

The Escarpment painters

Local artists combine talents for show

By MARG LANGTON

Special to The Champion

"It could be a disaster or a lot of fun," says Ann Kloppenburg with characteristic frankness. She is promoting a show of watercolors that opens Sept. 16 at the Burlington Cultural Centre called The Sight of Music because although the artist would prefer to be home painting she is enough in tune with the marketplace to know the importance of advance publicity. Slick PR is not her field—her choicest quotes are, unfortunately off the record—but her excitement about her work and The Escarpment Group of Painters in Watercolor which stages the exhibition is refreshingly contagious.

The 13 painters that compose the group are attempting one of the greatest leaps of courage creative individuals face by trying new styles to match the theme of music and musicians seen through the eye of an artist. Lyle Glover will portray black jazz musicians while Ms. Kloppenburg departs from her more recognizable mode to capture in gouache the strength and vitality of three Teen Tour Band members.

As the public makes its way through the exhibit studying the wide diversity of approaches and subject matter, snatches of taped music to match the work of each artist will complement the visual experience. Lovers of jazz, classical, blues, rock, ethnic and even the show tunes sung by Shirley McLaine at Hamilton Place will go away satisfied.

It was Marion Gow who decided that the upcoming group show should be something different, Ms. Kloppenburg points out. A lot of the artists are

known for their landscapes or their meticulous realism, have made names for themselves, and are expected to keep turning out the work that has made them successful. But the more critical viewer of the art scene who wonders, "Can't he (or she) do something else?" will be pleased to see the results of those members who have stretched themselves and accepted the challenge of venturing onto new ground.

That it is a challenge is without question. Many artists have been stung by a fickle public's rejection of experimentation and have bruised egos and dwindling bank accounts to show for it. The male artists in the group make their living from art, Ms. Kloppenburg explains. The seven women grapple with the age-old dilemma of combining their "real" work and the necessary business of running households.

Traditionally, the artist's life has been a lonely one of guarding jealously the time and the space necessary to produce good work. The formation of the Escarpment Group of Painters in Watercolor in 1979 helped combat the isolation of 13 highly-regarded area artists with monthly meetings and group shows. They respect the individualism of one another's work and profit from the meeting of like minds and sharing of ideas. "It's a wonderful collection of characters," Ms. Kloppenburg says.

Being a character is not always synonymous with having talent. In the case of the Escarpment Painters, however, each has the credentials of a professional: they have been accepted in juried exhibitions and have shown in galleries. Their aim for their latest venture is similar to that of their first show at Pettipiece Gallery, Hamilton in

November '79. Writing in a newsletter prior to the Hamilton show, group organizer Lyle Glover urged members to stress their own individual technique and subject matter as well as doing all they could to make their combined presentation dramatic and unusual "so no one can tab it as just another watercolor show."

In 1980 and 1981, the group decided to get into the awards business by instituting the People's Choice award at the Burlington Fine Arts Association Juried Show at the Burlington Cultural Centre. Visitors at the show cast their ballots for a democratic approach to a pursuit still seen as elitist by many Canadians.

Europeans and Americans buy art more readily than Canadians, Ms. Kloppenburg finds, adding that a gradual change is occurring and that Burlington is more appreciative than many centres of the artist in its midst.

Following are brief descriptions of the Escarpment group members:

Joseph Anthony: The Burlington artist has been in major juried shows and his one man show in Burlington was a sellout. He has work in many private collections across Canada.

Cecil Barlow: The Hamiltonian has been accepted in major juried shows and has won awards including six CKOC purchase awards. His work is in private collections throughout Ontario.

Dawn Beatty: Ms. Beatty studied with Gery Puley, at the Burlington Cultural Centre and the Dundas Valley School of Art. Her work has been in

numerous major juried shows and her first solo show was at Burlington Central Library.

Elizabeth Dawson: Ms. Dawson taught art for 10 years, has been in major juried shows and won awards. She had a one woman show at the Burlington Cultural Centre and was featured artist at the opening of the new Gallery Mariah in 1980. The Burlington artist has work in private collections in Canada, U.S. and abroad.

Robert Fisher: The St. Catharines resident has painted with A.Y. Jackson, C. Shaeffer, Ken Cosgrove, Allen Collier and has had six one man shows. His awards include Molson's 1976-77.

Kenneth Gent: President of the Upper Canada Centre for Visual Arts, Mr. Gent resides in Niagara-on-the-Lake. His work has been accepted in major juried shows and appears in private collections in Canada, U.S. and abroad.

Lyle Glover: The Burlington resident is a freelance illustrator, court room recording artist for CHCH TV and was head artist for Odeon Theatres from 1947 to 1952. His awards include the Jasper Award for Best Weekly Editorial Cartoon, 1976. He held a one man show at Grimsby Public Art Gallery in 1976.

Marion Gow: A former commercial artist for the T. Eaton Company, the Hamilton resident has been in major juried shows and won awards. She had a one woman show at Gallery Manfred,

Dundas in 1976.

Fredda Howell: Another Hamilton resident, Howell has been in major juried shows including the Peretz School Art Show and Canadian Collection 1978, Calgary. She has work in many private collections.

Ann Kloppenburg: Born in Ireland, the Burlington resident has been in major shows and has had eight solo exhibits. Awards include the CKOC Purchase Award, 1978 and the Cuna Insurance Company Burlington Award. Her work is in private collections in Canada, U.S. and abroad.

Jim McConnell: Also a native of Ireland, Mr. McConnell lives in St. Catharines. He is a retained artist for the Acres Group of Companies throughout the world. He has been in major juried shows, has won 14 awards and has had many one man shows in the Niagara area. He has work in many private collections in Canada, U.S. and abroad.

Isobel Page: The well known Burlington art teacher has been in major juried shows and has won awards. She has had five solo exhibits and is represented in many private and corporate collections in Canada, U.S. and abroad.

Shirley Walker: The Burlington resident has work in major collections including Shell Oil, Alberta, CKOC, Hamilton, First Canadian Place, Toronto and Civic Square, Hamilton.



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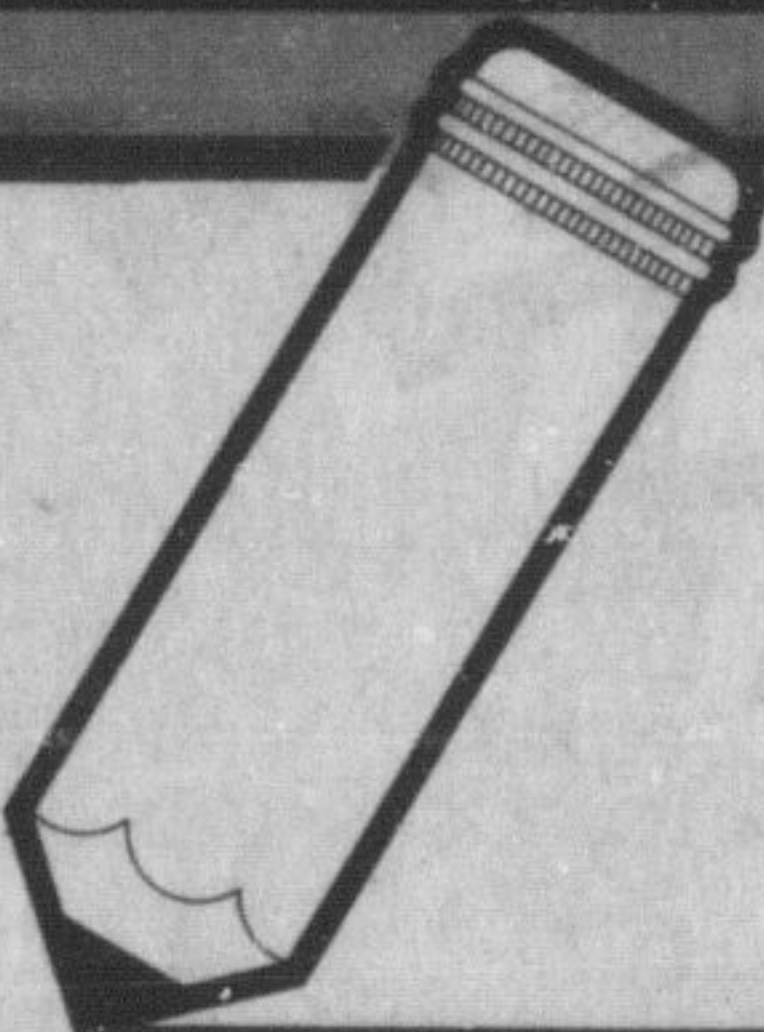
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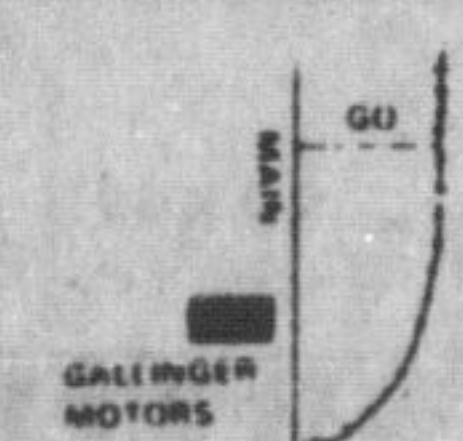
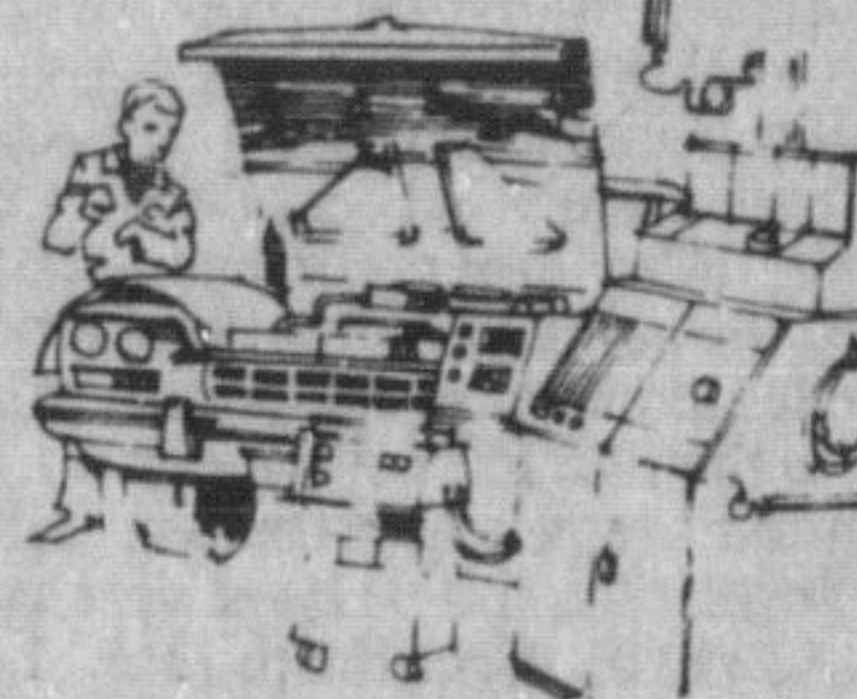
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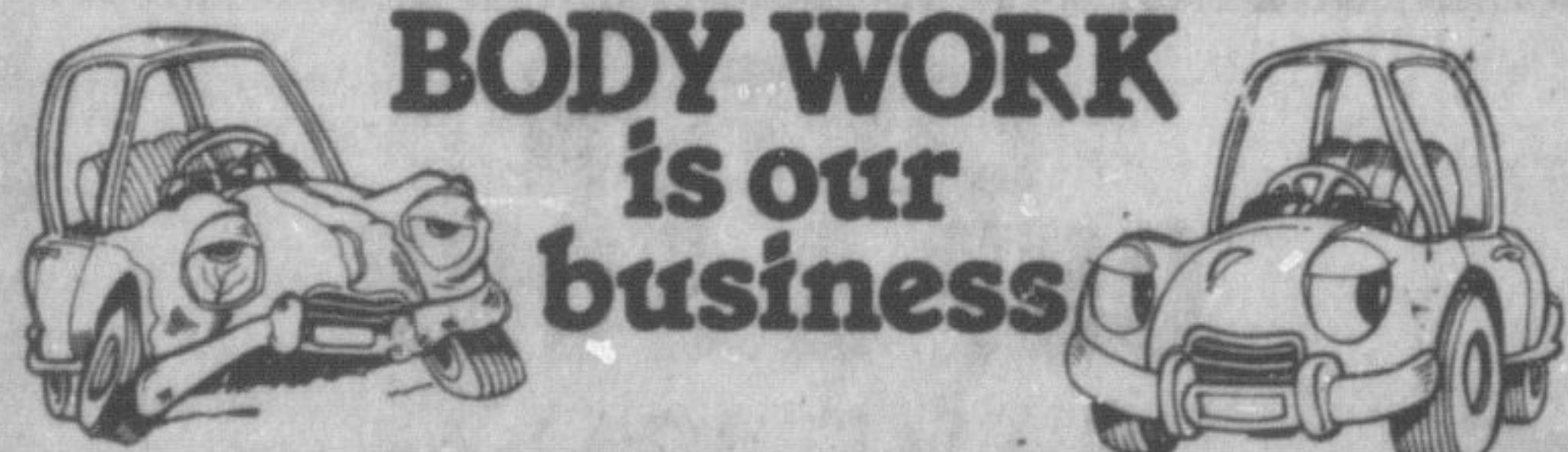
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