

# Local artist wins award from year-long project



**"Great Blue Heron" by Rena Brouwer**

By Jennifer Archibald  
Staff writer

Carroll County watercolorist Rena Brouwer was one of 15 select Indiana artists to take part in the juried art show "Preserving Nature" at the Artsgarden in Indianapolis on Saturday.

Each of the artists entered two paintings. Five awards were given. Brouwer's watercolor, "Great Blue Heron," won "The Jeanne H. Gammage Award for Outstanding Study Watercolor/Acrylic."

The show was the culmination of a project initiated by Central Indiana Land Trust Inc. (CILTI) a little more than a year ago, bringing together conservationists and nature artists. Project coordinator Eric MacDougall began a search for the state's finest landscape artists. Starting with a group of 150 artists, a selection jurist narrowed the field to 15.

"We submitted a short essay on why we were interested, along with examples of our work," Brouwer said.

The five artists who produced the 2000 book, "Painting Indiana, Portraits of Indiana's 92 Counties," were invited to be included in the 15. Brouwer became one of the other chosen 10.

The artists had a year to visit CILTI's nature preserves and interpret and paint what they saw. CILTI volunteers were available to serve as guides and resources.

The media for the project included oil, acrylic, watercolor, and pastel. The paintings were to be landscapes or more specific studies of nature, such as wildflowers, birds, insects, etc. No more than two artists were to paint the same subject.

One of the places Brouwer visited was the Millard Sutton/Amos W. Butler Audubon Sanctuary in Johnson County.

"This is a protected rookery of great blue herons that number 400-plus," she said. "Greg Oskay was the steward who guided me about this land. His knowledge of plants, insects and birds was extensive. I arrived at this site just after the herons had migrated. From Greg's narrative of his personal experiences at the site and mine with herons on my Wildcat Creek home front, I created a tribute to this magnificent bird in my studio. I had painted numerous sketches on site from repeated visits."

Brouwer created many preliminary paintings from the sites before settling on the final



## Painting along the Wildcat

Rena Brouwer paints watercolors inspired by wildlife, nature's bounty, and Wildcat Creek. She and 14 other professional artists were selected to paint scenes on central Indiana nature preserves as a way of calling attention to the areas' beauty and need for protection. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

two for the show.

The other painting she entered was from Burr Oak Bend in Hamilton County.

"There was a native plant specialist there on the day I visited," Brouwer said. "It was a rainy fall day. She was walking among the native cone flowers in her bright yellow rain slicker. The color was striking, and I was taken in with the thought of how well she became one with the wildflowers and the cheerfulness on such a dreary day."

Brouwer said she visited Mossy Point Nature Preserve in Parke County several times.

"I painted soaring eagles and deer crashing through the woods," she said. "There are beautiful Hemlock trees there and many interesting plant species."

At the newly acquired Hajji Hollow in Parke County, Brouwer said she saw a badger den, a beautiful babbling brook over sandstone, and hardwoods.

"I did a painting of acorns. Greg had showed me how to make a whistle out of the hats of the acorns," she said.

The CILTI project gave Brouwer another opportunity to explore her love of nature through painting.

"My husband and I chose to live where we do, along the Wildcat, among woods and habitat friendly to wildlife," Brouwer said. "Having the opportunity to be included in this project broadened my appreci-

ation, specifically, to those who give their time and physical efforts to retain native habitat in the state. As an artist, observation is a key element to rendering art. I must say, the stewards sharpened my skills even more with their insight and knowledge of the habitat. They broadened my artistic endeavors with endless inspiration."

"The Preserving Nature Art Exhibit is a wonderful opportunity for the residents of central Indiana to see the natural beauty that is right here in their own back yards," MacDougall said. "The artists have done a fantastic job of portraying the beauty and diversity of the natural areas preserved by the Central Indiana Land Trust."

Following the gala opening of the exhibit last Saturday, the paintings remain on display to the public for free viewing at the Artsgarden in downtown Indianapolis through April 30. Then the exhibit will travel to various public venues over the next two months. Some of these places are Franklin College, Noblesville, Zionsville, Carmel, and Nashville. At the conclusion of the tour, there will be a two-day sale of the paintings, with a portion of the proceeds to benefit the Central Indiana Land Trust.

For a complete list of the participating artists, details of the tour schedule, or more information on CILTI, visit [www.cilti.org](http://www.cilti.org).

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## DIXON ZTR

## In The Grow

By B. Rosie Lerner  
Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist

**Q.** What is the best method for fluffing up the mulch already around my flowerbeds? Is it necessary every year to keep adding mulch?

**A.** Spring certainly did seem to bust out of the gates rather early and vigorously this year, though winter returned with a vengeance! Mulch is a great tool to conserve soil moisture, suppress weed growth and shade soil from excess heat in mid summer. Depending on what type of mulch you use, you likely will need to top off the flowerbeds each year or two. Generally, the finer the particle size of the organic mulch material, the faster it will breakdown. Ground bark mulch breaks down faster than shredded bark, which breaks down faster than bark chips. And the finer materials may pack down a bit, so fluff up your old mulch and top off with additional material, if the layer is less than 2 inches.

**Q.** We are moving to a new home that is an open field that has sat dormant for a long period of time. We will be having a house placed there soon. But I have many roses, bulbs, iris, lilies, lambs ear, hosta, lily of the valley, tall phlox, columbine, coreopsis, and clematis. When is the best time to move them? The ground is not yet broken for the

house; we are to be out of here June 1st. Will it be safe to move all of these different plants and flowers and replant them then? I always thought it was best to do this in the fall, but I am afraid to leave all of my plants and flowers behind, and expect to recover them in the fall.

**A.** Well, there's no one perfect answer to your dilemma, since you have so many different species involved. Spring-flowering bulbs are best moved in the late summer or early fall while they are dormant. Most other perennials can be moved either in the fall or in late winter or early spring. Middle of the summer is about the worst time to move any of the plants, because that is the hottest time of year and when rains are less predictable.

It will likely be easiest to just start over with fresh spring-flowering bulbs this fall, rather than try to transplant those. For the rest of your plants, you may want to pot up small divisions of at least some of your perennials in good quality potting soil, and try to get them through the move that way until you have time to set your new garden. Or, if you have an out-of-the-way location at the new property, you could make a temporary nursery bed where you can move the plants and keep them pampered through summer, until you are ready to make your new garden. Keep the plants mulched and watered regularly.



## Join us at the 25th Annual St. Vincent Frankfort Hospital Health Fair

Local residents are invited to participate in the fair from 7-11 a.m. Saturday, May 5 at Clinton Hall at the Clinton County Fairgrounds. Also be sure to visit the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast and the Clinton County Farmers Market.

Health screenings include cholesterol, glucose, lung function, blood pressure, body mass index and bone scan. Educational materials will be available at over 50 booths. There will be refreshments and entertainment.



For more information, call (765) 656-3030.