

# The Maine Event



Artists who went on a painting trip to Maine are from left, standing, Lance Walker, Jerome Greene and Peter Kalill. Seated are Logan Hagege, left, and Paul Schulenburg. Photo by Jim Preston/Cape Cod Media Group

# On a trip north, local artists hunt for the best places to paint and catch some fine images

By Debbie Forman



**Y**ou know the drill: A bunch of guys go to Maine, probably to hunt and fish. That's what you'd expect them to do – besides all the horsing around, good humor and hearty meals. It is, after all, a guy thing.

But not this group. Sure, they went to Port Clyde, Maine, to get back to nature. But they didn't catch any trout or shoot any deer.

Their trophies are several hundred paintings: of rocky coasts, fishing piers, boathouses and cottages.

Of the dozen or so artists who made the trip last fall (there was an assortment of comings and goings), five have come to the Addison Art Gallery in Orleans (where they will show a selection of their work in February and March) to talk about what went on during what sounds like an absolute blast of a week.

Some of their work is hanging; other pieces are on the floor, propped against the wall. The paintings are mostly serene and quiet, but the painters are anything but. Their discussion is as much about art as about the camaraderie that reigned in that six-bedroom, two-bath rented house. You can tell there's a lot of good feeling in the group, even before they agree about how well they all get along. Everyone joins the conversation. They interrupt one another, finish each other's sentences.

The five – Paul Schulenburg, Peter Kalill and Jerome Greene, all of Eastham; Lance Walker, from South Dennis; and Logan Hagege who “bounces all over the place,” but is now living in Fall River – are full of stories. Logan, who's lived in California, has a West Coast connection, and three other artists who went on the trip are from California, one is from New Mexico and another lives in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, a destination the group is considering for a trip this year.

The idea for a painting excursion was hatched in 2004 when Paul was living in Maine and several of the Cape artists went to visit him there and paint. Two years later, after coming to live on the Cape, Paul, Jerome, Lance and Peter returned to Maine to paint. From that small beginning, the group expanded to twelve – thirteen on certain days – and they are still talking about it. They chose Port Clyde because, “It's a really great, small fishing village,” Paul says. “It's a beautiful spot.”



"Boathouse and Dock" is by Jerome Greene, who likes to capture "the immediacy of a moment in time."

"With a great sense of community," Jerome adds, noting there is one general store, one ice cream shop and a couple of restaurants.

The town is populated by "working-class people, retired people and artists," Lance says.

Andrew Wyeth comes there in summer, as does his son Jamie and as did Andrew's father, N.C. Wyeth. So it's not surprising the town welcomes artists.

An hour's boat ride from Port Clyde is Monhegan Island, where some of the American impressionists painted, as well as the Wyeths. The island is small, isolated and pristine. When he went there, Logan, says, he felt he was stepping back in time.

The group loves to paint outdoors, and so they are always looking for that special light, as so many artists do. Port Clyde is on a peninsula, and the light reflecting off the water sparkles. Just the thing for a plein-air painter.

And, Jerome says, "The light is always changing," which is so appealing to an artist like him who wants to "capture the immediacy of a moment in time."

Of course, the light on the Cape is spectacular, too. These artists agree that Provincetown is a great place to paint, but they have their other favorite spots. Paul, known for his paintings of fishermen, likes the Chatham Fish Pier. Lance mentions Sesuit Harbor in East Dennis. Logan likes Sandy Neck. A favorite of Jerome's is Rock Harbor in Orleans and,

he adds with a grin, "anywhere in Provincetown."

For Logan, referring to the trip to Maine and the chance to spend time with other artists, "The location isn't as important as getting together."

"I find there's good chemistry in the group," Lance says. Several artists correct him: "The chemistry is amazing."

Sometimes a painting was completed outdoors, but usually, Jerome notes, "You get a great portion of it done, and then in the studio it's about tweaking it and picking out the bugs."

Literally and figuratively, they all chime in.

"Painting outside is like taking notes," says Logan, "and the finished work happens in the studio."

Sometimes the whole group painted together; other times an artist went off on his own. Logan liked to set up his easel next to others.

"Most of the time, artists paint solo in their studio, so it's a great opportunity to paint together," Peter adds.

There are many benefits to working in a group. "Although we're all professionals," Paul says, "there's always a lot to learn."

Working with other artists is about sharing ideas and inspiration and tapping into their energy and enthusiasm, they agree. Seeing how other artists work – their particular vision and technique – would emerge as several painted in one location. For each, the focus, composition and choice



The red roofs in "By the Lighthouse, Monhegan" sparkle in this painting by Paul Schulenburg.

of colors would be different.

At the end of the day, they'd bring their paintings back to the house and talk about them. Wet canvases would be strewn across tables, sitting on chairs, leaning against bookcases, resting on the piano and sometimes even propped up against the molding over a doorway.

Although they are artists all with a distinct point of view, the discussion was not a formal critique. Paul notes that the only competition was related to who did the most work that day, who got out earliest and who stayed out the longest.

"It was all in good humor," Jerome says. And beyond the work itself, it appears there was lots of fun. "We were hitting each other with pranks and jokes. I pulled out every joke I had in my painting box."

"There were no tense moments," Paul says, "no disagreements."

A lot of the camaraderie was due to being artists and "speaking the same language," Logan says.

It mattered little that the age range in the group spans several decades: At fifty-one, Paul is the oldest; Jerome is forty-seven, Lance, forty-five, Peter, thirty-five and Logan, twenty-eight. It made no difference, either, that the artists enjoy varying degrees of skill and success.

"Some guys sell their paintings for \$800 and some for \$50,000," Logan says.

But there are no egos, Jerome interjects.

At night there was music: three guitars and a set of bongos. The bongos, it seems, were a source of some controversy. The artist, Jeffrey Bonasia, who played them, the group heartily maintains, had "a rhythm problem."

But even that didn't matter. "It was nice to have a male bonding experience," Paul says. "It was like a frat house."

As for having women artists join them, they are not against that. "I don't think we necessarily excluded women," Lance says.

"It was more of a 'mancation,'" Jerome quips. And no one stressed about the chores. Somehow, someone always volunteered to do the shopping and cooking. And when the dishes piled up, one of the guys came along and did them and would often be joined by another and they'd talk about art and soon the kitchen was clean.

All five are professional artists. Paul, Logan and Peter exhibit their work regularly at Addison Art Gallery. Lance shows his paintings at Winstanley-Roark Fine Arts in Dennis. He also works as a framer. Jerome has Jerome Greene Gallery, also in Dennis, but he has also spent many years "banging nails," he says.

None are starving artists. But there's always Ramen noodles, Peter jokes.

Even if you have a day job, Lance notes, that's only eight hours, so there's still time to do plenty of painting.

It's a matter of setting priorities, Peter adds. There are



Peter Kalill depicts the drama of a rocky coast in "Gull Rock" on Monhegan Island.



In "White Head, Monhegan," Logan Hagege sees the rocks as nature's monuments.



"Working Barge" by Lance Walker is a quiet image of a dock in Port Clyde on a rainy day.

many other things he'd like to do – fishing and skiing – but now it's all about painting.

There is joy in the process. But, Peter says, painting can also be frustrating and then "incredibly rewarding. It's absolutely work."

"It's challenging," Paul says. "It can be exhausting."

They all agree: It is amazingly engrossing.

"You lose track of time," Jerome says.

Paul adds: "You can get lost in work."

"It's a time in your life," Logan says, "when you can be totally intuitive."

As they discuss their work – a rain-drenched pier saturated in tones of green by Lance, a rocky coast set off by bright blue water by Peter, red-roofed buildings near the lighthouse on Monhegan Island by Paul – talk turns to the next trip.

With Frank Gardner, one of their group living in San



The artists paint different views from Larry Bailey's dock in Port Clyde.

Miguel de Allende, they're all considering that sunny Mexico – so different from the rocky coast of Maine – could be their next destination.

But whatever the location, they're definitely planning to do it again. ♦

*"Paintapalooza," paintings from the Port Clyde trip, will be on exhibit at Addison Art Gallery, at 43 Route 28 in Orleans, February 13 through March 21; an opening reception will be held*

*February 14 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.*

*For information, please call 508-255-6200; [www.addisonart.com](http://www.addisonart.com).*

*"Painting New England Together: West Coast Artists Join East Coast Artists," a selection of these works, will also be shown at the Cape Cod Museum of Art, Route 6A, Dennis, from January 17-March 8. For information, please call 508-384-4477; [www.ccmoa.com](http://www.ccmoa.com).*