

Library displays variety of local art

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Charlotte Nitcher recalls that, as a very young child, she discovered the fun of creative endeavors while drawing lines in the talcum powder soil of Florida. She hasn't stopped creating art in some form or another since those early days.

Many Sisters residents know Nitcher as the public services specialist at the Sisters Library, where she has worked for the past 20 years. Currently, her artwork is on display at the Friends of the Sisters Library (FOSL) December exhibit in the library community room. Before viewing Nitcher's exhibit, visitors can view in the lobby display case some of the items that provided inspiration for Nitcher's work.

Acrylics, oils, and oil pastels are the most-used mediums by Nitcher. She admits her first love is drawing,

followed by painting, then paper and printmaking.

As a child, Nitcher always delighted in receiving a new box of crayons. For her 10th Christmas, she received a real Sears art kit with quality paper, graphite pencils, charcoal, oil pastels, and kneaded eraser. Using the books included in the kit, she practiced shadowing and perspective, while honing her sketching skills.

Nitcher said that the obligatory art classes in grade school and junior high were more about following directions and actually squashed creativity. Rather than draw a simple round red apple as instructed, Nitcher drew an apple cut open, with the seeds exposed — not viewed positively by her teacher. So, the budding artist created in private, at home, and out among the oak trees surrounding her home in Albany, Oregon where her family moved when she was four.

Nitcher and her high

school sweetheart husband of 43 years, John, met while playing in the band, he the saxophone, she the clarinet. They couldn't actually date until she turned 16, and five years later they were married. Following John's graduation from Oregon State University, they lived in Reedsport with their children for 19 years before moving to Central Oregon in 1995, where they first lived east of Sisters.

Following a dream in which Nitcher saw a vision of a house, she drew a sketch, and her builder husband built her the dream house on the rim above Whychus Creek Canyon, complete with a separate art studio facing the Cascades.

While her children were growing up, Nitcher directed her creativity toward projects involving the children's interests. She also taught



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Annie Painter with two of her young student artists.

string-quilting classes and created wearable art for sale. Quilting, fiber arts, sketching and gardening provided creative outlets for her until she began taking art classes at the local community college in 1990, followed by earning her Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies from Linfield College in 1993.

Inspiration for her art seems to come to Nitcher at any time of day or night, in the shower, images from dreams, in response to social issues, and from nature, photography, and real life.

"Some of my ideas are quirky," Nitcher admits, as

See LOCAL ART on page 31

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