



Newsletter

4th Quarter 2025

Aquarius
2026

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Starting December 1, 2025

We are thrilled to welcome back Michael Reardon (mreardon.com), our Juror of Selection and Awards for the Aquarius 2026 Show and Workshop.



"Dorsoduro Evening"
© Michael Reardon

Michael has been painting in watercolor for over thirty-five years. An avid traveler, he uses watercolor to record his observations, convey a sense of place and light, and communicate his impressions of the built, natural, and imagined worlds. He works from his studio in

Oakland, California.

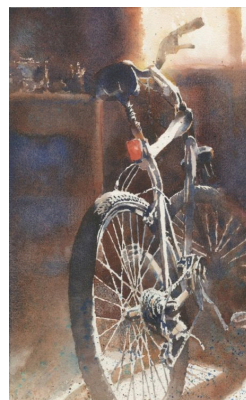
Originally trained as an architect with a degree in architecture from UC Berkeley, he was an architectural illustrator for over thirty years.

In 2005 he was the recipient of the prestigious Gabriel Prize from the Western European Architecture Foundation, which enabled him to spend three months painting in Paris. In 2004 he was awarded the Hugh Ferriss Memorial Prize, the premier award in the field of architectural illustration.

A signature member of several watercolor societies, his watercolors have been exhib-

ited worldwide. Recently, his painting, *"My Trusty Steed,"* won the "Best Vehicle" category in the February 2025 Plein Air Salon.

In his upcoming 3-day workshop, **February 23-25**, we will work on techniques to strengthen your skills in watercolor landscape painting. Fundamentals covered will include creating a strong composition, evoking a sense of light using values, and manipulating color for its full expressive effect. A demonstration will start each day, followed by individual painting with careful guidance. A review of the day's work concludes each day. We will also explore ways to work with photo references so that they help, not dictate, your final painting.



"My Trusty Steed"
© Michael Reardon

Registration for the Aquarius Workshop will open on December 1. See [Page 10](#) for "Submitting an Aquarius Digital Photo."

Find the Prospectus here ↓

Aquarius 2026 Prospectus



*CCWS Members Only
Holiday Card Show*

Catch the details on Page 3

Central Coast Watercolor Society

PO Box 922 Nipomo, CA
93444-0922

www.ccwsart.com

President

Linda Denton

Vice-President

Open

Secretary

Leslie Parsons

Treasurer

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Membership

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Workshop Coordinator

Brian Reed

Aquarius Exhibitions

Chuck Crotser

Historian

Open

Hospitality

Open

Newsletter Editor

Sandy McNeil

Past President

Jerry Smith

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President's Message

How many times in your life have you heard or used the phrase, "I'm just not talented when it comes to art"? For me, it is too many. Do you have to be "talented" to be an artist? In Betty Edwards' book, Drawing on the Artist Within, she compares learning to paint, draw, and create to learning to read. You don't have to be talented to learn to read. Granted, there are people who struggle to read, but for the most part, people learn to read through practice and they get better by doing. The same applies to the creation of art. It takes practice and a willingness to improve your skills as an artist.

Betty has another book titled, Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain. After reading this book and practicing her examples, I found myself improving. Did I improve because I was thinking differently or because I was practicing? Maybe both!

I have often referred to Malcolm Gladwell's book, Outliers: The Story of Success. When he took a close look at "successful" people, Gladwell discovered that their



Linda Denton, CCWS President

success came not from luck or talent but through practice. For example, as a kid, the great Michael Jordan spent all his free time playing basketball or shooting hoops. His parents always knew where to find him—on the court or at the side of the house shooting hoops. Likewise, what if we spent all our free time painting, drawing, or creating? I'm sure most of us would see our "game" improve.

So you see, it doesn't take talent to be a great artist; it takes practice. Next time you tape a piece of watercolor paper to your board, keep in mind that you are just practicing and, when you are practicing, it's okay to make mistakes. Eventually, you'll be making more baskets than not!

Linda Denton

Our Mission

The Central Coast Watercolor Society was founded in 1976 with the main purpose of fostering interaction, creative activity and artistic development among watercolor artists living on the Central Coast.

In addition, we seek to further the interests, appreciation, activity and growth of watercolor and water media through educational programs and art shows for the community and our membership.

The Central Coast Watercolor Society is classified by the Internal Revenue Code as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

CCWS Members Only

Holiday Card Show



CALL FOR ENTRIES In our VIRTUAL ONLINE GALLERY

*Celebrate the season with
a splash of creativity!*

The CCWS invites all its members to submit watermedia artwork for our 6th Annual Virtual Holiday Card Show—a joyful tradition that showcases the warmth, whimsy, and wonder of the holidays through your unique artistic lens.

Whether your piece evokes winter serenity, festive cheer, or heartfelt connection, we welcome your vision. Let your work brighten our virtual gallery and spread seasonal spirit to fellow artists and viewers alike. Share your art and help make this year's show a celebration to remember!

Email entries accepted Dec 7-12 at ccws@ccwsart.com
Dec 14-19 Member judging 'til midnight
Dec 21 Winners posted on CCWS website

Basic Procedures for Entering the Virtual Show

1. One (1) painting per member.
2. Original work only.
3. No size requirements.
4. Entry by members only
5. Members will judge the show.
6. Email a JPEG (at least 200 dpi) of your painting. Be sure to include your name and **the name of your painting**.
7. Your image should be cropped to show only the painting: no matting, background or frame in the photo.
8. Image must represent the painting exactly. No computer modifications.



*Voted 1st Place 2024
"Moonglow" © Steve Roller*

Going forward, what is your plan, your goal, for your artwork- life? Do you even have a plan? "If you're not growing, you're dying!" Thank you, Tony Robbins!

As one who is goal-oriented, I'm not one to drift along in retirement, waiting for life to happen. Since my artwork-life is a key component of each day, here are a few of my goals to keep me growing and moving forward:

1. Schedule at least 15 minutes/day – *no matter what* - to do

some form of artwork...a sketch, a painting, a value study, a line drawing;

2. Watch 1-hour of art instruction via YouTube or video/week;

3. Attend (virtual or live) 2 workshops/year that stretch me as an artist;

4. Complete at least 1 painting en plein air/month;

5. Visit an art museum 2x/year;

6. "Chunk learning": When procrastination has me in a stranglehold, ask, "What's one thing I

want to paint better?" Then, for 8-10 consecutive weeks, focus my efforts at getting better at that one thing.

7. Read 1 art book/month.

And in that regard, did you know there's a **Little Free Library** inside the Gallery at Art Central, well-stocked with books for the artist?



Autumn 2025

Members Only Show

Winners



2nd Place (tie): "Lunar Omen"
© Marie Angelus



1st Place: "A Place I'd Rather Be"
© Jan Godachy



2nd Place (tie): "Sunset on the Farm"
© Stacy Weed



3rd Place (tie): "Hidden"
© Edie Schneider

Congratulations

are in order for these seven artists whose vibrant paintings captured not only our votes, but also the essence of Fall—each piece a celebration of warmth, transformation, and artistic brilliance. From fiery reds to mellow ochres, their creations stir the senses and honor the season's palette with grace and imagination.

This third of our four virtual shows once again highlights the depth of our community's creativity and reaffirms the power of art to connect us across screens and seasons.

Thank you to ALL who participated and voted. You can still see the entire show at ccwsart.com



3rd Place (tie): "Season Hand-Off"
© Chuck Crotser



Honorable Mention
"Fall in the Mountains" © Karen Olsen



Honorable Mention
"Cliffs of Moher, Ireland" © Mike Grahek

Signature members
indicated in **RED**

ADIOS auf Wiedersehen Farewell Ciao Arrivaderci AU REVOIR

The following article appeared in the 2024-1st quarter newsletter as Dail handed over the reins of Newsletter Editor to me. She taught me all I needed to get started.

"I have been doing the quarterly newsletter since 2015. Having retired from a 20-year career in Graphic Design, it was my honor and...pleasure to produce this piece for the CCWS Membership. It is only because I need to focus on my health right now that this will be my last issue.

"I am very sad to give it up because I truly love doing it. I will always be deeply indebted to **Jerry Smith** for helping me know what to include in each issue, for writing many of the articles for me, and especially for putting up with my many phone calls to answer questions about how CCWS works....



Dail Schroeder,
CCWS Newsletter Editor
from 2015 to 2024

"I especially want to thank CCWS Secretary, **Leslie Parsons**, who has been my copy editor, proof-reader and a good friend through the years. She made me look smarter than I really am by catching my mistakes....

"Many of you have been contributors to the newsletter over the years; you have my thanks and appreciation as well. I would be remiss if I didn't also thank **Sarah DeLong** and

Linda Denton for contributing many photos."

Dail's journey is taking her back to the Bay area to be closer to family.

We thank you, Dail, and wish you all the best.

We'll leave the light on for ya!

CCWS 2026 Membership RENEWAL

CCWS yearly membership runs from
January 1 to December 31

Membership Fee
Still a bargain at just \$30!

- ♦ Eight monthly meetings with presentations by local artists;
- ♦ Two Pop-up Galleries and Potlucks;
- ♦ Four Member-Only Online Virtual Shows;
- ♦ Monday Morning Paint-Ins;
- ♦ Three Hands-on Workshops;
- ♦ Aquarius - Annual Juried Show with Awards, plus our Annual "Slide Show" of ALL Aquarius entries.



Invoices have already been sent out

through our website, allowing you to use PayPal with your credit card or a PayPal account. Or you can **click on the PayPal logo** below to go to the website Renewal page and pay now. You do not need a PayPal account; you can pay with a credit card.

If you prefer to pay by check, please make your \$30 check payable to CCWS and mail it to:

CCWS, PO Box 922 Nipomo, CA 93444-0922. Be sure to include your email address.

New Members who pay now receive membership through the end of 2025 PLUS membership through 2026.

If you have already renewed - Thank You!

Upcoming Meetings

Nov 25 – No Meeting - Enjoy your Thanksgiving



Dec 2* – David Massey - Barn & Field Landscape



David Massey is a multidisciplinary artist known for his expressive interpretations of the natural world. His artistic path began with fine art photography in the early 1980's, where he developed a keen eye for composition, values, and texture—capturing landscapes and architectural subjects on black and white film. This foundation laid the

groundwork for his transition into painting, where he now works primarily in watercolor and oil.

Drawing inspiration from his photographic archive, David creates works that balance realism with abstraction, often highlighting the emotional resonance of place and memory. His art reflects his deep appreciation for nature's complexity and design.

David has exhibited his work at numerous art festivals and group shows, and continues to grow his presence through galleries and online platforms. See more of David's beautiful work at dmasseyart.com

**Note special meeting date due to the holidays.*



"Wine Country Serenity"
© David Massey



"Cabarita Water's Edge"
© David Massey



"Santa Ynez"
© David Massey

Jan 27 - Aquarius 2026 "Slide Show"

The January meeting is reliably our most popular and entertaining. "Slide Show"? No way! We have long since gone digital, but...you know...the lingo lingers on!

Beginning December 1, **Jeanie Smith**, our web-site guru and techie, starts collecting all the images and information submitted for consideration in Aquarius 2026. At the time of our January meeting, the entry period has closed and the accepted artists have been notified, their names and titles posted on the CCWS website.

Now we have an opportunity to view the images of ALL the paintings Jeanie has received. Remember, Aquarius 2026 is open to all watermedia artists residing in California: you may well see subjects and

styles unfamiliar to you. No doubt, you'll wonder at the hows and whys of the selection process. You may even be inspired to enter your own work next year! In total, there are about 100 (give or take) paintings to view; less than half are accepted. If you miss this meeting, there's some beautiful work you'll never see.



Getting under way: the Aquarius 2025 "Slide Show"

October 20-22 - Workshop with Ann Smiga Greene - Expressive Painting with Watercolor, Marks & Gouache



Holly Branch and Ann discussing technique.

Ann Smiga Greene is an engaging instructor, inviting questions, providing thoughtful critiques, and encouraging experimentation and exploration.

Just to get underway and put fear at bay, Ann invited everyone to section a large

watercolor paper into 6 equal-size rectangles and then to randomly apply various lines, marks and watercolor to the entire paper, without regard to the sections. She finds it useful to have a small mat to evaluate and to single out which section(s) might be saleable, or the inspiration for a larger painting, or, ultimately, a greeting card (who doesn't like to receive original artwork?).

The warm-up completed, Ann launched into a larger painting in similar fashion, covering virtually the entire paper to the edges, though not with any particular image in mind, and leaving a path of light to lead the viewer. When the watercolor dried, Ann moved in with gouache to define shapes, increase contrast, and create areas of negative space, high-lighting the dynamic relationship between shape, value, and key design principles. These elements and principles were always foremost in her process.

Why use gouache? Ann explained that, for

smooth, intense color, gouache works better than layers and layers of watercolor. I have to admit that the opacity of gouache absolutely made her floral watercolor painting glow.

Sometimes, with an abstract, it's hard to tell which side should be up. Ann advised that the general rule is, "The heaviest shape goes at the top."

Ann created interesting shapes and textures using stencils: with a clean damp sponge, she lifted color, leaving vague suggestions of the stencil shapes. She noted that it's helpful to know which watercolors lift easily, and also that this technique does *not* work well with gouache.

As the three days were coming to a close, Ann proposed we have a drawing for two of her paintings, your choice! The delighted winners are shown here.

Finally, hats off to **Linda Denton** for keeping us well-fed, and many MANY thanks to **Stacy Weed, Jim Trask, Leslie Parsons, Brian Reed** and others I'm probably forgetting who helped with setup and the behind-the-scene stuff that keep things flowing smoothly.

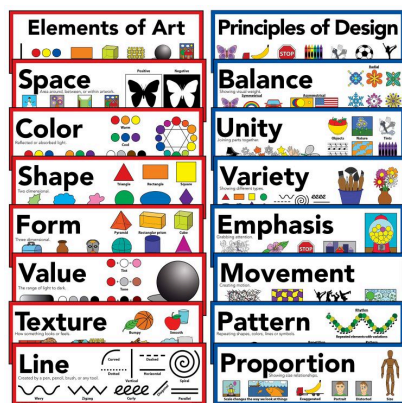
To receive Ann's monthly newsletter and see her latest work, visit annsmigagreene.com.



Ann's completed demo painting features glowing flowers accented with a smooth blue gouache background.



The enthusiastic artists who persisted and took home some memorable, if not remarkable, artwork.



And the winners are Marie Angelus and Caroline Avery.

Recent Meetings

August 26 - Linda Abbott Trapp - Slaying the Dragons



"Slaying the Dragons" was the title, but "Trust your Painting" was the substance!

As a psychologist, Linda was prepared to address questions like, "What keeps you from doing your best work?" or "Why do you paint in the first place?"

When answers were not immediately forthcoming, we were treated instead to Linda's own painting process—not easily described. Coincidentally, the same day, an email from Streamline's American Watercolor, written by Thomas Jefferson Kitts, nailed it:

If a student asks me how I compose, I quote Sorolla: 'Go to nature without...preconception. You should not know what your picture is going to look like until it is done. Just see the picture that is coming. Buddhists call it 'No Mind,' a state in which your conscious self fades and the painting takes over. I call it the flow. I know I am in the flow when time stops and the painting just happens.

By way of example, Linda walked us through her painting, "Layered Faults—Vietnam." Her process begins in her mind where she decries the blatant lack of environmental stewardship. She begins her painting, not with a sketch, but with paint—earth tones, light and dark, shapes emerging and receding—a soldier, a bridge. The painting speaks, and she's done. Not exactly where she started but

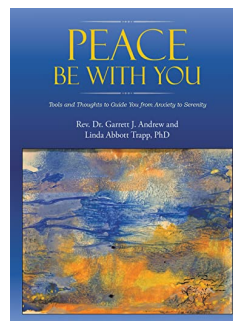


Layered Faults—Vietnam

that's the beauty, when you "trust your painting."

On a different note, Linda co-authored Peace Be With You (available at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)), a book written as COVID was winding down and anxiety was coursing full throttle among our population.

For the hour we spent, there was ample food for thought!



September 30 - Jay Stieler - Wild Water Washes



Jay, laying down the initial wash.

The artists featured at our monthly demonstrations invariably introduce me to something new—about themselves and the tools of their trade. With **Jay Stieler**, it was surfing and Rosemary & Co. brushes. It's no wonder that Jay titled his presentation, "Wild Water Washes": in, on or near the surf is where he spends the free

time he squeezes into his days!

Curious, I googled "Surfers who watercolor." Turns out, Jay is in good company:

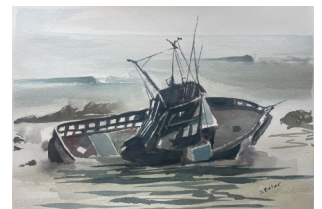
Surfers who are also watercolor artists include...John Severson, a Hall-of-Fame surfer and artist who founded SURFER Magazine, [not to mention several others] who blend surfing with artistic pursuits.

In addition to Rosemary & Co. synthetic brushes, Jay gravitates to M. Graham colors, especially Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber to accomplish his rich dark ocean surf. With the initial wash, we watched the windswept clouds take shape as he allowed water and color to move and blend, settling into mist over the distant cliffs and waves. Eschewing gouache or masking fluid, Jay is careful to pre-

serve those areas where the white paper must dominate. To texture the hillside vegetation, Jay uses a razor blade and sea salt. While he claims to lack the patience for detail, there's enough here to suggest that the fishing boat, Point Estero, is in trouble!



Jay's completed demo painting.



The Point Estero
© Jay Stieler

Enjoy more of Jay's work at [coastarhouse.com](https://www.coastarhouse.com)

Recent Meetings (cont'd)

October 28 - Annual Business Meeting, Potluck, and More!



Winners of the PopUp Gallery

(L to R) **3rd Place:** "Cyprus at the Junction" © Rebecca Ellis; **1st Place:** "Penny Lane" © Bob Norwood; **2nd Place:** "Blushing Roses" © Stacy Weed.

It was a feast for the eyes and the palate!



Creativity and community.

At our most recent meeting, creativity and community came together in the most delightful way. We mingled, admired, and cast votes

for our favorite three paintings. New this year was an Art Supplies Exchange (think white elephant exchange without the steal)! A lot of great finds – color pencil sets, a pochade box, brushes, tube squeezers, frames, DVDs - a great way to unload (or load up, as the case may be)!

Following membership approval of the directors and committee chairs (listed on Page 2), as well as the budget for the upcoming year, President



Rosa Andrade & Susan Johnson check out the Exchange.

Linda addressed her concerns. While the art and food were abundant, one thing was in shorter supply: volunteers for our Board. As Linda pointed out, we need fresh energy and helping hands to keep our momentum going. If you've ever considered stepping up—or just lending your skills behind the scenes—now is the perfect time. We can't do this without you. If you're curious, interested, or even just a little bit tempted, please reach out. We'd love to have you on board.

Thank you to everyone, especially to those who may not have entered the show but joined us for this delicious and memorable afternoon!



A feast for the eyes and the palate!

Submitting a Digital Aquarius Photo

The Goal: is to submit a photograph that exactly represents your painting, cropped correctly and with good resolution.

In fairness to all those entering the show, the show committee cannot rework or modify individual entry photos before submitting them to the juror.

Photograph Before Framing

Location: Place your work against a neutral background. A full-sized sheet of mat board works well on the floor. For larger works, prop against a flat neutral colored wall.

Lighting: Use bright, soft indirect lighting. No sunlight or flash. Natural light coming in a window or outside in the shade works fine. Be sure to switch off your camera's flash and any electric lights in the room.

Square Up Your Piece: Center the artwork in your camera screen so that the sides line up with the edges of the camera's view-finder or screen. Leave the smallest border possible around the image to maximize the size of your artwork. Don't zoom in as this will reduce the quality of your image. Move the camera instead. Take several shots.

Editing: You can use your phone's editing



Wrong



Wrong



Correct



Cropped Correctly

tools to crop your Image to exclude any background, matting or framing and rotate image if needed. You can also use photo editing applications on your computer.

Emailing Your Image File: You can email your photo to yourself to get it on your computer. When you email from your phone, be sure to choose actual size after hitting send on an iPhone. On Android, choose full-size.

Naming Your File: Each jpg/jpeg photo (or file) must be named with the artist's Last Name, First Name, and Title of the work only. Example: SmithJohn_My_Cat.jpeg

NO SPACES OR PUNCTUATION

Suggestion: Starting Dec 1, 2025 on the CCWS website, go to "EntryThingy" to create an account and complete your entry for 1 or 2 paintings (link will be live on ccwsart.com and entrythingy.com as of 12/01/2025). Email your jpeg photo to yourself one more time prior to submitting so you can double check the quality, focus and cropping of your photo.

Follow instructions in the Prospectus for completing your entry on EntryThingy.

Plein Air Painting Opportunities

Wednesday Morning

There are two plein air groups:

PACA is based in Morro Bay.
pleinaircoastalartists@gmail.com

Wednesday Irregulars is based in Cambria.
camarnold@145107922.mailchimpapp.com

Thursday Morning

This group meets at various locations around San Luis Co. thursdaywatercolor@gmail.com

This one is just too good not to share because....

A little levity lightens the load!





Come Paint with Us on Monday Mornings!

What: Paint-In Session

When: Every Monday morning

Where: Nipomo Community Presbyterian Church

Time: 9:00 am – 12:00 noon

RSVP: Please sign up when you receive the email invite each week.

Monday Morning



What is a "Paint-In" ? Bring whatever you are working on and spend the morning painting with other members of CCWS. Share tips and techniques and try new things. Be inspired and motivated. Make new friends. This is a **FREE** benefit of CCWS Membership.

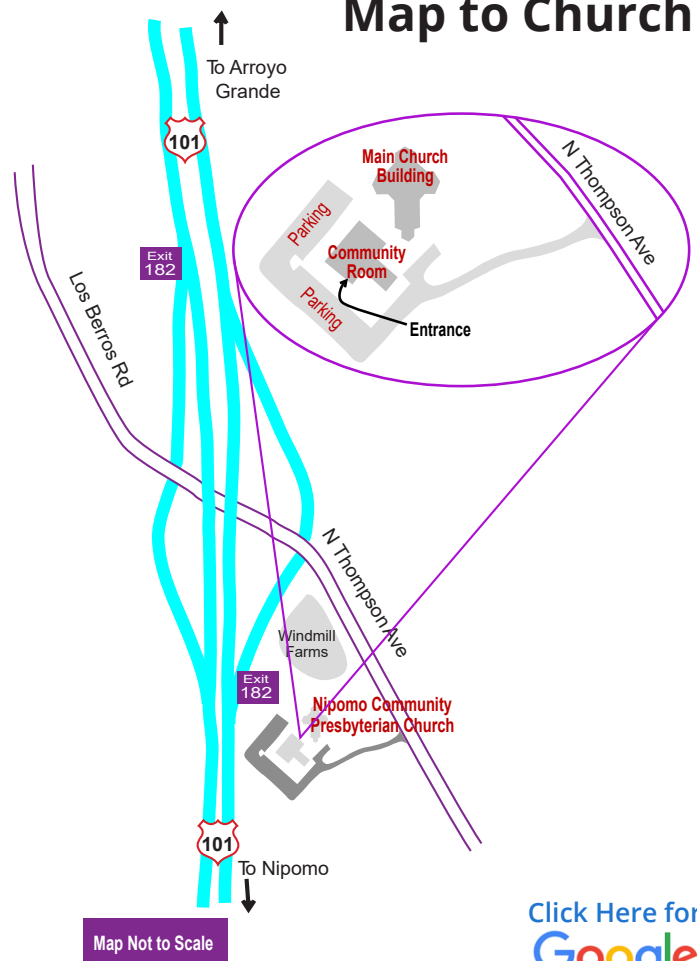
Critique: About 10:15, we do a completely optional, very informal, peer critique. There are some very accomplished artists among the CCWS membership who will generously share their knowledge with you, make suggestions, all very positive.

Where: Nipomo Community Presbyterian Church, 1235 Thompson Avenue. See map.

Who can Attend: Active (dues paid) CCWS members are encouraged to take advantage of this great member benefit. You may invite a guest to introduce them to this CCWS event and if they want to continue they will need to join CCWS.

Covid Update: Although CCWS no longer requires attendees at live events to be vaccinated, it is still recommended, and also requested, that you stay home if you have any symptoms of illness. Thank you for your consideration!

Map to Church



[Click Here for Google Map](#)

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS 2025-2026

Meeting Reminder

CCWS meets the last Tuesday of each month, unless notified of a **date change** for that month.

CCWS Monthly Meetings begin at 1:00 pm

The first 1/2 hour is a social time and demonstrations start at 1:30 pm.

SLO United Methodist Church, Wesley Room.
1515 Fredericks Street, San Luis Obispo.

Monday Morning

Paint-In

presented by
CCWS CENTRAL COAST WATERCOLOR SOCIETY

Nipomo Community Presbyterian Church

9:00 am - noon

Upcoming Meetings:

Nov 25 - **NO MEETING** - HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Dec 2* - 1:00pm - David Massey

Barn and Field Landscape

**Note date change due to holidays*

Jan 27 - 1:00pm - Aquarius 2025 "Slide Show"
(all entries)

Feb 17 - 1:00pm - Tracy Taylor

Time to
RENEW!



ccws
Members Only
Holiday Card Show

Dec 7-12 - Email JPEG entries 'til midnight to
ccws@ccwsart.com

Dec 14-19 - Member judging 'til midnight

Dec 21 - Winners Posted on Website

Aquarius 2026 Exhibition Calendar

Dec 1, 2025 - Digital Entries accepted - closing Jan 4, 2026 at midnight

Jan 20 Email notification to accepted artists

Jan 21 Accepted artists posted on CCWS website

Feb 18 Take-in, 10:00 - 11:00am at
Art Center Morro Bay,
835 Main St., Morro Bay CA

Feb 19 Exhibition opens

Feb 22 Opening Reception, Awards and
Gallery Talk - 2:00-4:00pm

Feb 23-25 Workshop with Michael Reardon

Mar 30 Exhibition closes

Mar 31 Take-out, 10:00am - 12:00pm

6th Annual Watercolor Live
January 21-23, 2026

3 FULL days of online
instruction

24+ world-class faculty

Check it out at

watercolorlive.com/wcl2026



JANUARY STRADA 31-DAY CHALLENGE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

One drawing or painting FROM LIFE every day for 31 days.

Details at stradaeasel.com

One of the best ways to improve your art is to make a personal daily commitment to painting or drawing. The STRADA January 31-Day Challenge brings together hundreds of artists from around the world who commit to daily practice. Join the tribe and **take the Challenge!**

Newsletter Deadline: The deadline for articles, photos, calendar events, member news and general information for the 1st Quarter 2026 edition of this newsletter will be **Feb. 1st**. Please send to Editor, Sandy McNeil: mcneils0911@gmail.com. The newsletter will be **published February 15, 2026**.