

A Guide to the Loudoun Sketch Club, 1947-

Loudoun Sketch Club 1947
1947

A Collection in the Thomas Balch Library M 040
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History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Loudoun Sketch Club, 1947-

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Author: Matthew Exline

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Descriptive Summary

Collection number

M 040

Language

English

Abstract

This collection consists of materials in scrapbooks, folders, and bound volumes. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, newsletters, and Exhibition programs and invitations.

Creator

Loudoun Sketch Club

Extent

1.65 cu. ft.

Repository

Thomas Balch Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open for research

Use Restrictions

Physical characteristics and conditions affect some of this material. Photocopying of some items may not be permitted.

Acquisition Information

Loudoun Sketch Club, Loudoun County, VA

Processing Information

Processed by Matthew Exline, 29 April 2008.

This is an open collection

Preferred Citation

Loudoun Sketch Club, 1947- (M 040), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Accruals

2006.0149

Alternative Form Available

None

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

None

Bibliography

"Loudoun Sketch Club: About Us," <http://loudounsketchclub.com/about.html> (accessed 15 Apr 2008). Loudoun Sketch Club (M 040), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Other Finding Aid

None

Technical Requirements

None

Biographical Information

This collection consists of the papers and scrapbooks of Loudoun Sketch Club. The Sketch Club, which still exists, is according to its website "an active group of local artists working in various media." Club members meet regularly for work and critique. Work sessions are held indoors during cooler months; in the summer, meetings move to scenic outdoor locations around Loudoun County. The Club also gives its members opportunities "to learn from interesting presentations and to meet with like-minded artists...[and] to show their work." The Club hosts at least one members-only Annual Exhibition, at which members and invited guests show and sell their works.

For most of the period covered by materials in this collection membership was by invitation only, open to artists living in Loudoun County who worked in painting, graphics, sculpture, or collage. According to by-laws, active members were required to attend weekly meetings (exception was made for artists working on large or difficult-to-transport projects) and business meetings. Associate membership was open to artists with full-time jobs, former members who had moved away, art teachers in Loudoun County schools, and

honorary members. Associate members were not required to attend any meetings, though they were always invited, and paid half the dues of active members. Honorary members were exempt from any obligations and paid no dues. Each year the Club held an exhibition, for which active members were expected to submit "a reasonable number of works." The requirement changed to "at least five" submissions in 1964, of which apparently less than five were selected for exhibition. Guest artists or organizations were routinely invited to participate in the Annual Exhibitions. The Club received a commission on any member's work sold at an exhibition: this commission was raised from an unknown amount to 20% in 1961, and again to 25% in 1988. The Club was allowing photography in its Exhibitions by the early 1990s, and today membership is no longer by invitation only.

The Club was founded unofficially in 1944 when Vinton Liddell Pickens (1 Jan 1900-25 Nov 1993), Evelyn Marshall (1 Apr 1897-15 July 1987), and Betty Tiffany (c. 1923-) met while exhibiting artwork at the First Annual Waterford Crafts Fair. After the fair, the three started meeting at each other's houses to sketch and paint, and had a small exhibit at the 1945 Waterford Fair called "A Day with the Hot Sketches." Her husband, Robert S. Pickens (12 Dec 1899-12 Nov 1978), originated the name when he came out of their house one day as the women were working on the lawn and said "You're a bunch of hot sketches, aren't you?" (a popular slang phrase of the day). In 1947 the group, now at about 12 members, had its 1st Annual Exhibition in the recreation room of Leesburg Baptist Church, still as the "Hot Sketches." The 2nd Annual Show was in the old Leesburg Court House, now under the name "Hot Sketch Club of Loudoun County." By the 3rd Annual Show, also in the Court House, the group was known by its current name, "The Loudoun Sketch Club." The Loudoun Times-Mirror reported the Club had 9 active and 4 associate members (but listed 14 names).

Since then, the Club has continued to sponsor its Annual Exhibition, held in many different locations. Little information survives about the Exhibitions from 1950-1953. From 1954 to 1973 (except for 1957 and 1972) the Club held its Exhibitions in the "new" Leesburg County Office Building (different from the new County Administrative Center that replaced it in the 1970s). Technically there was no 11th Annual Exhibition in 1957; instead, eight Club members painted a "Group of Historical Murals," with supplies paid for by the County. The murals depicted important scenes and events throughout Loudoun County's history to celebrate the Bi-Centennial of the founding of the County. The murals were unveiled in July, displayed in the old Leesburg Court House through the rest of 1957, then moved to Loudoun County High School, where at least through the 1980s they were used to teach local history. From 1974 to 1976 the Club held its Exhibitions in the Middleburg Community Center. The Loudoun Times-Mirror ran a detailed but clichéd account of the 29th Annual Exhibition (1975), which was parodied in an anonymous piece in the Club scrapbook entitled "European Sketch Club Opens Show."

In 1977 the Club moved its Exhibitions to the new County Administrative Center Building. In 1986 members of the Sketch Club helped to re-furbish the Odd Fellows Hall in the Loudoun Museum and held the Exhibitions in the Museum from 1986 through 1994. The 1994 Exhibition was a special celebration of the Club's 50th anniversary, first running as usual at the Loudoun Museum, followed by another month at George Washington University Loudoun Campus. In 1991 the Club had 47 members; by 1996 the Club had 55 members and was hosting two Annual Exhibitions: the traditional one in spring or early summer, and another in autumn or winter. In the 1990s members still met weekly, indoors in winter at the Douglass Community Center in Leesburg, and outdoors "on location" in summer. The Club continued to hold most of its Exhibitions at George Washington University Loudoun Campus from 1995-1999.

In addition to the Club's official Annual Exhibition, the Club hosted many one-time exhibitions to honor special occasions, individuals, or explore artistic themes. Club members also participated in other shows or held their own. Many Club members have also used their talents serve or participate in the community. For example, in 1942 Liddell Pickens, the Club's founder, petitioned for the establishment of zoning in Loudoun County, helped to write the County's first zoning ordinance, and served on the Planning Commission until 1961; Dagmar Wilson (c. 1916-?), a faithful Club member in the 1960s-1980s, founded the organization "Women Strike for Peace" in 1961 to petition for a nuclear test ban treaty; and in 1988 Club member Margaret Siner used her sculpting and anatomical skills to help the Loudoun Sheriff's Office by re-creating the appearance of an unidentified skeleton found near a dirt road.

Today the Club continues to provide a place for artists to work together and through regular shows provides a way for artists to show their work. The Club also continues to provide a foundation for a growing interest in the arts in Loudoun County.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of materials in scrapbooks, folders, and bound volumes. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, newsletters, and Exhibition programs and invitations. Some of these scrapbooks are in fragile condition and may have restrictions on their use. The folders contain newspaper clippings, photographs, artist resumes, correspondence, meeting minutes, financial records, and a typed manuscript, "A Loudoun Sketch Club History (1946-1966)," by Mary Lou Witmer, 2006. Some of the items folders were originally in 3-ring binders; the current folders have the same titles as the original binders and, where

possible, the contents are still in their original order. The bound volumes include a guest book, composition books containing Exhibition registers, meeting attendance, financial records, and minutes. This is an open collection, and will probably be augmented by future additions.

Contents List

Box 1

Folder 1: Scrapbook 1, 1946-May 1975

Folder 2: Scrapbook 2, Apr 1976-Sep 1985

Folder 3: Scrapbook 3, Oct 1985-Mar 1989

Folder 4: Scrapbook 4, May 1989-Oct 1994,

Folder 5: Scrapbook 5, Jan 1994-Nov 1997, n.d.

Folder 6: Empty custom 3-ring binder with the Club's name on it, n.d.

Box 2

Folder 1: Correspondence, 1956-1966

Folder 2:2a: Treasurer's Reports to 1963 (with bank statements, cancelled checks, invoices, and correspondence) (Part a), 1947-1963

Folder 2:2b: Treasurer's Reports to 1963 (with bank statements, cancelled checks, and invoices) (Part b), 1947-1963

Folder 2:3: Newspaper clippings 1978-1986, 1978-1986

Folder 2:4a: Contents of "The Artist" scrapbook (clippings, posters, resumes, and photographs) (Part a), n.d.

Folder 2:4b: Contents of "The Artist" scrapbook (clippings, posters, resumes, and photographs) (Part b), n.d.

Folder 2:4c: Contents of "The Artist" scrapbook (clippings, posters, resumes, and photographs) (Part c), n.d.

Folder 2:5a: Contents of "Resumes" binder (with photographs) (Part a), n.d.

Folder 2:5b: Contents of "Resumes" binder (with photographs) (Part b), n.d.

Folder 2:5c: Contents of "Resumes" binder (with photographs) (Part c), n.d.

Folder 2:6: "A Loudoun Sketch Club History (1946-1966)," by Mary Lou Witmer, 2006

Box 3

Folder 1: Bound Volume, "Guests" (Guest book 1991-1992), 1991-1992

Folder 2: Bound Volume, Spiral Composition Book (Attendance, Financial

Folder 2: Bound Volume, Spiral Composition Book (Attendance, Financial Information, Minutes), n.d.

Folder 3: Bound Volume, Square Deal Composition Book, "Loudoun College Exhibition Register," n.d.

Folder 4: Bound Volume, Exhibition Register, 1950-1953

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