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Shirley McNary 2011 Morrow County Fair featured artist

By Laura Rogers

Beaming beautifully as they lunch together at The Stable of Youth, three long-time friends discuss their personal art histories, critically, honestly and enthusiastically. Artistic and well organized, these women have kept the spirit of fine art alive in Heppner for decades by their leadership of the Morrow County Arts Council.

Shirley McNary is permitting this interview since she is the featured artist for the Morrow County Fair this year. Betty Mills and Betty Brown are most eager to assist in offering informative memories in case Shirley is inaccurate or less than forthcoming. In any case, I loved learning about Shirley and hope the reader will feel the same as the frame holding this artist is built around her. Artistic painting and drawing

was not a reality for Shirley until she was past her 30th birthday. Family encouragement for artistic talent was not part of her youth. But, she was a determined girl, and will state emphatically that "anyone can learn to paint".

Although Shirley began painting without formal instruction, a class in oil painting taken in Walla Walla from teacher, Eleanor, was the inspiration that kept her motivated. Those were the beginning years and were followed by sketch groups and pleasure painting for her own gratification. Eventually, Shirley's painting began to find buyers and she was juried into the Oregon Water Color Society, a prestigious group of artists selected for talent and accomplishment.

In last year's fair, Shirley won a blue ribbon for her submitted painting. Several



Shirley McNary

more of Shirley's paintings will be featured at the Morrow County Fair in a special section devoted to Art.

You will be surprised and pleased by her unique treatment of color and motion in the common subjects made wonderful by her paintbrush.

As our luncheon meeting concluded, the three friends decided that their artistic productivity has been diminished in the last few years. But the happy, peaceful memories of painting together inspired them to get back to their enjoyable work.

Admission bracelets new this year at fair

New this year at the fair will be admission bracelets for adult and kid passes instead of paper ones. This was done to make it easier for the gate people. "If you lose your bracelet you will not get another one, so please keep them on your wrist throughout the fair," said a fair spokesperson.



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