

First acrylic will go on the block this year

By SANDY PEOPLES
Dallas Post Correspondent

Sue Hand has been donating her original paintings to the Back Mountain Library Auction since 1976. Since 1990 she has been painting them on location on the auction grounds at the library.

"I usually start a few days ahead of time with some of the background work, but there is always something new and different each year," said Hand. "So I wait to do the bulk of the work on the premises after I see how things are set up for the event. Each year I have tried to do the official auction painting from a different angle."

This year Hand will do her very first acrylic on stretched canvas on location. "I need the versatility of acrylic to do what I have in mind," she said. "Because the auction starts on the Fourth of July this year, I have come up with an idea to use the American flag on the perimeter of the painting as a graphic illustration, floating the auction scene within the perimeter of the flag. The painting will symbolically celebrate the Fourth of July and our American freedom."

Hand will also incorporate a synesthetic aspect into the painting. "I did an exhibit last year at King's College using this technique of painting the colors to actually produce the sense and sight of sound in the painting," she said. "The colors will connect

*"America starts here
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Sue Hand
Painter

with the sounds and motions of the holiday and the auction with all of their usual and wonderful images and excitement."

One hundred percent of the proceeds of her paintings are donated to the Back Mountain Library. In the beginning her paintings sold for around \$100. The highest price ever brought on the auction block was over \$4,000.

"I do this every year," she said, "because I absolutely love the Back Mountain community, the library and the people. I am an unembarrassed cheerleader for Northeastern Pennsylvania. It is the greatest area in the world. I want to give something back to the community, and painting is all I know."

Each painting takes about 40 hours, 20 of which are done on site on the auction grounds. "Saturday nights are usually hectic trying to get the finished picture framed and ready for the auction the next night," she said. "My husband and business partner, Joe, does the framing, and we get auction fever by that time as

we keep up the frantic pace to get it done."

This year's painting will be approximately 30" x 40." It will be framed as usual with a brass plate denoting that it is the annual and official auction painting.

"My dream is that one day I could see all of the previous year's paintings collected all in one place," said Hand. "But I don't know who bought all of them."

This year's painting is extra special to her with its all-American theme. "America starts here in the Back Mountain for me," she said, "because all of my family and friends are here to celebrate and enjoy one another."



On the cover: Auctioneers took bids on Sue Hand's auction watercolor last year. This year it will be done in acrylic for the first time.

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