

CHERYL DILLINGER Artist of the Month-May

Cheryl Dillinger dreams big, and she dreams long. Ever since childhood, she remembers wanting to be an artist. And finally, after many years on a long winding path, she has become not only an artist, but an award-winning one. She spent her childhood moving from place to place because her father was in the Army. The first formal art training she has had was high school art classes. She explains, “When I was a kid, I sketched things that I saw and pictures in magazines. I especially liked drawing fashion. I enjoyed illustration and thought I might be an illustrator.”

So, she entered UT-Austin as an art major. There, Cheryl felt overwhelmed, that she “wasn’t good enough”. She left college with no encouragement and no degree and worked in retail for a few years. In her early 30s she began sewing seriously and worked her way to a position as costumer at an opera house in Granbury, TX. “I seemed to have a knack and caught on easily to designing and making costumes. I found I could make clothes from pictures and drawings. I really enjoyed it. So really, without actually calling myself an artist, I found ways to satisfy my desire to create.” When her husband, Dean, got a job in Illinois, the family had to move. In Illinois she had a sewing business, a catering business, and a coffee shop — “not all at the same time☺” — but one after the other.

Finally, again for her husband’s job (SRS), they moved to Aiken, SC. “We fell in love with Aiken, and I was very excited about the art scene there.” She was inspired to draw and paint watercolors. She even began taking classes. She took some of her work to Art and Soul in downtown Aiken.

After years of drawing and painting, she found her heart when she took a Glass-on-Glass mosaic art class from Stacy O’Sullivan. She loved her newly found medium. “I started experimenting with resin when I saw other artists that used it. I have found many different ways to use glass; the possibilities seem endless!” Cheryl learned about the North Augusta Artists Guild when Stacy, who is a member, invited her to a meeting. “It’s been wonderful to meet fellow artists and learn more about what they do and learning about new places to display and sell my art.”

Although the glass art has taken first place, she still paints with watercolors and acrylics. She is currently working on writing and illustrating a children’s book about a pig named Primrose. And now that her husband has retired, he has begun making lamps out of “just about everything”. So, the artistic output in the family has increased. Cheryl’s life-long ambition has come into being. “I love actually being an artist. It took me a long, winding way to get here. Doing glass art is especially satisfying to me, like putting a puzzle together. I only got started when we moved to Aiken 4 years ago. I love it and I feel like I am right where I am supposed to be.”

