



### Just Add Rocks, Boulders & Water

Sky, land and trees have been the elements of our painting projects in the Oakland VA painting group for a number of months. The Oakland vets generally like the natural environment and Michael Friedland has always brought a new learning experience to each of these “paint along” projects. For March we added rocks or boulders to the landscapes and in some cases water. Michael brought some wonderful pencil and charcoal sketches as source material. The veterans were to create their own color schemes. We pondered the project and waited for George, who happened to be the last to arrive. Nancy had brought a beautiful surprise birthday cake for George’s 70th. He made a wish, blew out the candles and we ate cake. Happy Birthday George! Then the group got to work.

We proceeded with some quick pencil sketches and everyone began to paint. In the conversation Michael explained how over time huge, jagged boulders become rounded stones as water falls pound and rivers erode them. Craig is our gold prospector. He explained that winter ice can sometimes break stones and that in times past some prospectors looked for gold by drilling holes in stones and letting winter ice crack them, thus revealing treasure, or not. In the meantime we all painted. Finally, when we shared our paintings the “take home” was that a greater value range would improve our work, but we happily observed that we each were developing a personal style.

*Sheila Cain*





# Community Outreach

## Martinez & Oakland VA



### A Field Trip to Michael Friedland's Dominican University Show

On March 5th Nancy Redden organized the Oakland veterans painting group and made a field trip to see Michael Friedland's Solo Show at the Dominican University in San Rafael. They organized a VA van which carried eight people and made a morning excursion. The day was sunny and beautiful. Michael met them at the gallery and gave a tour of the more than thirty five artworks. The veterans found the artwork very interesting especially seeing the strong group together. They had many questions about locations and techniques. When everyone had absorbed their fill of art they were ready for lunch. They moved outside to the courtyard and ate their bag lunches and chatted at tables under umbrellas enjoying the beautiful campus gardens. The perfect end to an art field trip.

Michael Friedland 's Art Show on exhibit now – May 8\* at Dominican University in the Alemany Library Gallery located on the 2nd floor.

Dominican University of California  
50 Acacia Ave.  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
(415) 457-4440  
www.dominican.edu

\*Note: Library is closed through at least April 7, 2020.

Check website for hours.



### March at the VA Martinez

Twice a month CWA Outreach offers a drop-in watercolor studio at the Veterans Clinic in Martinez, CA. We arrive early and set up with paint, paper and supplies. The room is inviting to artists and critics.

On this day, the doors were locked and the lights off, but Joe, one of our artists who was sitting nearby, instructed me to knock on the glass door. A staff member popped out of an inner office, recognized me and allowed me in. Others were there awaiting a meeting regarding the current situation. We all greeted each other with toe taps and elbow bumps. Others arrived. Subsequently we were informed that all outside [non VA staff] programs were cancelled for the time being, at least through the end of March.

In the hallway outside I saw an Army veteran who, again, told me his delightful story of hitchhiking from Germany to Paris and along the way meeting up with none other than Bob Hope in London who was there to judge a beauty contest. Mr. Hope had quipped "It's a tough job but someone has to do it!"

My friend then told me about the Irishman who was kicked out of the Army because he was a terrible marksman. His name was Rick O'Shay. One of the things I love about working with the military veterans is their sense of humor and esprit de corps. They are inclusive, celebrating both differences and similarities.

What I missed today was the friendly hellos and acknowledgements as I walked the hallway. It felt somber and apprehensive. As I told Joe before I left, maybe its better to engage in large measures to minimize the current situation's impact rather than suffer a much worse situation. As a military man, he understood.

One thing was quite clear. These are soldiers who know how to go into the unknown with courage and faith. We are all looking forward to meeting again and channeling our inner artists!

*Maggie Metcalf*