

# Artisans at Cedar Lakes- Biographies



**Colleen Anderson** owns Mother Wit Writing and Design, a creative studio in Charleston, where she does graphic design as well as writing essays, poems, stories, plays, and songs. She has produced three collections of original songs, *Fabulous Realities*, *Going Over Home*, and *Trail Through the Trees*. Recent publications include a chapter book, *Missing: Mrs. Cornblossom* and a poetry chapbook, *Bound Stone*. For information about Colleen's workshops and her other passion, origami, visit her website at [www.colleenanderson.com](http://www.colleenanderson.com).



**Bob Barris** is a native of Ohio and has been carving since 1984. He has participated in many shows and has won several awards on the national and international levels. He is well known for his wildlife carvings, which he sells through art galleries across the US. He has been teaching woodcarving since 1986 and enjoys working with students of various skill levels from beginners to advanced.



**Dave Bing** is one of West Virginia's most respected old-time fiddlers. He has considerable skills and patience as an instructor. He has taught old-time fiddle to students at all levels in the U.S., the British Isles, Spain and Australia. Perhaps his most significant inspiration was his relationship with the legendary Hammons family of Pocahontas County, West Virginia. He has performed with the Bing Band for more than 20 years and now performs with the band Gandy Dancer, in addition to various other artists.



**Stephanie Danz** is the Artist/Owner of Mountain Art Glass in Fayetteville where she teaches the art of stained glass and creates her one-of-a-kind pieces, including original designed commissions. In the past, juried art fairs have been a part of her schedule including Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes, Kentucky Crafted, Winterfair in Ohio and shows at Tamarack and the West Virginia State Fair to name a few. Sales to Japan and Canada have been great experiences. The local Fayetteville community with its rich history and broad spectrum of experience has become home. Stephanie enjoys not only what the community offers in the sense of support, but also, the various activities and events where residents congregate to enjoy art, food and friendship. Stephanie's work, including her unique and one-of-a-kind jewelry, is available at WV Fine Artisans, Tamarack, Canyon Rim Visitor Center, Studio B and several other venues in West Virginia and around the United

States. Or you can view her work at [www.facebook.com/mountainartglass](http://www.facebook.com/mountainartglass) or for questions and commissions you can e-mail her at [mountainartglass@suddenlink.net](mailto:mountainartglass@suddenlink.net) She is a past member of Tamarack Artisan Advisory Board representing glass.



**Jeff Leister** has been working with tin since 1980, creating pierced tin panels for various uses. He has taught classes at the Institute of Pennsylvania Rural Life and Culture in Lancaster, PA, Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins, WV and Cedar Lakes in Ripley, WV. Jeff is the resident tinsmith at the Carroll County Farm Museum in Westminster, MD, where he also teaches tinsmithing and helps young people to carry on the traditional art and become apprentices. Most of Jeff's tinsmithing skills are dedicated to the 1800's. He strives to craft authentic tinware pieces using tinsmith tools of that time period, which he also collects and restores. Jeff has demonstrated his authentic crafts at Landis Valley Museum in Lancaster, PA; Montpelier Mansion in Laurel, MD; 1860 Conference in Harrisburg, PA; West Virginia Folk Festival in Glenville, WV and the Carroll County Farm Museum, Westminster, MD.



**Deborah Lester** has been an artist for 40 years; she paints in several mediums but is primarily a watercolorist. She has won numerous awards, most recently, the Best of Show at Carnegie Hall in Lewisburg's Season of Color Exhibit for "Coal Tipple Memories", an oil painting of a tipple in Wyoming County, where she grew up. She likes to paint scenes of Appalachia and the people and culture that represent the beauty of WV. She now lives in Shady Spring and paints in her home studio.



**Debbie Martzall** earned her BS Degree in Art Education (K-12) at Millersville State University. She taught Art in Pennsylvania for 25 years. Debbie took an early retirement and moved to Tanner, WV in 2002. Her retirement is “only on paper” - she has changed her media from tempera, watercolor, crayons, pencils and clay to fiber and baskets! “Hearts of the Meadow Farm” became a second career for Debbie with her move to WV. She is a self-taught basket maker and fiber artist. Her fiber comes from her own livestock: Coopworth and Jacob sheep, alpacas and llamas. She teaches needle felting, ribbed basketry and continues to work with children in assorted media when the opportunity presents itself. She has also taught art to children in WV that are homeschooled. Debbie was named “Teacher of the Year”. This nomination was made by a former student and is a treasured memory as many memories are with her teaching career. Her second career has achieved ribbons in her needle felting, fleeces, home canning, coiled baskets and ribbed baskets. Her philosophy in teaching is: *“I believe your students need to leave your class wanting to return, and with a smile. This shows that you have succeeded as a teacher!”* Her website is <http://www.heartsofthefarm.com>.



**Jackie Milliken** has a passion for the art of quilting. She makes traditional quilts, art quilt landscapes, and portrait quilts. Jackie has been an active student in the Cedar Lakes quilting classes offered through Folk Art at The Lakes since 2009. She is new to the 2024 program and will be teaching 2 quilting classes this year. Jackie is a retired public school art teacher and alumni of Glenville State College. She lives in Spencer with her husband and dogs.



**Harry Newman** has been woodturning for more than forty (40) years. He belongs to two woodturning clubs in West Virginia -- the "West Virginia Woodturners" out of Lewisburg, W.Va., and the "Mountaineer Woodturners" in Ripley, W.Va. He is also a juried, demonstrating artisan at Tamarack in Beckley, W.Va. Woodturning is his passion, and he likes nothing better than sharing his knowledge of turning with others.



**Vivian Ripley** is an internationally recognized artist of varied subject matter, and inherent in all her works is the beauty of color and how it is affected by light and shade. She works in pastel, watercolor, acrylic, and colored pencil (sometimes combining media), always striving to achieve beauty in each medium through her emotional use of color and tone. She has been professionally active in group and individual shows since 1975. Teaching has inspired her to examine her own works, continually strive to grow in her achievement, and to verbalize and demonstrate those findings to others- and hopefully inspire them as well. She regularly teaches pastel, watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil, and is also in demand for demonstrations and workshops in these disciplines. She has been teaching at Cedar Lakes since 1998! She has also consistently offered weekly classes since 1977 in Columbus, OH, where she

resides. Vivian is a signature member of Ohio Watercolor Society, Kentucky Watercolor Society, Missouri Watercolor Society, Wyoming Watercolor Society, Central Ohio Watercolor Society, Degas Pastel Society, International Society of Acrylic Painters, and a charter member of Ohio Plein Air Society. She is represented by Sudbury Art and Frame in Sudbury, Ontario. Vivian has participated and won awards in many state, regional, and national shows. Her most recent awards are from the Ohio Watercolor Society *Watercolor Ohio* show, Kentucky Watercolor Society *Aqueous USA*, and the Degas Pastel Society *National Biennial Exhibition*. Vivian has enjoyed residencies at two United States National Parks: Harper's Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia, and Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas. Vivian's special watercolor technique is spotlighted in a chapter in *The Watercolor Landscape Techniques of 23 International Artists* (International Artists Incorporated, 2003). Vivian is one of only six artists from the United States included in this popular book. Her paintings are in collections in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, and Japan. Please view her work at [www.vivianripleyart.com](http://www.vivianripleyart.com). You are welcome to contact the artist with questions at 614-451-6254 or [vnripley@gmail.com](mailto:vnripley@gmail.com).



**Jeannine Sandora** is a retired nurse that has a love of making things and sharing how to make them with others. Her favorites are crochet snowflakes, hand stitchery, and basket weaving. Jeannine has been a part of Elaine Sinclair's Basketry & Penny Rugs workshops and has assisted many students with completing their projects. She is new to our program in 2024 and will be offering Crocheting and Cross-Stitching classes for beginners. She lives in Morgantown with her miniature chocolate poodle.



**Kathy Saunders** has been quilting for more than 40 years and teaching all aspects of quilt-making for over 35 years. A Bachelor's Degree in Residential Interior Design from Purdue University and years of working in Graphic Design and Publishing laid the groundwork for the many facets of quilt-making. In recent years, historical reproduction quilts have been her main focus with a special love for the early 1800's time period and especially Patriotic Quilts. Kathy started and ran a very active Quilts of Valor-Cincinnati group for over eight years. She enjoys the stories that go with the quilts and shares a variety of facts and non-fiction in class.

<https://bluejayquiltstudio.blogspot.com>



**Elaine Sinclair** I began my life in Horner, WV. Two months later, I moved with my family to Indian Run in Bristol, WV. By the age of 8, I had 5 brothers and 7 sisters. We grew up as “farm kids” on my parent’s “hundred-acre woods.” After graduating from Bristol High School, I began married life. I moved out of state for a few years, but returned to the family farm where I raised 3 children. After my youngest child turned 17 and didn’t need mom’s apron strings any longer, I decided to do something for myself.

After visiting Jackson’s Mills Jubilee, I decided to try my hand at painting. Several of my art pieces are around the world including Japan, Canada, Alaska and several western states. But most important to me, are the pieces collected by my friends and family here at home. I attended the Salem Apple Butter Festival for 17 years as an artisan. Then I became an artisan at the Forest Festival in Elkins WV for about 14 years.

In 1989 I decided to explore the world of basket weaving through the West Virginia Extension Homemaker’s Club. Shortly thereafter, I began teaching classes of my own. I have taught in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia, Indiana, North Carolina as well as here locally. I started a basket guild here in Harrison County about 2000, at which I am still president today. I have taught students at the local elementary schools as well as my church and our VBS.

In about 2006, I was juried into Tamarack in Beckley, West Virginia, where one can still find my baskets and penny rugs for sale. In my second year at Tamarack, I was informed I was the 2<sup>nd</sup> top seller for 2008! In 2011 I was chosen as one of the top 15 of 3000 artisans and West Virginia Living Magazine did a feature article on those honored. In the year after I was chosen to run for governor’s award.

I still reside on the family farm in my very own “hundred-acre woods” with my husband of 42 years and my 1 dog. My 3 children stuck close by and share with me our 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

P.S. I fed and served the Oak Ridge Boys in March 2019 hahaha



**Martin Unrue** Being a lifelong resident of Jackson County and a 1982 graduate of Ravenswood High School, I have always been enthralled by the local beauty. I wanted to showcase our communities’ wonderful sights and history. I have traveled a lot, but still this area is my favorite place to photograph (apart from Alaska). My interest in photography dates back as far as I can remember. Memories of learning to take photos with my dad still are strong in my mind. My photos tend to show perspectives on scenes around us in a different way or from an unusual viewpoint. As far as education in photography, I would say like many, I have been trained in the school of *Trial and Error*. Lots of reading and studying to learn different techniques and then testing them out myself. I currently hold the office of President of the Jackson County Tripods Photography Club. Whenever possible I like to help others learn to hone their photography skills and have taught several classes at other photography clubs and groups around the state. (Martin joined the Cedar Lakes Artisans team in 2022.)



**Judy Lilly** is a native West Virginia artist and quilt maker living in South Carolina. Her love of color and design are evident in her award-winning watercolors, quilts and wearables. A teacher certified with the National Quilting Association, she teaches on a full-time basis to guilds, shops, quilt seminars and in the Crafts program at Cedar Lakes. An active member of several guilds, she has quilts in the WV Division of Culture and History's permanent collection as well as the Horry County Museum's permanent collection. Relaxing, informative classes with personal attention, original handouts, and tips and hints for better quilt making are her specialty.



**Jerre Watkins** A graduate of Oklahoma State University, where she received a BS degree in Interior Design. She later returned to Marshall University to earn her MA degree in fine arts – painting. During her thirty-year pursuit of painting and teaching, Jerre has continued to study with many top painting professionals. Although watercolor is her first love, she enjoys working in varied media. Her training leads her to focus on design in painting and in teaching, but the real goal is to achieve an exciting combination of design, technique, and creative expression of the artist. She enjoys a variety of subject matter and style from realism to total abstraction.



**Larry Weese Jr** is a wood turner from Ravenswood, WV. Born and raised here, he values the beauty and diversity of this great state. He is best known for the embellishments he adds to his turnings, transforming his objects into a work of art. He attends fairs and festivals around the region selling his wares. He started turning in 2010 and joined the Mountaineer Woodturners and the American Association of Woodturners to become proficient at his craft. "Creating Wood Art from one of earth's natural beauties is pure joy. Wood is an imperfect medium, I create my art retaining the natural cracks, knots, bark inclusions, and imperfections. These are reminders of the rugged nature, endurance, and resilience of trees. The thought of using a living, breathing medium and transforming it into Wood Art is truly magical. The simple things in life are often the most important. My turnings speak of my passions, while at the same time allowing the user to recognize the important things in their own lives..." You may check out his website at [WeeseWoodgems.com](http://WeeseWoodgems.com) or email him at [Larryweesejr@Gmail.com](mailto:Larryweesejr@Gmail.com).

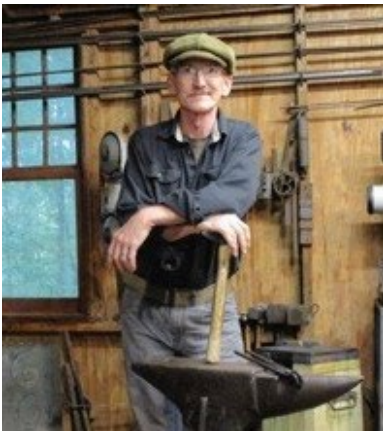


**Tish Westman** is one of the three full time resident studio Artisans at Tamarack in Beckley, West Virginia which is an art center showcasing “The Best of West Virginia” Art and Crafts from across the state. Along with being a woodworker and Luthier she also is a singer/songwriter, musician and teacher of many stringed instruments. She plays bowed psaltery, ukulele, clawhammer banjo, autoharp and has won several awards on mountain dulcimer. She also organizes an annual Bowed Psaltery Symphony which is going into its 13th season and brings in over 50 musicians from all over the country. She has CDs recorded with “Psaltrio” and many song books. Has performed on Mountain Stage and many other music venues including our local Carnegie Hall in Lewisburg, WV. Her passion is teaching people to play music, fiber arts and gardening.

[Bowed Psaltery--Westman Instruments--Everything Bowed Psaltery](#)

[Tish Westman | Facebook](#)

[Bowed Psaltery Friends | Facebook](#)



**Michael W. Young** Michael’s fascination with this ancient craft of blacksmithing started in the summer of 1975 when he worked as a volunteer at the living history site known as the Ohio Village in Columbus, Ohio. The ability to heat a simple bar of steel and form it into a useful and beautiful object captured his imagination then and it drives him still today.

Being a teenager with no money and even less skill and knowledge, he decided to build his own forge. He bought a small iron skillet, drilled holes in the middle of it and asked his brother-in-law to weld plumbing pipe to the bottom. This design allowed air to be pushed through the pipe and holes and into a fire kindled in the skillet. It was crude, but he was able to forge small items.

Soon afterward life began to happen, and he left that little forge and began to pursue a career as a machinist and then joined the army. After the army he decided to go to college, and it was there when he took a welding class where he built a nice little portable forge and began searching antique stores for a “real” anvil. Since that time there has always been a forge and anvil with him wherever he has lived allowing him to forge when he could. But when careers, raising two wonderful children and more schooling took priority, his little shop sat quiet for many years. Then in 2016 he took early retirement from the State and took on the task of cleaning up all the clutter, rust and termite damage that had befallen the shop. Since that time, he has been relearning old skills, learning new skills and falling in love once again with the craft and artistry of blacksmithing. Still today, as it did many years ago the “magic” of watching steel being heated in a forge and then being shaped and formed into graceful curves and sharp angles captivates his imagination and calls him to light the fire, to start the air blast and to pick up the hammer.

Michael’s work has won craft show awards and thanks to the Internet can be found in homes all across America and abroad. He has taught classes for the Appalachian Blacksmith Association and is a member of the Artist Blacksmith Association of North America. Some of his work can be seen on his website, [Libertyironworkswv.com](http://Libertyironworkswv.com).