

Life in LAMORINDA

The Wandering Hues—Lafayette Reservoir's Plein Air Group

By Andrea A. Firth



Marcy Wheeler and Charles White

Photo Tod Fierner

Theater-in-the-round, where the audience surrounds the stage area, provides theater-goers with unique access to viewing the actors and the production. Marcy Wheeler, an artist and Director of the Lafayette Studio, has come up with a similar concept and applied it to the art world. Wheeler's idea for "painting-in-the-round" consists of views from around the Lafayette Reservoir painted by local artists that will provide art patrons with a unique—and more complete—view of this local landmark.

"I have always felt that the Reservoir is one of the best things about Lafayette," states Wheeler who has lived in Lafayette for almost 15 years and who, in addition to teaching art, owns and operates the Toots Sweets bakery

in the Plaza Shopping Center on Mount Diablo Boulevard. "I thought this would be a wonderful community activity that would allow people to get to know the Reservoir as a subject of paintings," adds Wheeler.

To make her idea a reality, Wheeler recruited some of her artist colleagues, including Charles White, Teresa Onada, and Mark Jezierny, to teach a class on plein air painting (painting in the outdoors) that is held at the Lafayette Reservoir each week. Following a brief critique session of works-in-progress at the Lafayette Studio, class members and teacher then carpool to the Reservoir and head out to find a view of their liking.

"Plein air painters are very independent," says Wheeler. "It may take some

an hour or more to find just the right spot with just the right light... And we can't ignore the trail that goes around the Reservoir," adds Wheeler. "It creates wonderful sinuous lines in the landscape."

Wheeler has an enlarged photo of the Reservoir where she keeps track of the locations from which paintings have been created. Through the work of the students and teachers, Wheeler aims to amass a sufficient number of paintings from around the Reservoir to hold a show. By displaying the "art-in-the-round," Wheeler hopes to provide viewers with a complete (and probably never before seen) picture of the Lafayette Reservoir.

All painting skill levels are invited to join the class (although some art experience is advisable), which will



Scene from the Lafayette Reservoir by Marcy Wheeler

be held each Wednesday afternoon until the rain comes. The teachers are versed in oils and acrylics and rotate leading the class each week providing students with a variety of art perspectives. For more information about the class or to become one of Wheeler's wandering hues, contact the Lafayette Studio at 284-5143.



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