



Easel

Supporting and Informing Coast Guard Artists

Summer 2023

COAST GUARD ACCEPTS 2023 ART COLLECTION; ADM FAGAN AND CAPT SENNICK PRESIDE



U.S. Coast Guard and Salmagundi Club officials and Coast Guard Art Program (COGAP) artists gather for a photo at the 2023 COGAP Art Acceptance Ceremony on July 13, 2023 at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. First row, from left to right are: COGAP artists Stephen Roberson, Kristin Hosbein, Maria Bennett Hock, and Karen Loew, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan, and COGAP artists David Ray, Elizabeth Whelan, Susanne Corbelle-tta, Leon Wescoat, III and Amy DiGi. Back row, from left to right are: Coast Guard Capt. Marc Sennick, Salmagundi Club President Emeritus Robert Pillsbury and COGAP artist Tom Hedderich.

Thirty-eight works by 25 artists were accepted into the Coast Guard Art Program's (COGAP) permanent collection during the annual acceptance ceremony July 13, 2023 at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan accepted the new works on behalf of the service. Capt. Marc Sennick, Chief of External Affairs for District 1 and previously Deputy Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Sector New York,

served as the evening's master of ceremonies.

John Ward of Saranac Lake, N.Y., was the recipient of the George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence. His acrylic painting "Rescue off Kitty Hawk" shows an injured boater being hoisted to safety in a rescue basket by a Coast Guard service member deployed from Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C.

This best-in-show work was lauded by Adm. Fagan for

capturing the complexity of a search and rescue mission at sea.

The 2023 collection vividly portrays the myriad missions of the Coast Guard. Among these are the many training exercises that make the Coast Guard *Semper Paratus*—always ready—including homeland security, protection of the marine environment and living marine rescues, aids to navigation, working dogs of the
(Continued page two., col. one)



U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan holds the George Gary Award plaque by John Ward's winning painting, "Rescue off Kitty Hawk." She is joined by Salmagundi Club President Emeritus Robert Pillsbury. The Admiral noted that this best-in-show work highlights the complexity and rigors of a rescue at sea.

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Service as well as search and rescue missions such as the one depicted in Ward's painting.

When she accepted the new works on behalf of the Coast Guard, Adm. Fagan expressed her profound thanks to COGAP artists and the program's many supporters including the Navy League and the Salmagundi Club. She noted that 2023 marked the 42nd anniversary of COGAP. "Since the program's inception," she said, "artists in their stunning works of art have volunteered their time and talent to capture the vital contributions the U.S. Coast Guard makes to our nation."

She also paid homage to the invaluable contributions of deceased COGAP artists Lewis Jackson and Dino Sistilli who passed away earlier. While Jackson's widow Susan could not attend the ceremony, four members of the Sistilli family were present. Several works by these two artists were on view.

Adm. Fagan was joined in praise of COGAP and its artists by Salmagundi Club President Emeritus Robert Pillsbury and the event's master of ceremonies, Capt. Marc Sennick. Mr. Pillsbury and Capt. Sennick noted that they looked forward to their roles in the acceptance ceremony with pleasure and gratitude. They lauded the 2023 art and its visual narration of the Coast Guard's story.

President of the New York Council of the Navy League Capt. Frank Russo, U.S. Navy (ret.) added his thanks to COGAP's talented corps of artists

and underscored Navy League support of the program and the Coast Guard. The council hosted this year's reception, an event it has repeatedly sponsored.

Karen Loew, Salmagundi Club COGAP Committee Chair and COGAP member artist, advised viewers to look closely at the 2023 art collection. Its remarkable qualities, she said and emphasized, "show why Coast Guard artists are Coast Guard proud." The art "embraces the essence of the Coast Guard which is that of service to our country and those who live here."

Contributors to this year's collection are Robert Blevins, Elizabethton, Tenn.; Susanne Corbelletta, Southport, N.C.; Kathleen Denis, Palm Beach Shores, Fla.; Amy DiGi, Yorktown Heights, N.Y.; Charles Fawcett, Bellevue, Wash.; N.Y.; Frank Gaffney, Mountlake Terrace, Wash.; Don Hatcher, Newport, Wash.; Tom Hedderich, Westtown, N.Y.; Maria Bennett Hock, Cary, N.C.; Kristin Hosbein, St. Joseph, Mich.; Daniel Coolbrith Jones, Arroyo Grande, Calif.; Debra Keirce, Broadlands, Va.; Kirk Larsen, Hicksville, N.Y.; Karen Loew, New York, N.Y.; Priscilla Messner-Patterson, Post Falls, Idaho; MK1 Jasen Newman, Kodiak, Alaska; David Ray, Wilmette, Ill.; Stephen Roberson, Arlington, Va.; Cmdr. Ken Sauerbrunn, Pittsburgh, Penn.; J. C. "Jim" Smith, McMinnville, Ore.; formerly MST2 now Ensign Thomas Unger, Houston, Texas; Leendert van der Pool, Brooklyn, N.Y.; John Ward, Saranac Lake, N.Y.; Leon Wescoat, III, Absecon, N.J.; and Elizabeth Whelan, Edgartown, Mass.

COGAP artists whose works from previous collections are also on view at the Salmagundi Club are Daven Anderson, St Louis, Mo.; Del Bourree Bach, Mystic, Conn.; James Consor, Savannah, Ga.; Chris Demarest, Bainbridge Island, Wash.; James Dyekman, Chesapeake, Md.; Louis Stephen Gadal, Los Angeles, Calif.; Mara Sfara, Farmington, Conn.; Chuck Van Horn, Glen Head, N.Y.; and Marty Walsh, Middle Village, N.Y.; and from states as noted above Susanne Corbelletta, Amy DiGi, Tom Hedderich, Debra Keirce, Kirk Larsen, Karen Loew, MK1 Jasen Newman, Stephen Roberson, Leendert van der Pool, and John Ward.

The 2023 collection will be on display at the Salmagundi Club until July 28 and then go on view at Federal Hall National Memorial through September 28, 2023. Both are located in New York City.

Photos courtesy of:
 PA3 Eric Villa Rodriguez, U.S. Coast Guard District 7
 Paul Backelenick, New York, N.Y.
 Karen Loew, New York, N.Y.
 Philippe Debeusscher, Arlington, Va.

Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty: John Ward wins 2023 George Gray Award for “Rescue off Kitty Hawk”

Each year a panel of jurors selects a recipient for the George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence from the collection of artwork submitted to the U.S. Coast Guard Art Program. No stranger to the program or this award, John Ward is this year’s award winner for his painting “Rescue off Kitty Hawk.” His acrylic painting depicts a rescue of an injured boater by a Coast Guard service member deployed from Air Station Elizabeth City in North Carolina. Mr. Ward has previously won the award — the art program’s best in show award — for his outstanding work in 2020, 2006 and earlier in 2000.

The award-winning work was chosen by a panel of judges comprised of Adm. Linda Fagan, Commandant of Coast Guard; Vijay Kumar, artist and teacher; and Robert Mueller, a former curator at the Salmagundi Club and artist and designer.

In naming Ward’s work, Adm. Fagan said, “I am incredibly excited to be part of the judging for this year’s Coast Guard Art Program. Search and rescue is a complex and dangerous mission for our service and the action and the reality of rescuing somebody at sea is absolutely captured in this year’s winning painting.”

The artist, a New York native, received a bachelor of science degree from Niagara University, a master’s in art education from SUNY (Plattsburgh) and a master’s in illustration from Syracuse University. He received his New York State teacher certificate from St. Lawrence University Graduate Program. He retired from the Saranac Lake High School where he taught art for 30 years.

Mr. Ward has designed two Adirondack rustic homes in the village of Saranac Lake, where he has his home and studio. He is the official ice carver for the Saranac Lake Winter Carnival Ice Palace and creates sculptures out of enormous 600 pound blocks of ice.

His art has been used by more than 60 publish-



The 2023 George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence recipient was COGAP artist John Ward here pictured in his home in Saranac Lake, New York.
Photo courtesy Jane Ward

ers and he has received numerous awards. His work was chosen by the U.S. State Department for its Art in Embassies Program and exhibited in Swaziland, Africa. Ward’s works have also been shown at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Mass., and the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., among many other locations. He is a former member of the Society of Illustrators and the Graphic Artists Guild. He now spends much of his time creating portraits.

Upon learning that he had won the prestigious George Gray Award, Mr. Ward declared: “I grew up in a small town along the St. Lawrence Seaway, and I always felt safe on the water knowing that the U.S. Coast Guard was looking out for us. I am the son of a wounded World War II veteran, and I was taught at an early age the importance of giving back. I think that it is very fitting to do so by contributing to the U.S. Coast Guard Art Program.”

The July 13th COGAP Acceptance Ceremony in Pictures

The jurors faced a formidable task in deciding which work from the 2023 collection would win the George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence. Shown here are the three award jurors as they pensively examined each of the 38 artworks comprising the 2023 collection. They are (left to right) artist Vijay Kumar, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan and artist and designer Robert Mueller, who is also a former Salmagundi Club curator.



Members of the Coast Guard Sector New York Color Guard arrive for the opening of the 2023 COGAP Art Acceptance Ceremony.



Coast Guard Band Senior Chief Musician Mark McCormick on bass and Musician First Class Yeisson Villamar on piano provided music during the reception. The duo also performed the National Anthem during the Presentation of Colors.



Guests are welcomed to the July 13th Acceptance Ceremony at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. In the front row (right to left) are COGAP artist and Salmagundi Club COGAP Committee Chair Karen Loew, Coast Guard Chief Judge Walter Brudzinski, District 1 Command Master Chief Michael Ingham, District 1 Commander Rear Adm. John Mauger, Coast Guard Vice Adm. Sally Brice-O'Hara (ret.), Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan and New York Council of the Navy League President Capt. Frank Russo.

Speakers at COGAP's Acceptance Ceremony



Master of Ceremonies
Capt. Marc Sennick
welcomes guests.



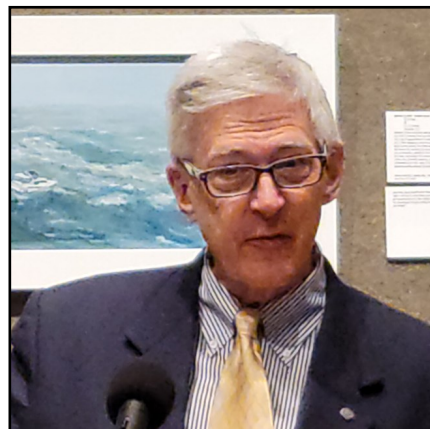
Sector N.Y. Chaplain Keith Connor
delivers the invocation.



New York Council of the Navy League
President Capt. Frank Russo
offers remarks



Karen Loew, Salmagundi Club
COGAP Committee Chair and COGAP
artist, addresses guests.



Salmagundi Club President Emeritus
Robert Pillsbury presents the 2023
collection to the Coast Guard.



Coast Guard Commandant
Adm. Linda Fagan accepts
the 2023 collection on behalf of the
Coast Guard.

Artists receive the Public Service Commendation Award July 13th

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan presented COGAP artists attending the July 13, 2023 ceremony with a Public Service Commendation Award. The award is given in recognition of contributions to the Coast Guard. It can be signed only by a Flag officer or the civilian equivalent. Robert Pillsbury, Salmagundi Club President Emeritus is shown on the left. Ten of the 25 artists contributing to the 2023 collection were present at the July 13th ceremony. Public service awards for artists not attending were sent Robert Blevins, Kathleen Denis, Charles Fawcett, Frank Gaffney, Don Hatcher, Daniel Coolbrith Jones, Debra Keirce, Kirk Larsen, MK1 Jasen Newman, Priscilla Messner-Patterson, Cmdr. Ken Sauerbrunn, J.C. "Jim" Smith, Ensign (formerlyMST2) Thomas Unger, Leendert van der Pool, and John Ward.

COGAP artist Susanne Corbelletta receives her award for her oil painting *"The welder."*



COGAP artist Amy DiGi receives her award for her oil painting *"Checking for environmental hazards."*





COGAP artist and Salmagundi Club COGAP Membership Chair and COGAP Committee Vice Chair Tom Hedderich receives his award for his watercolor painting *“Hoist training with canine.”*



COGAP artist Maria Bennett Hock receives her award for her two oil paintings. Shown here is *“Survival technician responds to Hurricane Ian”*



COGAP artist Kristin Hosbein receives her award for her oil painting, *"Pile driving in Portsmouth."*



COGAP artist and Salmagundi Club COGAP Committee Chair Karen Loew receives her award for her oil painting *"Mississippi River patrol."*

COGAP artist David Ray receives his award for his oil painting "Training for rescues."



COGAP artist Stephen Roberson receives his award for his two paintings. Shown here is his oil painting "Wet work."



COGAP artist Leon Wescoat, III receives his award for his oil painting *"Looking FORWARD."*



COGAP artist Elizabeth Whelan receives her award for her oil painting *"Maintaining aids to navigation."*

Chaplain Keith Connor's Invocation and Benediction Blessings

Invocation

Almighty God,

We ask for your blessing on the 42nd anniversary of the Coast Guard Art Program and for the opportunity to memorialize the contributions that our Coast Guard members make to our country. We express our gratitude for the support of so many contributors of Coast Guard art, that make up the over 2,000 works in its collection. May we take the time tonight to appreciate the new pieces, and remember the challenging environments that our service members face in carrying out their duties, and the artistic skill needed to capture this.

Whether it is Search and Rescue, Maritime Security, Natural Resource Protection, or National Defense, we pray that our service members are safe and protected from accidents as well as the civilians they are supporting, and that both are always under your watchful eye. We also pray for the family members and friends who are not in the paintings, but are so visible in the lives and success of each Coast Guard member.

While it is impossible to paint the Coast Guard Core Values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty, we can certainly see them illustrated in the paintings, and know what our service members stand for, and pray that these qualities are found at every Coast Guard station that dots the shores of our country.

We also pray for the families of two artists in the Coast Guard Art Program who passed on over the last year, Dino Sistilli, who has four family members here tonight, and Lew Jackson, whose widow could not be present. God, we ask that you bless their families, and we pray that they feel your dear love for them during this time.

We also give gratitude to the Salmagundi Club, which has sponsored the Coast Guard Art Program from its very first year. May the Salmagundi Club be the place where many new artists get to share their works with an even wider audience.

In your holy name we pray. Amen

Benediction

Gracious God,

We ask for your blessing as we close this year's Coast Guard Art Program, and we pray that the excellent artworks continue in the years to come. We pray for the artists' creativity in bringing the many missions of the Coast Guard to life. May this mirror the utmost professionalism of our Coast Guard members as they carry on their daily duties. We pray that the artwork on display tonight helps to elevate the everyday, but noble tasks that our members perform. May these works of art help to inspire a new generation of Coast Guard members post 9/11, who want to serve their country and take part in the many opportunities that the Coast Guard offers.

From its origins as the U.S. Lifesaving Service and Revenue Cutter Service, we pray that our Coast Guard members always be Semper Paratus when called upon to rescue someone. May each Coast Guard member be strengthened in the work they do, and may each person in dire straits have faith in the young men and women of the Coast Guard being sent to their aid.

The Bible says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." May we perceive in each work of art the things which are not seen, yet are the true substance of our service, such as the courage, conviction, determination to help others. We also pray that these qualities sustain our members when the days are long and demands significant.

May God bless the Salmagundi Club for being a beacon of creativity in Lower Manhattan, and in its ongoing support of the Coast Guard Art Program. May God continue to bless our Coast Guard and every service member as they carry out their nation's business. Amen.