

It almost always turns out to be quite different

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flowing and spontaneous in character. The accidents that happen when paint touches water give an expression other mediums can't

accomplish with an individuality and results far beyond your fondest expectations."

He said most of his work comes from his imagination and intuition. "I am a firm believer



ASPIRING YOUTH - Getting the earliest start on Roycraft's culmination of experience is Jeremy Karns of Marshall.

'I had to make up words for what I am doing because there were none. I never went to school for art. It evolved.'

-Roland Roycraft

of God creating and controlling things."

And what He has created is in everything Roycraft paints, but not a mimicry, a work that creates itself and surprises the maker as the colors and water blend as 80 percent of the artist's work is done

with out a brush.

Roycraft practiced commercial art out of Chicago before coming to Benzie County in 1974.

"A friend of mine kept urging me to come. Of course, I wanted to come. It is a beautiful place to live, but before that time, the roads

were so poor that the trip took 10 hours making a weekend trip impossible until 1974.

He has been teaching his art individually to students here ever since, sometimes in his home with six to nine at a time. He also had to support himself and his family by driving a school bus for Benzie Central Schools.

As his work evolved and his paintings and classes became more lucrative, he was able to expand and teach at workshops in Fremont, Manistee, Traverse City, Midland, Battle Creek and in Pennsylvania, Illinois, California, Tennessee, and Vermont.

But the real reward is the creation and letting the creation happen.

"I may start with something but it most always turns out to be something quite different."

It is also the teaching and sharing what he has learned.

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Beyond the classroom, he also made six videos showing the process of his unique watercolor methods and he has written two books.

"The first book I wrote, Fill Your Watercolors with Light and Color, was a teaching book. The second one Fill Your Watercolors with Nature's Light, was a method book to improve painting technique.

Throughout the interview and by his side at all times is his special friend Jean Bowers.

"We knew each other before, of course," he said. "Sometime after my wife passed away, she had asked how I was doing and then one day she called me and asked if I would like to go for a ride. Well, the only people that ever called me were insurance salesmen and such. No woman who could drive had ever called me. So I said yes. We've been together ever since."

Last winter while snow blowing his driveway he fell down and wasn't able to get up. He was down off the road and behind a large pine tree and lay in the snow for an hour and a half before he could get anyone's attention to know his state.

Although a wheelchair is his transport now, he remains very active, still painting, still teaching and helping to support the Crystal Lake Art Center from its beginning and throughout all of its trials to become what it is today, sharing the richness of his life through the "natural" expression of watercolor.



EARLY PROGRESS - Stefanie Vallee, also an internationally competitive kayaker, teaches Roycraft's method to her own students in Quebec.