (wood), Peter Potter (photography), Henry Schmidt (sculpture/mixed-media), and Willam Shearrow (clay). At the Masters Jury four Artisans were elevated to Master Artisan status. Congratulations to Holly Bird (print making), Margaret Cherre (fiber/weaving), Patricia Cancilla (jewelry), and David Hughes (wood).

More changes are yet to come. At this year's Roycroft Summer Festival, located at the Parkdale School on Girard, we will have a designated tent in the center of the show for demonstrations and several workshops. Don't worry, we will continue to provide music and shopping opportunities to purchase high quality hand made crafts. We will also continue to offer a shuttle service from the Parkdale School location and the Main Street School (details can be found in the Festival Guide).

As always my email door is open to hear your concerns and ideas for the betterment of the organization.

Ron VanOstrand
2015 President of the Roycrofters-At-Large Association
vmstudio@verizon.net



SPECIAL THANKS TO HOWARD LEHNING Roycroft Master Artisan

Who has provided many years of volunteer Service to the Roycrofters-At-Large Association. Howard dedicated many hours of his time to the Association, and we'd like to recognize him for all his efforts.



Enjoying the light through the trees with Laura Wilder ...continued from page 1

Also 4) The more automated and fast-paced life gets, the more rare and valuable are the things that can only be made with time, patience and human hands.

Q: Where do you like to "create?" Paint a mental picture for us of your ideal workspace.

A: My actual workspace varies a lot. When making block prints I design at the computer, carve at a table (kitchen, studio, dining room, coffee), and print either at a table with inking brayer and wooden spoon, or at the letterpress center with other printmakers. As long as I am alone, it works. Although at the printing center, I can sometimes converse with fellow artists while printing once I've gotten all the bugs worked out.

My most ideal workspace so far was probably at the Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms. I did an artist-in-residence there. This is Gustave Stickley's retirement estate. They gave me the cottage where Gus and his family lived while the big log house was being built. It's furnished as it may have been then — natural woodwork is everywhere. There is a room with huge windows that look out on a meadow with woods beyond. I had my print-making table set up in front of the window. No phone, no interruptions. In the morning the sun glowed orange through the trees. During the day, deer would wander past my windows or graze nearby as I ate lunch on the front porch. In the early summer evening, Bambis would leap and chase each other around the meadow, putting on quite a show.

My husband and I have plans to build a studio in the back yard that will face our woods. It will have simpler furnishings, and instead of deer I'll have squirrels and woodchucks, and I'll get to watch the light through the trees.



Q: When I interview artists, I often discover that the artistic gene has been handed down from generation to generation. Is that true in your case?

A: Probably. My paternal grandma was a missionary, but did beautiful professional-looking illustrations of Indian street scenes, and as far as I know had no formal training.

My mother would never admit it but she is also quietly artistic.



She canes chairs, knits, makes clothes, slipcovers and furniture, and once did a near-perfect copy of a landscape photograph in oil paints.

Q: Your artistic style seems perfectly suited to the Roycroft way. Did you find Roycroft ... or did it find you?

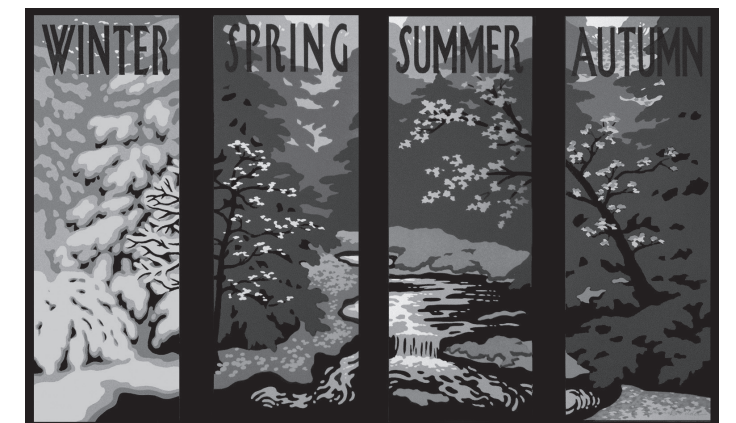
A: Synchronicity happened over and over ...

I had quit commercial art and was a bit lost. Around that time, the Memorial Art Gallery had an exhibition called Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters. There I saw a few Roycroft Renaissance artisans demonstrating their crafts. I suddenly knew I wanted to do portraits of them working and arranged to photograph a few of them in their studios.



Then I accidentally came across a photo of some old block prints which had the perfect bold, simple, vintage style for my project. I took a block printing class. My first four block prints were The Potter, The Silversmith, The Bookbinder and The Cabinetmaker.

The potter — former RR Artisan Janice McDuffie — urged me to apply to become a RR Artisan. I was thrilled and sent my application and four prints to the jury. Belatedly I realized, mortified, that those prints were ALL portraits of jury members, and they would think I was totally sucking up. But I was approved anyway.



Joe Kirchmyer is president of Kirchmyer Media LLC, a communications company based in West Seneca, N.Y. You can contact him at jkirchmyer@verizon.net.

