

drifting into watercolor

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Cloquet's Lyn Jutila is currently exhibiting her watercolors at the Pine Knot office. She recently sat down with us to talk about her work and how she became a watercolorist after hanging her paintings on the multi-colored brick wall that is The Knot art gallery.

"I moved here from California. I'd always enjoyed painting on boards, on driftwood. I began painting in oils, but enjoyed viewing watercolors and dabbling with them, taking classes now and then."

A stay-at-home mom, her children thought they could help! She still has a painting with their contributions. "I started painting when we started our family. My husband, Bruce, was in the Air Force, stationed in Duluth. We married in 1968 in Cloquet. The day of our wedding, he was assigned a mission overseas. I didn't want to live by myself in Duluth, so I moved back home to live with my parents and worked at the Johnson Company department store."

After Bruce returned from being stationed in Thailand, they moved to California, to his last station at San Bernardino Air Force Base.

"We wanted to move back to Minnesota. Bruce got a job with Best Oil and went to UMD. We decided to live in Cloquet, out by Big Lake. Before starting our family, we built a house, and, later, another one."

Lyn originally painted in oils. But she began to prefer watercol-

The Knot art exhibit opening

Community members are invited to attend a reception for Lyn Jutila 5:30-7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 18 at the Pine Knot News office at 122 Avenue C in Cloquet. Masks are required.

ors. "It's the movement, the flow of water," she reflects. "And oils take so long to dry."

She took painting lessons in Cloquet in an open air park where City Hall is now located. She met other watercolorists, with whom she formed a group that met and painted together in the park. One year they held an art fair.

Lyn also began to exhibit at the Park Point Art Fair. She enjoyed meeting other artists there, especially Marsha Boeker who made silk scarves. "Most artists are willing to share!" She took a class up the North Shore with Russell Norberg, whose watercolors she admired. She befriended other artists, including Joyce Gow of Two Harbors. Betty Brown invited her to the Lake Superior Watercolor Society some 20 years ago. She's still a part of it, though currently their 35 members meet by Zoom. She participates in the Arrowhead Regional Artists group as well.

What does she see as her strengths, special techniques?

"I'm not a loose painter," Jutila said. "I have a vision in my mind, and then I have to paint it before it's gone. If I don't do it



Lyn Jutila has slowly migrated to watercolor painting after starting in oils. Her work is on display at the Pine Knot News office in Cloquet's West End.

right away, it's lost. Sometimes it disappoints me, but sometimes it's better than I thought."

When Lyn paints on canvas, she preps the canvas to accept the watercolor paint with something called ground base, which "looks like Elmer's glue," brushing it on with a large paint brush. "Sometimes I have to apply layers of my colors. I work from the top down. Sometimes, I can tilt the canvas and the paint will roll!"

Lyn and Bruce raised three children. She began to teach watercolors, through community ed and workshops at the library, mostly locally. She held some parent-child classes, teaching adults what they needed to do and how to work with their children. "I taught everyone from a 70-year-old grandpa to a 3-year-old." She taught an adult class one year at the Pine Valley chalet. She currently serves on the new art board at the Cloquet Public Library.



Cloquet artist nabs fifth DNR stamp

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Artist Stuart Nelson of Cloquet has received another honor from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. His work will be featured on the 2021 walleye stamp issued by the DNR after it was chosen in a contest. It is the fifth time Nelson's work has been featured on a fishing stamp.

Nelson chuckles from his home on Big Lake and says he has been painting "forever, probably. I've got a degree in art. I went for four years to an art school, so I've been painting pretty much all of my life."

His artwork may have started with sketching and drawing years ago, but Nelson has found his niche with painting. "I've done landscapes and other stuff, but I guess I'm most comfortable with wildlife, especially fish, because I'm more of a fisherman than a hunter. I guess

it's almost natural."

Nelson grew up on Big Lake. "I was always around water. Fish are the easiest for me."

Stamp contests are open to any Minnesota resident and the field is competitive. Categories include walleye habitat, trout and salmon, migratory waterfowl, pheasant habitat, and turkey habitat. Those who have works chosen are required to sit out the competition for a year.

Nelson has had his artwork chosen four other times — the 1999 trout stamp, the 2011 walleye stamp, and the 2014 trout and walleye stamps.

"I was the first artist to win them both," he said. He was third in the trout stamp contest. "It is what it is," he said. "There's some pretty good competition, so to get two winners is pretty difficult." He'll aim for the trout stamp next year.

The winning piece is an acrylic painting of a walleye taking an

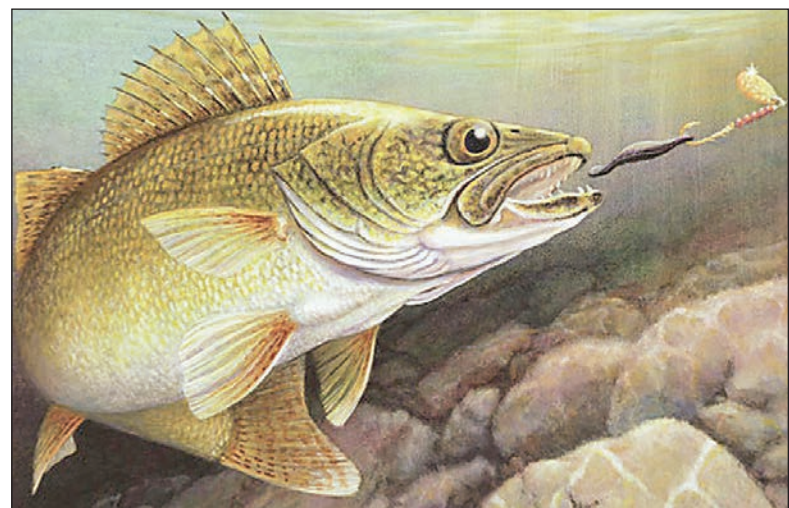
angler's lure. There was a three-way tie for runner-up out of seven eligible submissions.

The DNR uses revenue from voluntary purchases of walleye stamps to purchase walleye for stocking in Minnesota's lakes.

There are some keys to winning over judges. "I try to really make them look natural in their habitat," he said. "I do a lot of larger paintings. The fish stamp (canvas) is only six-and-a-half by nine inches, so it's difficult to do anything more than just paint the fish."

Then there is the reduction in size to the stamp. "It's tiny and you're just down to two-and-a-quarter inches by an inch-and-a-quarter stamp, so you can't get a lot of detail in there. You have to concentrate on the fish."

His non-stamp paintings are at least twice as large, allowing for more habitat like weeds or underwater logs. "Different things like that make the fish look more



Stuart Nelson's work that was chosen for the 2011 walleye stamp. Minnesota DNR photo

natural," he said. This means focusing on contrast and ensuring that the fish stands out. Nelson has found a way to do this, as evidenced by his win this year.

Nelson has other reasons he enjoys capturing wildlife. "My last two paintings have been northern paintings. I always paint an original for fundraising."

He provides a raffled painting to Minnesota Adult-Teen Chal-

lenge each year. "We've been very successful with our fundraising, so that's good," he said. "Any time you can use your talent to raise money, that's as good as it gets."

Those interested in Nelson's work can find his paintings on the website stuartnelsonart.com. Visit mndnr.gov/stamps for more information about habitat stamps and contest guidelines.