

## History of the Pastel Society of North Carolina

The creation of a pastel society for North Carolina artists was the vision of pastelist and teacher, Lorie Callahan. At the Pastel Society of America's (PSA) 24th National Open Exhibition, Lorie met with founder, Florence B. Giffuni. Ms. Giffuni, committed to elevating the awareness and recognition of American pastel art, enthusiastically provided Lorie with information to start a small local pastel group. In 1996, along with 11 of her art students, the Pastel Society of Orange County was founded, with Lorie its first elected President. The Society's mission was:

*to provide fellowship and encouragement, promote standards of excellence in the use of the medium and further the education of the general community to the intrinsic beauty and permanency of art created from soft pastels.*

Charter members were: Lynda Baddour, Joan Blacher, Lorie Callahan, Linda Guaspari, Alejandra "Lexi" Hernandez, Barbara Lininger (Vice President), Marge Merritt, Louise Pagano (Treasurer), Barbara Spang, Jan Weaver-Turlington (Recording Secretary), Marijane Whiteman, and Betty Mishkan-Zelman. Their first exhibition was held at the Orange County Historical Museum in Hillsborough NC, April 1997.

Between 1996 and 2000 news spread of the budding organization. This was primarily from exposure through local exhibitions, articles in area newspapers and the website at [pastelsocietyofnc.com](http://pastelsocietyofnc.com). Artists from surrounding counties traveled to enjoy the company of fellow pastelists, expand their knowledge, skills, and exposure through exhibitions. Soon the group outgrew its name. Vice President Jim Williams, suggested, with unanimous support of the membership, to change the name of the organization to the Pastel Society of North Carolina (PSNC). At his recommendation, the group also joined the International Association of Pastel Artists (IAPS). These formative years helped to build the foundation and format of the society's meetings that are still used today.

In addition to Lorie Callahan's influence, new member Herbert Slapo brought his expertise and experience as a board member of the PSA in New York City. He contributed greatly to the improvement of members' works, offering expert advice during the critique sessions. Artist members at all levels of skill brought in their work at various stages of completion. Honest criticism was given and received by all those participating. As a result, members flourished. They honed their skills and applied the necessary ingredients to make masterful works.

Herb emerged as a leader and was elected President in 1999. Shortly after, Helen Knapp brought order by introducing the group to Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Law. It was she who created the first Constitution and Bylaws of PSNC. That year Lois Fuchs created the first logo and Chris Kanoy revisited the idea of a newsletter to be called *The Artline*. Begun by Barbara Spang, the newsletter started publishing during the Pastel Society of Orange County days. It became an important way to document the many happenings of PSNC and members. Chris turned the editorship over to Roger Kaiser in 2004 and the newsletter continued in print until August of 2006.

Early meetings concentrated on fellowship and critiques. In the early 2000s, educational programs and workshops became the emphasis partly due to Helen Knapp's organizational skills as workshop chair. After organizing some one-day workshops with area art instructors, Helen

arranged PSNC's first five-day workshop with international renowned artists Albert Handell and Anita Louise West.

In 2001 meetings moved from members' homes to the Carol Woods Community Room in Chapel Hill. This growth move was made possible through the efforts of Betty Zelman, PSNC member and resident of Carol Woods Retirement Community. Thanks to her, PSNC benefited for over eight years by using the Community Room without charge. In appreciation, PSNC made a small yearly donation to the Carol Woods Foundation recognizing the generosity and spirit of the Carol Woods community

2004 brought organization and structure to the growing society under co-presidents Chris Kanoy and Helen Knapp. They worked to create an active Board that met monthly. Plans and goals were established to give the organization direction. Chris and Helen moved the PSNC into the communication age with their computer knowledge by electronically sending letters, documents and minutes, and contacting members by email. Meeting agendas and minutes were sent out in advance as reminders of upcoming meeting. New member, designer Leandra Ganko, redesigned the website.

A pivotal point in the growth of PSNC came near the end of 2005 when the Board, headed by Co-Presidents Chris Kanoy and Lori White, decided the organization should have a presence at the International Association of Pastel Societies (IAPS) conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. The second generation PSNC logo, designed by Chris and Helen, was printed on a large banner in the PSNC booth. Around the table were several pastel paintings produced by members. New member Donna Slade designed and published the society's first professional brochure, distributed during the IAPS Convention. PSNC members attending the booth enthusiastically represented the organization. As a result, membership grew to 85 within a few days of the convention.

In the years following the participation at IAPS, PSNC progressed through the vision and leadership of those who volunteered their time. In late 2005, Chris and Lori began planning for the First Open Juried National Show held at the gallery of the Alamance County Arts Council in Graham, NC. In addition to Chris and Lori, the planning committee consisted of Herb Slapo, Helen Knapp, Toni Lindahl, Leandra Ganko and Jim Williams. Through their efforts and the PSNC members, 53 artists were juried in and judged by juror Jack Pardue. PSNC honored selected artists with over \$5000 in awards, and over 100 people attended the opening reception on a snowy evening in February 2007. The treasury benefited from the proceeds generated by show entrants. The increased monies allowed PSNC to concentrate on professional programs and compensate presenters.

2008 brought new President Laurel Parker continuing the tradition of offering formal programs at each meeting. Member exhibitions, critiques, and periodic workshops were continued. The artwork of members reflected the knowledge and skills gained from the educational programs and critiques. Laurel established as one of her goals that PSNC acquire a nonprofit status. Through Nancy Clausen, nonprofit status was achieved.

In 2009, newly elected President Mandy Roeing brought a youthful and fresh approach to the 13-year-old society. The youngest president to date, Mandy was responsible for arranging the PSNC Online Shop with Café Press, the internet site. Those visiting the site could now purchase various products featuring the art of PSNC members as well as fun and useful gift items geared toward artists. During her tenure, Mandy envisioned a joint exhibit with other regional pastel societies and worked closely with David Boone, Vice President, to ensure that instructional and

informative programs be given top priority. Toward the end of the year, a crisis arose when Carol Woods informed PSNC that the Community Room would no longer be available for meetings.

New President Luana Winner and continuing Vice President, David Boone, began searching for a new meeting location in early 2010. With her connections in the art world and David's assistance, meetings were moved to the NC Museum of Art in Raleigh at the start of 2011. Under Luana's direction, PSNC moved forward and attracted new members who could attend a meeting and visit the museum's art collection afterwards.

Luana's professional expertise and reputation promoted the advancement of the pastel society even further. She worked to bring the PSNC to a new level, from local to a statewide professional society. During her tenure, the board began updating the PSNC Constitution and By-laws. PSNC secretary, Roxanne Lorch, directed the project for a new contemporary logo with designer Leandra Ganko.

An alliance was forged in 2011 between PSNC and the state's three regional pastel societies. Mandy's original idea became Luana's mandate when the first statewide exhibition started taking shape. Chairperson Patricia Savage contacted each society promoting the idea and the Statewide Advisory Council was established. Representatives from the Appalachian Pastel Society, Piedmont Pastel Society (PPS) and Coastal Pastel Society (CPS) met with Patricia and established guidelines and planned the format for future exhibits. Primary being that each organization will rotate the responsibility of hosting a statewide annual exhibition. PSNC members Toni Lindahl, Wendy Musser, Donna Slade, Nina MacDonald, Leandra Ganko, and Anne Kiefaber generously helped in the planning of the 2012 Statewide Pastel Exhibit event.

Patricia Savage was elected president for 2012. One of her goals is that PSNC continues to collaborate with the other regional societies in promoting the beauty of pastel paintings and artists throughout North Carolina. Each organization will rotate the responsibility of hosting a statewide annual exhibition. As with all past presidents, Patricia's intent is that objectives be met.

Soon after her term began, it became clear that in order to offer the popular hands-on pastel demonstrations during chapter meetings, a change in venue was needed. Mandy Roeing and Patricia explored various possibilities. The light open space at Chapel Hill's NC Botanical Garden provided the best option. In early 2012, meetings were moved from the museum to the new location.

PSNC hosted the first exhibit titled "On Common Ground: Pastel Paintings from the Mountains to the Sea" June 1-30, 2012 at Bev's Fine Art Gallery, Raleigh. Over \$3000 in awards was distributed to artists selected by juror Marla Baggeta. Two hundred and ten paintings were submitted and one hundred and ten pieces were accepted. In conjunction with the exhibit, Marla also taught two workshops.

During the spring and summer, the society's first official history was researched and written by Historian Chris Kanoy.

PSNC will continue its quest for artistic growth through education. It is committed to promoting standards of excellence, professionalism, and fellowship with other artists statewide.

### **Historian's Statement**

This narrative documents the founding, major events and significant changes of the Pastel Society of North Carolina between 1996 and 2012. The information used to generate this report was derived from review of the minutes and other pertinent historical records, interview of key

individuals and personal recollection. Though I chose to describe the history using the tenure of each president, I want to emphasize that the accomplishments and achievements of the PSNC are shared by all who have served as officers, chairpersons and committee members. It is those individuals who have collectively provided the leadership and direction that has contributed so greatly to the nature of this society.

I wish to thank Lorie Callahan, Louise Pagano, Marijane Whiteman, Helen Knapp and Herbert Slapo who provided their time and support and, in many cases, missing papers instrumental in helping me create this historical overview.

Written by Chris Kanoy, Past President and Historian PSNC  
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