

Southern Oakland TOWNSHIP *Living*

AN EXCLUSIVE NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SOUTHERN OAKLAND TOWNSHIP

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Turn To The Meet Your Neighbor Section To Read About Amy Carels, Who Strives To Tell A Story Through Her Paintings.

Amy is photographed sketching in the gardens of the Rochester Hills Public Library.

Capturing the Beauty *All Around Us*

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Madge Lawson

Some artists try to replicate the beauty of a landscape. Amy Carels, a long-time resident of Oakland Township, strives to tell a story through her paintings. For example, her work may weave in the architecture of a homestead and the traces of the people who may have lived there. Her current work focuses on the 150-year-old Glen Haven Inn in Michigan's Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Park near Glen Arbor in the Leelanau Peninsula.

"I first started watercolor painting when I was 8 years old at the side of my dad, an illustrator and art director at a Detroit advertising agency. I still have the pictures of an old barn we each painted. Soon after, I ventured out each summer in northern Michigan to sketch in pencil, pen and ink and charcoal. Both my parents were artists, and it was unspoken, but expected, that I would be successful if I worked at it," she said.

While watercolor painting was always her passion, a busy career as an advertising consultant, the wife of a physician, now retired, and the mother of three children consumed most of her time until the last several years.

"Now that I have more time to paint, I've been in juried shows for 10 years. This year, my work was accepted into five juried art shows, including the prestigious Michigan Water Color Annual Exhibition," she said.

"When I was young, my dad said: 'Paint what you see.' Then, I thought he meant to literally reproduce the image I saw. Now I

see his advice differently. I am compelled to share my interpretation of what I see through the abstract shapes in nature, the overlay of shadows and reflections, and the unexpected colors in natural light. I see the movement in water and wind and the atmospheric effects on light. I focus on the horizon where the sky meets the earth because that's the essence of a landscape," she said.

"There is infinite beauty all around us to enjoy. I explore the relationship between natural landscape and architectural dwellings to show a sense of place, history and what draws us to location," she said. She also paints in this theme on location in Sedona and in Arizona's rugged Superstition Mountains.

Amy feels her artistic inclinations have been helpful in her work as an advertising consultant.

"Creativity and an artistic eye play a part in all that I do, including planning strategic marketing, campaign design and media placement. Artistic skills help me spot what doesn't fit in the picture, and what is exciting and balanced. It's a part of how I approach all things," she said.

Her goal is to work with a gallery to open a solo show of her current Sleeping Bear Glen Haven Inn series.

"I'd also like to develop a 'plein air' annual event in our community that concludes with a sale of the paintings. Oakland Township is an artistic community that attracts both artists and those who appreciate the arts," Amy added.

Amy shows her paintings of Glen Haven Inn at the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Park.



For those who are unfamiliar with art or what to buy, Amy suggests joining organizations like the Paint Creek Center for the Arts, take classes, and attend art events and lectures. When traveling, she recommends visiting museums and galleries and bringing original art you love into your home.

Amy also encourages parents to display their children's art work. It helps them value their accomplishments.

"Encourage children who exhibit some interest and talent in art. Go to galleries and museums together. Paint and do art with your child, but avoid buying student-grade materials. Buy professional grade if you can," she said.

"We designed and built our home in Oakland Township over 25 years ago after an extensive search for the perfect setting. We knew we found it here because of the rural character, history and inviting setting. It is a fantastic place to live with its historic buildings, the Paint Creek Trail and a community that supports the arts," she said.

Husband Dr. Henry Carels is a retired physician and professor emeritus at Michigan State University – School of Osteopathic Medicine. For the last five years, he has found better treatment for those with life threatening conditions through his company, Lachesis. They have three grown children: Christina Ley, Henry Carels III, and Gabrielle Carels. Amy often can be seen walking along Paint Creek Trail and throughout the Township with her Samoyed dog, Mia.

You can view Amy's paintings at her website: www.amycarels.com.