

## Classes cultivate creativity

# Art League members inspire budding artists

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DANVILLE — Budding artists can bloom at any age, and Danville Art League's summer classes provide the perfect greenhouse.

Both adults and children have three separate sessions to choose from this year.

Adult classes will be offered both afternoons and evenings in June and afternoons in July.

Children may attend Saturday mornings in June, July and August, with a different instructor each month. All classes will be held in the Art League Studio, 502 Sherman St.

Marsha Russell, League president, will teach in both the adults' and children's sessions. She enjoys sharing her love for art with students of both ages.

"I always was interested in art," Russell said. "I tried to teach myself using books when I was a teenager. Then I started watching PBS shows that gave art instruction and reading art books from the library.

"Since then, I've taken classes at the Art League and really developed my skills," she said.

Russell's adult classes will focus on beginning oil painting — just the basics will be covered. She assures students that even if they can't draw, they can learn the painting techniques that will lead to a rewarding hobby.

In her children's classes, Russell said she emphasizes that there's "no wrong way to create art. Kids sometimes give up if something doesn't turn out just as they thought it would. But everyone sees things differently.

"All I ask is that the children are able to follow simple directions," she said.

"We do cartooning first, using basic shapes like circles and squares and then evening them out," Russell said.

"We also paint with acrylics," she said. "The kids love to do it. I let them choose their own subjects.

"I started out being happy if I could paint something that looked like a cloud. I still find my inspiration in organic things, but I put my own twist on them. I've even painted the stars I see on the NASA Web site and put my own twist on them," she said.

Another talented artist will teach beginning watercolor to adults. Roberta Williams has taught both children's and adults' classes and looks forward to this year's June session.

"I'll be teaching watercolor technique," Williams said, "not composition. That's drawing."

She explained the technique she'll teach is based on a class she took in Florida from PBS artist and expert Terry Madden.

"It's a fun, easy and fast technique," she said. "Anyone can do it. I'll give them an outline to trace onto their paper, maybe a parrot or some flowers. Then they can concentrate on their technique."

Cynthia Embry, vice-president of the league, started painting in 1999 and now can't imagine life without it.



Roberta Williams mixes paint on her palette at the Danville Art League. Williams will teach beginning watercolor to adults this summer.  
Susan Joy McKinney / Commercial-News

"I hear people say they can't fill their time after they retire," she said. "I retired a year ago, and I don't have enough time to fit all the art I want to into my schedule."

Embry said the goal of the Art League is to make "a real intense effort to recruit more members and expand our programs.

"Our classes aren't just for people who already paint, who are veteran artists. Art can be calming, even a kind of therapy," she said.

"We need a new building — our demand is exceeding our space."

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The Danville Art League will hold the following adult/teen summer classes:

- Beginning watercolor painting with Roberta Williams offered from 1-3:30 p.m. June 7, 14, 21 and 28.

- Beginning drawing classes with Carol Garver from 6-8:30 p.m. June 3, 10, 17 and 24.

- Beginning oil painting classes with Marsha Russell from 1-3:30 p.m. July 5, 12, 19 and 26.

Cost for each session is \$45 for members and \$50 for nonmembers.

The Art League will offer these classes for children :

- 8:45-11 a.m. each Saturday in June with Eileen Dunavan.

- 9-11 a.m. each Saturday in July with Marshal Russell.

- 9-11 a.m. each Saturday in August with Carol Garver.

Cost for each session is \$40 with all materials provided. To sign up for classes, contact Cynthia Embry at 446-3237.

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