

Artist Michael Wood to judge 'Little Dickens' contest

Backstreet Gallery is honored to welcome nationally acclaimed oil painter, Michael Wood, as the juror for the 10th annual Little Dickens Miniature Show in December.

As an Army brat, Wood found his artistic bent early when he and his family around traveled Europe. In one location, eight-year old Wood found an impressionistic painting in a storeroom that inspired his pursuit of art.

After much early experimentation with colored pencils moistened with a quick lick, then later with watercolors, Wood's parents gave him a set of oil paints. He copied techniques of artists he respected like Sargent, Wyeth and Parrish, developing his present technique of Impressionism.

"The first impression is the heart of the scene," said Wood.

Observation is key in executing his signature style, where he captures the essence of his subject bathed in luminosity. Wood paints "a la prima." This is a technique where the artist paints wet into wet paint. Using a large brush he mixes a combination of rich color on the canvas, resem-



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Painting by artist and Little Dickens Juror Michael Wood.

bling his palette, quickly bringing chaos into orderly resolution with dramatic results.

Wood says of art, "Sometimes it's painting, and then

sometimes it's PAINTING."

During high school he started showing his work and had his first one-man show in junior college. In 1985, he took the giant step of becoming a

professional artist. Discovered by the director of the Triton Museum of Art in Santa Clara, Calif., Wood was hooked.

Since then he has become a signature artist in Oil Painters of America, appeared in books and magazines and participated in many National Exhibitions. He is nationally recognized for his land and seascapes, animal and figurative works.

Internationally, his work appears in private collections.

View his work at the Vardanian Gallery, Old Town Coffee or on line www.fmichaelwood.com.

Wood teaches what he calls, "Holistic" oil painting at Florence Regional Arts Alliance, where the student learns by taking in the whole of the subject matter.

Classes are offered on Wednesdays from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Contact Wood at fmwood@msn.com for more information.

A reception honoring the artists will be Saturday, Dec. 10, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Backstreet Gallery is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WOU stops requiring ACT or SATs for applications

Students applying for admission to Western Oregon University (WOU) will no longer be required to submit an ACT or SAT test score.

This change goes into effect for fall 2017 applicants with a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher and who have successfully passed the required college prep high school courses.

"Our admission requirements are now better aligned with our role as a public university with a strong commitment to access," Rob Findtner, director of admissions, said. "This change is designed to help us extend our access priority while also ensuring admitted students are prepared to succeed in the classroom."

ACT and SAT scores will be used in some scholarship competitions, the Honors Program and for students who have a cumulative GPA below 3.0 or who did not complete the required number of college preparation courses in high school.

Transfer students are not required to submit test scores.

"Our retention and student success data revealed that ACT and SAT test scores had

no relationship to student success at WOU," said David McDonald, associate provost at WOU. "As many other colleges and universities have determined, the most effective predictor of student success is the high school GPA and courses taken. We believe eliminating the test requirements will open the door to college for more students who are already prepared to succeed."

"The cost of the exams, optional test-preparation courses and very real levels of testing stress and anxiety are barriers to access and run counter to our mission and institutional priorities."

The university has also revised its President's Scholarship requirements to match the move to being test optional. Students who have excelled in high school will be able to receive a President's Scholarship without a test score.

Students who have high GPAs and submit optional test scores may receive higher awards, if their test scores are sufficiently high.

WOU is fully accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Final house concert of season to feature John Paris

Award-winning jazz pianist and composer John Paris returns for his fourth appearance in Kathy Parsons' house concert series on Saturday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m.

This will also be a CD release concert for Paris' new solo piano Christmas album.

Paris received "Best Jazz Album of the Year" awards this year and last year from Enlightened Piano Radio. This year's award was for his "Piano Jazz My Way" album.

Paris made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2015.

His first instrument was the accordion and he recently



COURTESY PHOTO

John Paris

acquired a new one that he loves to perform with. So this concert will be combination of piano and accordion and will feature a couple of surprises as well.

A life-long performer with an impressive resume, Paris' concerts are always a special treat.

He has been a featured performer alongside the Minneapolis Symphony, an accompanist to the Moody Blues and a special guest on The Merv Griffin Show and Jerry Lewis Telethon.

His diverse and varied career has spanned four decades.

Touring the country's major cities, he entertained millions as the leader, composer and arranger of his show-band, Atlantis, which was based out of Las Vegas.

In addition to composing and performing, John Paris is a music teacher in the Yuba City, Calif., schools.

There is a suggested donation of \$15 at the door.

Reservations are required by calling Kathy Parsons at 541-999-9720 or emailing her at kathypiano@gmail.com.

Her Florence address and directions will be given when reservations are made.

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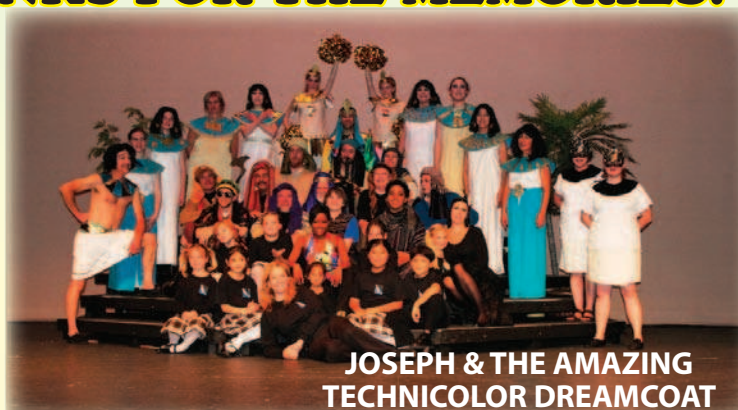
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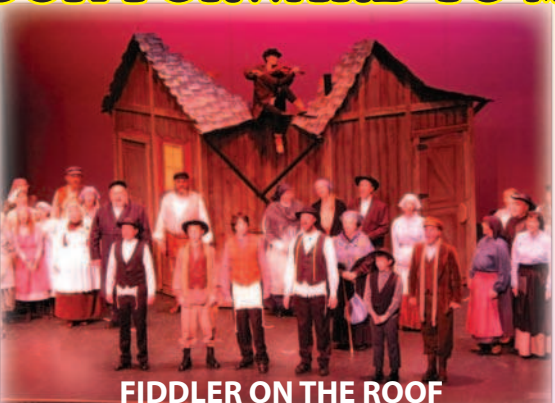


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