

# Silver Lining

## Senior Spotlight

ART, DRAMA, MUSIC

By Karen King Russo

Going back to our roots, we as kids all liked to draw, just like our kids and grandkids. Then we got sidetracked by life. Though a few went on to professions in art, most did not. Yet fundamental to almost any art project, even the simplest poster for the PTA, is drawing.

I am not an artist by any stretch of the imagination. But in my frenetic dash at this stage of life to try new things, I have dabbled in a few watercolor classes, both here and when away, specifically in San Miguel de Allende. Fun as they may be, I find myself a bit stymied from the get-go because I can't draw. That is why I am glad that Manhattan Beach is fortunate to have Cynthia Carver Svezia, or Cindy, as she is known, teaching drawing at Joslyn Community Center, under the auspices of the South Bay Adult School.

The current session, Tuesday mornings, 10 a.m. to noon, will be coming to a close, but will start up anew on Tuesday, January 5. All you need to bring to class is a 9 X 12 sketch pad, and some drawing pencils, #2, B, B2, B4, and B6.

At the beginning of each class, Cindy presents a project, an object to draw like a box, an onion, or a sunflower. She gives a demonstration and then everyone is on their own. Some beginners, like me, struggle just to follow her suggestions. I am actually sometimes rather delighted with what I turn out, however amateurish. Others who are more advanced take off on their own creative journey, coming up with something wonderful. She never criticizes--merely gives us all suggestions on how to improve at whatever level we are.

Cindy is a wife, mother, and active member of the community in El Segundo. She has a degree from UCLA in computer design, is a muralist, and has designed for a needlepoint company. She has taught art to a wide spectrum of students from graphic designers and retired engineers ready to tap into the creative side, to little kids. "Most of my students," she says, "are there for fun, to create a new hobby, to enjoy the social aspects of working with others, and of course to learn." She adds, "In these difficult economic times, staying focused for a couple of hours on something outside your life is a stress reducer." She has something going because many of the students return session after session.

Melen McBride, a member of Cindy's class, said that back in grade school, she liked drawing and was pretty good at it. Then a lifetime career in academia left no time for art. Melen has a PhD in nursing with a specialty in geriatrics. Since retiring from teaching at Stanford University, she has thrown herself into several of the senior activities in Manhattan Beach, including founding the Senior Resource Center. She says of Cindy's course, "I find myself noticing details more closely, both in nature and just daily life. Something as simple as a leaf can take on an intense fascination when you put it on paper."

To find Cindy's class, be on the lookout for the South Bay Adult School brochure that will come in the mail, or go up to the Joslyn Center and ask for Jan Buik.

**On to drama,** Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie*, directed by the delightful Maria Ruiz and performed by Palos Verdes Players, will be given at the Joslyn Community Center Sunday, November 15 at 3:00 p.m. Before

turning to directing, Ruiz studied acting with Eric Morris and at the Actors Studio. Since then she has directed such plays as Arthur Miller's *After the Fall* and *All My Sons*, and Frederico Lorec's *Blood Wedding*.

Ruiz says of *Anna Christie*, "It was Greta Garbo's first talkie. O'Neil intended it as a drama, but much to his chagrin it was received as a comedy." Ruiz's production was performed in Palos Verdes to such enthusiastic audience response that she decided to bring it to Manhattan Beach. Casting for the play, Ruiz chose from the PV Players, the Play Reading class she facilitates in Manhattan Beach, and award-winning speakers from the Toastmaster group she heads. Free and open to the public, complimentary light refreshments will be served after the performance. Not only will you get to see a world renowned play, but you might recognize some of your neighbors on stage that you did not even know had such talent.

**And to music,** one of the best-kept secrets deserving more attention is the Bach's Lunch Recitals, a free noontime concert series at 12:15 p.m. on the first Friday of the month at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1340 Eleventh Street in Manhattan Beach. The intimate and acoustically superb setting makes for an inspiring treat for music lovers, right here at home. It began when they wanted to show of their new organ, obtained in 1992 and built by the same person who built the organ at Our Lady of the Angeles Cathedral.

Mark your calendar for the following concerts:

December 4 will feature Santa Monica College pianist Nora Chang, and USC Thorton students cellist Joo Lee and violinist Stirling Trent, a graduate of Julliard where he studied with Itzhak Perlman.

January 8, violinist Helen Callus will play Bach. Callus graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, studied at the Peabody Conservatory in Maryland and is faculty member at UC Santa Barbara.

February 8 features American pianist Christopher Atzinger, a winner of many international piano competitions.

March 5 features organist Nambee Hann and cellist Lars Hoefs.

April 2 features the Lutheran church's own organist and choirmaster, James Taulbee. Since the program falls on Good Friday, the music will be appropriate for Holy week.

Some of these same artists can be seen on the stages of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion or the Disney Concert Hall.

Others may be in due time. Now they can be enjoyed right here in Manhattan Beach, free of charge. Hard to pass up. Again the concerts are free, and at just 30 minutes can fit in a lunchtime break. In fact, box lunches are available for \$5. There are also Sunday afternoon concerts at 4 p.m. but those are not on a particular schedule. Call the church office at 310-937-9722, or look up [www.palosverdes.com/TLCmusic](http://www.palosverdes.com/TLCmusic).

And don't forget the Be Our Guest Program. Seniors are invited, free, for all shows at Mira Costa. How cool is that? I think both their drama and music productions match most of the professional productions I see. And Dial-A-Ride will take you to and from. For upcoming programs, call the Older Adult Office at Joslyn and talk to Jan Buik, 310-802-5000 Ext. 5447.

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