

# Art is alive and well in Morganton

As a youngster, I never really appreciated art and think it was most likely due to the fact that my attempts at painting, sculpting and even taking a stab at ceramics left too much to the imagination. It seems that the only objects I could



## Generations

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successfully paint were walls and, even then, I never had success with the edger gizmo.

My mother treasured my ashtray ceramic piece that I made in middle school, but even my

chain-smoking father refused to use it. And the self-bust of my head that I attempted in high school kind of resembled the creature Governor Schwarzenegger fought a couple of times in his earlier movie days.

So, art has plagued me pretty much my whole life because I could never quite understand why I couldn't come within a half inch of mastering it.

And it's not that I haven't seen art up close. A few years ago, I surprised my sister, Jan, and took her on a trip to London, Paris and Rome. The Louvre was closed in Paris for remodeling, but we were able to tour art exhibits in London and Paris and Rome's Vatican City and several cathedrals. Yes, we saw art in all shapes, sizes, colors and arenas (one of my souvenirs is a T-shirt emblazoned with the mystically placed boulders of Stonehenge).

THE NEWS HERALD



Gab Gone Green

The truth, however, is that while Jan was studying the Sistine Chapel and admiring the portraits and sculptures of the magnificent artists of the past, I sat somewhere in a corner rubbing my tired feet and wondering where and when the tour bus was picking us up.

Today, the pictures of our 'Gals Gone Wild' European adventure, a trip that every art lover that ever lived longs for, rests on the freshly painted walls of my living room collecting dust.

However, recently my interest in art has taken an upswing. Our local Burke Arts Council, in conjunction with Friends for Animals Humane Society, devised a public art project called, Raining Cats and Dogs. The council wanted to provide an opportunity to bring residents and visitors of Morganton and the surrounding communities together to boost awareness of not only its artists, but also the efforts of the council and the Friends for Animals Humane Society. So, these two non-profit organizations got together and the council, lead by Ann DiSanto, sent a call out to the artistic community.

Budding and established artists were encouraged to showcase their talent by providing innovative "coats" for 21 fiberglass dog and cat sculp-

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# DEMARCO

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tures. The finished sculptures were previewed recently at a party held at the council, and they have been or will shortly be on parade at festivals, restaurants, businesses, public buildings and schools.

They all looked so fabulous at the preview party. The colors were amazing, the designs unique, and you could tell with each piece that the artist put his or her heart and soul into the project. For those who want to see the finished entries, you can view them on line at [www.burkearts.org](http://www.burkearts.org) and click on Raining Cats and Dogs project. Even better still, see them at local businesses that will host one or two sculptures in Morganton and Valdese prior to the sculptures returning to the Burke Arts Council on Sept. 30. Check out a complete tour schedule listed on the Web site.

A silent auction on the sculptures will take place at Morganton's Annual Oyster Outing on from 3 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 4 the Old Courthouse Square in Morganton. I'll be there with a pen in hand because my eye is on one dog in particular that I just can't seem to shake.

But, alas, the question keeps coming back to me — how do they do it? How do some people see color, design and interpretation on a blank canvas or a naked fiberglass sculpture while others, like me, see nothing? Where do they start? Is there a blueprint to the finished product? Is there an alarm that goes off the moment the tip of the paintbrush hits the object for the first time? Are there days/nights when, like writers, they have an "artist block?" Writers who now have the computer at their disposal can easily use the delete key to erase what they decide isn't up to par, but what does an artist do?

These days, post Europe, and after seeing the finished cats and dogs sculptures en-

tered into the Raining Cats and Dogs project, I have a new respect for art and realize that I may never know the answer to the above questions and that's OK. That doesn't mean the next catalog from Western Piedmont that comes in the DeMarco house won't end up on the coffee table with a circle around a painting or sculpting class.

As a writer, I'll share my answers to the above questions because they're pretty simple with no hidden secrets. I start with the first word on the first line of a novel and keep working forward. The first complete sentence and the last complete sentence are the most difficult. Everything else is gravy. I have no definite ending — no blueprint — and the alarm that goes off is the one that keeps me up at night thinking about alternate chapters and endings. And, yes, there are many writer's blocks, and plenty of times when after 10 words, I'm done for the day.

But that's just me. If you write or paint or sculpt, you'll

have your own answers to all these questions and they will no doubt contain more depth than what drives me.

In the meantime, please try and catch the sculptures at the Oyster Outing to see these wonderful works of art. I'll see you there in the crowd.

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