

Village Insights

The Newsletter of Carleton-Willard Village

Early Spring 2012

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Carleton-Willard Village
is a not-for-profit continuing
care retirement community
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Carleton-Willard is a
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For Carleton-Willard Residents, Art is a Lifelong Passion



Early American Style – Resident Ardelle Janes poses with two of her hand-painted works: an Early American oval box (top), and a Shaker-style chest. Ardelle’s creative style extends to hand-painted cards and rugs, and many of her pieces have been featured at the Village’s Residents’ Craft Fair held every November.

Whether professional pursuit, creative pastime, or just plain fun, many Villagers choose the arts as the way to stimulate the mind, explore and express their passions, and interact with their neighbors. For them, art is less “something on the wall” and more a way of life.

According to Woody Ward, anyone can be an artist, “even if you haven’t done art before.”

Woody (short for Mariwood) should know. She has two degrees in art, including a Masters of Fine Arts from the

Massachusetts College of Arts, and has been teaching art to children and adults most of her life.

“Everybody has the potential to be creative,” says Woody. “You can just pick up a brush and start painting. If it’s loose and sloppy, that’s okay...you’re channeling Picasso! Don’t worry about ‘being good.’ Just do it!”

Woody’s views are shared by many Village residents who actively engage in varied forms of creative expression. “We have painters – watercolor artists, others who do oils or pastels,” says Gail Hatfield, CWV’s Director of Learning in Retirement. “We have illustrators, people who

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“All Dolled Up” on Main Street

At the end of Main Street in the Village sits a stately yellow two-story colonial. And it’s the most popular house on the block. In fact, the home of “Mr. & Mrs. Dollhouse” is a microcosm of what’s happening at Carleton-Willard Village.



Village Life in Miniature – Gail Hatfield, CWV’s Director of Learning in Retirement, lends her interior design skills to *The Dollhouse’s* home.

The dollhouse is the creation of resident Ardelle Janes and her husband, Phillip. Built to scale from a kit, Phillip attended to even the smallest details, adding miniature lamps in every room, candles in all the windows, and custom hardwood flooring. Ardelle would then search for miniature furnishings – often

during her winter vacations in Florida – to decorate the home from the ground floor up.

Eventually, Ardelle had to find a new place for the dollhouse. “After all those years, the whole collection had gotten too large for my home.” That’s when the Village’s Gail Hatfield and Barbara Doyle came into the picture. “I thought Gail was just going to put it all into storage,” explains Ardelle. “But then Barbara saw it and said, ‘You put that right by the desk at the end of Main Street!’ And its been there ever since.”

“Barbara told me she never had a dollhouse when she was young,” adds Ardelle. “She was so excited to help set it up!”

Since then, Gail has regularly changed the furnishings and interior decor to reflect the seasons, holidays and other goings-on at the Village. “You can tell what’s going on in the Village by peeking inside and seeing what Mr. & Mrs. Dollhouse are up to,” explains Gail. “For example, as a nod to the current art showing in our Gallery, there are six miniature canvases up on easels in the attic – the ‘artists’ garret’ in Dollhouse-world.”

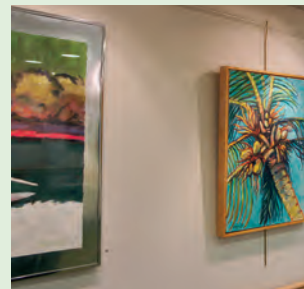
“Gail has gone crazy buying things for the doll-house,” says Ardelle. “I can’t believe all that she does!” Gail makes sure a sign is in place for each new exhibit, noting what’s been added inside and why it’s there. The dollhouse has been on permanent display for a little over a year.

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Villagers Take a Keen Interest in The Arts

Carleton-Willard Village is a haven for art lovers... at least that’s the way Mimi Braverman, noted instructor and lecturer with Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts, sees it. “The people at Carleton-Willard are very well-traveled, extremely intelligent, and very eager to hear about art,” says Mimi. “So many come to Carleton-Willard after a full experience of work and travel. They’re remarkable.”

Mimi has been regularly presenting lectures at the Village since 1990. “Carleton-Willard is unusual,” says Mimi. “At other retirement communities, people pretty much want to hear about what’s currently on display at the MFA. But at Carleton-Willard, people not only want to hear details about the exhibits, they want to talk about their own art experiences. They really identify with the art.”



Village lectures occasionally present a surprise or two for Mimi. “I was giving a talk on Isabella Gardner and the art at the Gardner Museum.

Afterwards, a woman introduced herself as a descendent of Mrs. Gardner and talked to me about her visits with her in the 1920s!”

Mimi’s presentations at the Village are just as fulfilling for her as for those who attend. “I had an enormously rapt audience at my last talk. One can tell when people are interested, when they’re really enjoying what you’re presenting. The lights go out, these beautiful works of art go up on the screen, and there’s a sense that you’re going to be transported to another world. It’s very seductive! And to have people so eager to have that experience...well, that’s so very satisfying.”

For Carleton-Willard Residents, Art is a Lifelong Passion

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draw and design cards, people who work with furniture and ceramics and fabrics. And we have some wonderful photographers. It really is amazing, all the creativity at the Village!”

Resident Joan Kaufman agrees. “Art is so important for people’s happiness here. There are always lots of smiles and enthusiastic chatter after we have any kind of art event.”

Many of those events are coordinated by the Village’s *Art For Fun Committee*. The group meets monthly to sponsor programs designed to engage residents in art, including events at the Art For Fun Gallery – the place to see Village art on display.

“Sometimes we’ll have a single-person show, or a showcase of many artists, sometimes even 20 to 30 residents,” explains Gail Hatfield. New shows are scheduled every three months. Featured work is typically created by residents, but occasionally includes art, historical artifacts or family heirlooms from personal collections.

The Gallery is currently showing the work of resident watercolor and acrylic artist Tim Martin. Tim, who describes himself as a “doodler and recreational painter,” combined his artistic talent and architecture background into a unique style that has evolved beyond the canvas and onto stage sets for performances by the Village’s *Thespian Players*. Tim is also a member of the *Offsite Committee* which coordinates the many resident outings to the Boston area, such as the recent trip to the distinguished deCordova Sculpture Park & Museum in Lincoln.

“The outings used to be called the ‘Bus to Boston,’” explains Gail. “Once a month, we’d schedule a trip to the Museum of Fine Arts – we just *love* the MFA – or the Museum of Science. But now it’s expanded to include the Currier Museum of Art, the Worcester Art Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art, and the Peabody Essex Museum.” Village residents look forward to these outings, according to Gail. “The friendships built on these trips are great. People are out together in beautiful settings experiencing great art. They have lunch, they sit and talk and share what they’ve seen. And then they take the whole experience back to the Village. It’s a wonderful thing.”

The Village also has a regular slate of lectures on art, art history, culture, and local art exhibits. And for those who like to “get creative” themselves, there are many opportunities to learn painting and other fine art, photography, quilting and crafts.

“The art, the gallery showings – it brings people closer together,” notes Gail. “It means so much for people to see who the artist is, to have a chance to interact with them. They ask questions about their work, the story behind it, how it’s done. Next thing you know, people are being invited to dinner and new relationships begin. Art builds friendships.”

Many residents become inspired to begin – or restart – their own creative journeys. “It’s lovely to have art, to be creative, to have these things as you get old,” observes Woody Ward. “As long as you keep creating, you keep feeling good!”

Woody finds the creative challenges stimulating. “When you put a fresh canvas up, it’s sometimes so hard to get started. It’s the same with poets and writers. But once you get a few marks up there...!”

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An Eye for Art – Village artists create works in a diverse range of media. Clockwise from top left: Three-dimensional scenery for the Village Thespian Players’ performance of Proof, designed by Tim Martin; “Path to the Meadow” by Grace Stergis (pastel on canvas); “Artist’s Studio in Miniature” inside Ardelle Janes’ dollhouse; Nantucket baskets by Ellsworth Sanders.

Art Experience is “One of a Kind”

Ivan Kaufman never studied to be an artist. In fact, Ivan, a semi-nary professor, only began exploring fine art in his forties. And he didn't perfect his preferred medium – monoprints – until after he had retired.

“That's one of the wonderful things about your retirement,” notes Ivan's wife, Joan. “You get to experience something wonderful you never knew you had. Art was sitting around all that time with Ivan, just waiting for a chance to come out!”

While all creativity is inherently unique, Ivan's monoprints take artistic expression to a new level. Unlike other printing processes, every monoprint is individually created – and afterwards, it can never



Uncommon Treasures – Joan Kaufman displays some of the striking monoprints created by her husband, Ivan.

be replicated. “That's the thing about this technique,” explains Joan. “You only get one chance! And you never really know what you're going to get. That's what made it so fun for Ivan. Often, the piece would come out completely different from what he had imagined.”

Gail Hatfield, CWV's Director of Learning in Retirement, invited Ivan to display his work at the Art For Fun Gallery soon after he and Joan came to the Village. “It was so exciting!” recalls Joan. “And such a fabulous thing for Ivan too, because it gave him a lot of confidence with new people. He was so delighted that people responded to his work the way they did.” Gail and the Village's *Art For Fun Committee* would later approach Joan to select two of Ivan's works to be used as covers for the Gallery's guestbook, as well as for thank-you cards the committee sends to Village artists who have displayed their own work at the Gallery.

“It's hard for people sometimes to make new friends in a new place,” says Joan. “But the Art For Fun shows are such a wonderful way for us to get to know each other. We all get to see each other's achievements.”

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Creative expression by seniors is proving to be a highly effective way to increase cognitive health and maintain vital social connections. “We all know how important the arts are for healthy child development,” explains Joan Kaufman, who is also the chair of the *Resident's Health Committee*. “But now we're hearing that participating in art is fundamental for maintaining social, spiritual and mental health. It's so important.”

“Art is all about our community life,” Joan adds. “Some of us are artists, and we participate directly. The rest of us are the audience; we participate vicariously. And we all naturally share what makes us happy! I think the Village draws people who are interested in that kind of community.”

“All Dolled Up” on Main Street

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Ardelle has been pleasantly surprised at the response from residents. “People have called me, written to me...they show it to their grandchildren. They just love the whole thing! I can't get over it.”

“I have no idea what Gail's going to do next with it,” adds Ardelle. “You'll just have to come see!”



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Creativity is the Ultimate Expression of Potential

by Barbara A. Doyle, President & Chief Executive Officer



“There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age.”

– Sophia Loren

It's been well-documented that art and creativity help maintain cognitive, emotional and

social health, especially as we get older. But scientists are now discovering that the brain doesn't work exactly as we once thought it did. And the impact of these recent medical studies could have a profound impact on the importance of creativity and the importance of seniors in our society.

At the heart of this development is a shift in the perception of what it means to be an older adult – away from simply tending to the familiar effects of aging, and toward a focus on a person's strengths, potential and achievements. Gene Cohen, MD, PhD, author of The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life, writes that while there certainly are issues with aging, “What has been universally denied is the potential [of older adults]. The ultimate expression of potential is creativity.”

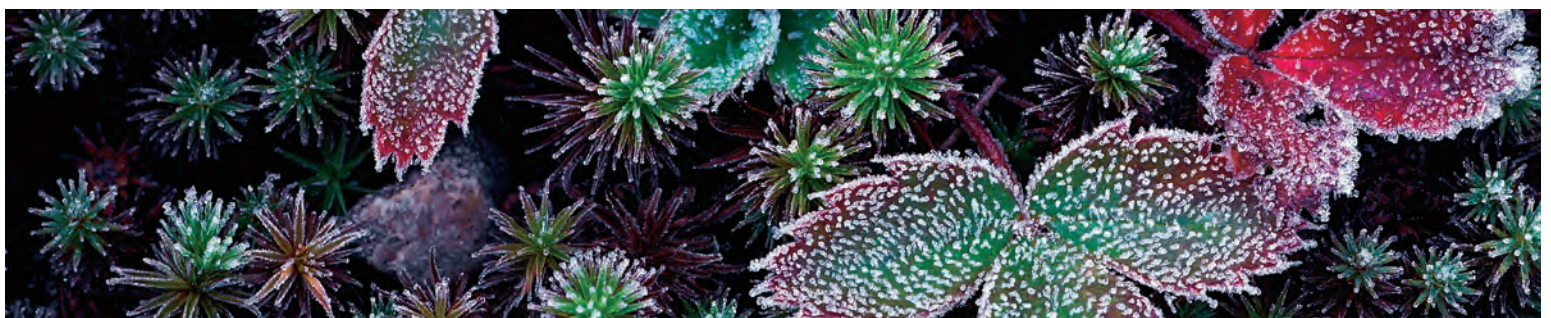
Dr. Cohen is the director of the Center on Aging, Health & Humanities at George Washington University. He is also an advocate of what's being called the “Creative Aging” movement. Creative Aging maintains that through creativity, the expertise gained with age can offset the complications of aging. In other words, our brains have the potential to actually work better as we get older!

A growing body of neuroscientific research supports this challenge to conventional models of how the brain works. While it's true that our brains begin to actively lose neurons (nerve cells) as early as age 25, scientists have discovered that it's not the number of neurons that determines intellectual capacity, but the connections between them. These connections, called dendrites, develop when the brain is exposed to a rich, stimulating environment – such as when we're engaged in art and creativity.

Medical science has also discovered that between our early 50s and late 70s, the number, size and density of dendrites increases. The old-school maxim that one is “too old to learn” is simply not true! The reality is that our ability to handle complexity and abstract thought is enhanced as we get older. To make a technological analogy, the “personal computers” in our heads may be getting smaller, but they're more powerful and can do more complex things the “newer models” can't do!

Creativity is inherent in every person. For some, it's something “just for fun”; for others, it's a lifelong passion. For everyone, this new science opens up many new possibilities for seniors – and not simply in regard to artistic expression and cognitive health, important as those concepts are. Seniors now represent a vast and growing pool of untapped intellectual, aesthetic and experiential power that has the potential to transform the strength of our economy and our society.

Seniors have historically been the “keepers of the culture” – those who pass on the history and values of a community to the next generation. This, perhaps, represents the greatest legacy Villagers can leave to their children and grandchildren. Art and creativity, specifically expressed by and through seniors, has the ability to give meaning and purpose to all our lives.





Happy Hundred! – The Village honored resident Murial Health on her 100th birthday with the traditional presentation of a Vermont Teddy Bear. Murial's birthday festivities were held in the Red Room. Congratulations to our newest centenarian!



Trekking For A Cure – The CWV team gathers for a photo before beginning the start of the 2011 Walk to End Alzheimer's held last fall in Cambridge, MA. The group raised \$14,540 for the event, and one family member of a former resident raised \$5,510.



Masters At Work – What do you do in January when it's cold and sunny? Carve some ice! The Village's Director of Dining Services, Matthew Hinckle, and John Willis, guest chef from the Abenaki Country Club in Rye, NH, transformed blocks of ice into a dragon in celebration of the Chinese New Year. The beautiful weather allowed some residents to watch from the courtyard, while others sipped hot chocolate from the corridor of the Abbott Dining Room.



Around *The Village*



30th Anniversary Garden Tour To Be Biggest Ever

The Village is well-known for its spectacular gardens – extensions of both our unique natural setting and the artistic skills of our many resident horticulturists. This year's Village Garden Tour will once again open our gardens for viewing at the height of the Spring bloom, but with an added special treat. In celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Carleton-Willard Village, some of our most beautiful cluster homes will also be on display! Walking and riding tours (via the Village jitney) are scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Visit as many locations as you wish, and afterwards enjoy a lovely box lunch on the patio or in the Garden Room. This always-popular event is not to be missed! The Garden Tour will be held on Tuesday, June 12. For reservations and more information, contact Peggy Whiteley at pcwhiteley@cwvillage.org or 781.276.1902.