

Los Altos Art Docent, Betty Latta, has been awarded the Los Altos - Los Altos Hills Joint Community Volunteer Service Award for promoting art and education and it is clear that Betty Latta loves to teach art.

Her voice gently lilts with her original Virginian accent as she explains to a group of trainee Los Altos Art Docents how to arrange a still life of fruit and vegetables for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Watercolor Still Life lesson. She fondly describes the interplay of colors and textures. **'I love to bring a pear with a nice blush. The kids love it when they see the red and yellow paint flow.'**

Betty has served as an Art Docent with the Los Altos School District for 36 years. She's loved every minute of it. She began her career in teaching when her husband was deployed to Okinawa for thirteen months. She taught second grade in Elmhurst, Illinois (near Chicago) and lived with his parents.

After the birth of her third son, the family moved to Los Altos. Betty became very involved in the Oak PTA board and Oak Site Council for many years as the newsletter editor and as the PTA co-president with her husband for two years. She also hosted exchange students from Iwata, Japan.

Betty taught Sunday School at the Los Altos Methodist Church with Nancy Marston (one of the LAAD founders and, at that time, the



Betty Latta (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) with other Award recipients

Co-ordinator). When she saw Nancy's name on a LAAD introductory coffee flyer in the Oak School office, she gave Nancy a call and the rest is history! 'Nancy had a wonderful way of bringing you in and making you feel welcome and comfortable. (And showing you a few art techniques and assuring you that you really could teach that lesson!)

Betty began with the Art Docents by teaching clay lessons and moved to watercolor painting as her interest in painting grew. Betty now paints in oils and watercolors as an artist in her own right. Last summer she taught five sessions of watercolor lessons to members of the Mid-Peninsular Widow and Widowers Association—some of whom had never painted before.

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### Trainee Art Docents in Schools

During October, the 2012-13 trainee art docents spent some time in the classroom to get a feel for teaching art to real students.

One trainee assisted with a 5<sup>th</sup> grade One-Point Perspective class. In this lesson, students are introduced to linear perspective drawing to create depth on a 2-dimensional plane using a t-square.

To help the students understand the activity, the art docent lead gave examples to the children from their own experience, such as playing a computer game like 'Mine Craft'. 'The use of real life examples makes it more relevant to the students,' the trainee said.

The trainees were excited to have been involved in the classroom and were keen to return and further their experiences.

<p><b>George Seurat visits the Art Docents</b></p> <p>Los Altos Art Docents were treated to a special performance for the November General Meeting. George Seurat paid them a visit! No, he wasn't a ghost or a zombie, it was the unique art education technique of Ken Young, teacher, artist and actor.</p> <p>Ken Young began performing in 1978. As an art teacher he was seeking a new way to inspire his students about art history.</p> <p>He has developed performances for about 50 characters all together, including Rembrandt, Picasso, and Wayne Theibaud.</p>	<p>The sensitivity and reserve of Ken Young's performance brought the character of the 19<sup>th</sup> century painter to life in the plain school Multi.</p> <p>George Seurat was intrigued by the way the Impressionists used colour which he observed at the 3rd Impressionist Exhibition. Instead of painting from a tube of green paint, they would place dabs of blue and yellow paint close together on the canvas. This would appear to be green.</p> <p>From this inspiration and from his study of optics, a new science at the time, Seurat developed the</p>	<p>technique which he called 'Divisionism', usually known as Pointillism.</p>  <p><i>Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte</i></p>
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