Larry Veeder: Still painting, still learning

BY RUTH NERHAUGEN
Staff Writer

If chill winds have blown most of the orange and gold leaves off the trees, don't worry. There's enough color in Larry Veeder's paintings to satisfy any leaf-peepers who took a fall color trip to Red Wing for the Fall Festival of the Arts.

The 40th annual Red Wing Arts Association show runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and from 10 a.m. to around 4:30 p.m. Sunday in downtown Red Wing.

Poster art for the 2006 show features one of Veeder's Mississippi River-Barn Bluff scenes. It's reproduced on T-shirts, too.

Another of his autumn paintings is on the cover of the 2007 RWAA calendar, which also will be available at the association's festival booth at Third and Bush streets — just a few steps from the booth where Veeder and his wife, Carolyn, will spend the weekend.



The Red Wing Arts Association surprised Larry and Carolyn Veeder by naming one of its galleries the Veeder Room. A retrospective of his work is currently displayed at the Depot Gallery. — staff photo by Ruth Nerhaugen

The Veeders, who organized the first show 40 years ago, have been the focus of considerable attention. The city proclaimed today Larry and Carolyn Veeder Day in Red Wing, and the association named one of its galleries the Veeder Room as a way of recognizing all the couple has contributed to the local arts scene.

He does the painting, and she does the matting and framing, plus "I'm kind of the go-for," Carolyn Veeder

Another of her contri- ons, according to her and, is her outgoing nality.

he's very good at meet- people," he said. "And quite a designer. We a good display."

rry Veeder began oring art as a child, ing up in Watford City estern North Dakota. n he contracted rheu- ic fever at age 11 and bedridden for several ths, he spent a lot of practicing drawing — cially cowboys, gun- ers, Indians and World II war images. He's got ral scrapbooks full of ures he drew during the years.

the 1950s he studied ting at the Minneapolis ege of Art and Design. couple moved to Red g in 1963. Veeder said jumped at the chance" ansfer from Owatonna become Josten's art ctor here because the le was attracted to the munity, its sandstone s and the Mississippi r.

In 1975 he left Josten's, and for the most part he has devoted himself full-time to his art ever since.

"We enjoy the art fairs," Veeder said, although they don't do as many outdoor shows as in the past. "It's a lot of work" and very time consuming, so they more often use galleries and other outlets for his work. And they have a second home in Arizona, where they spend four to five months each year.

Likewise, his work reflects his interest in both places. Working in oils, watercolors, acrylics and pastels, Veeder paints familiar images of Minnesota and scenes of the West.

Work on display

A retrospective of Veeder's work is on display in the association's Depot Gallery adjacent to Levee Park, just a block downhill from the festival.

The show includes works borrowed from private collections and originals of local scenes that also have been distributed as black and white prints.

"I'm working on new things all the time," Veeder said, admitting that he gets tired of "doing the same old things."

Right now he's experimenting with abstract art, something he's "dabbled in" over the years. A workshop he took from John Salminen, realistic abstract artist from Duluth, piqued his interest. Veeder also recently researched a historical painting with a Lewis and Clark theme for a big hotel in Billings, Mont.

Two unique sections of the current Depot Gallery show include photographs of the artist on Sorin's Bluff, at work painting scenes, along with his finished paintings of the woods and the old quarry. They are distinctive "Veeder views" that Red Wing people know and value.

From his perspective, Veeder said, "I'm glad I'm still able to paint and to run up and down the bluff."

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Kathy Boos will have a vendor booth.

"People started seeing that it was fun," Carolyn Veeder said.

Over the years the show moved from Levee to various other city parks, and then for quite a few years it was held at Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical. It became a juried show when it moved next to Bay Point Park.

"That changed the appearance a lot," Larry Veeder said.

Bay Point was a beautiful spot, but, "We almost blew away all the time," his wife recalled, so the show relocated one more time — to downtown Red Wing.

The festival has always been held in the fall to take advantage of the large influx of people who come into the community during leaf season.

Also, Carolyn Veeder said, it's usually the last big outdoor show of the season so they are able to attract top-quality artists from a wider area.

"It's really a nice-looking show now," Larry Veeder said, although the downtown location can only accommodate 96 or 97 artists.

Deciding who gets to participate is always a dilemma.

The weather can also be a challenge.

"The first year we were at Bay Point we had really horrible weather all week, and people said we were crazy," he recalled.

But by the weekend, everything was perfect. Veeder said there was only time, a few years ago, n the show had to be celed on Sunday ause the winds were ing booths down.

ne Veeders are hoping decent weather today Sunday, but they know le will come regardless, as the artists also come year after year for the camaraderie as well as the sales.

"We try to be artist friendly," Larry Veeder said.

The association tries to assign artists the same spot every year. That way they can visit with their once-a-year neighbors, and people can find their favorite artists easily.

As always, the Veeders will be in front of Claydon's Hallmark at Third and Bush streets. Some would say that's putting the heart of the festival at the heart of the festival.

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