



MASSCRIBES, INC.

P.O. BOX 67132, CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467

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Odyssey 2010



Photo by Amy Veaner



President's Pen

Dear Scribes,

Many of us are fresh from the successful Odyssey 2010 Calligraphy Conference, hosted by us, Masscribes, Inc, in our own backyard at Stonehill College in July. I know that many of you were on campus early, doing the work that makes a big event like this happen...preparing dorm rooms and classrooms, moving people from the airports to their rooms, setting up conference stores and vendors etc. Anyone who spent five minutes in the office would have been amazed by the impossible number of details that can pop up at the last minute, serenely handled by office manager Jennifer Wry, and a little less serenely by Aimee and Elissa. Theirs were the only two brains holding every conference detail. Needless to say, those brains were in great demand, though Aimee and Elissa themselves would really have liked to be able to use them.



Artist-in-Residence, Adam Heller

Some of us took classes in addition to volunteering. Some came only to see the exhibits, attend evening programs or visit with friends made at previous conferences. I hope everybody enjoyed their conference involvement, whatever it might have been. Thank you for everything you did to make us all so proud of the final product. And a special thank you to Aimee Michaels and Elissa Barr for the years and months they spent putting the big picture together and seeing it through to its conclusion, despite their many challenges.

In the days we spent together I talked to several Masscribes members about ways to improve the guild. Linda Ohsberg has volunteered to record the structure of our organization so it will be easier to pass big and little jobs from one person to another. We will talk a little more about ways the guild can include more people in all kinds of ways at our next general meeting on Wed. Sept. 29th. Since you will most likely read this after that meeting, please call or email me with your suggestions, thoughts, even complaints, so we can make improvements that suit YOU.

*Keep in touch,
Carole Roy*

FYI

Two of our members post regularly
and have great information
on their blogs

Visit Mary Lawler's blog
<http://artid.com/members/calligraphy/blog>

and Maryanne Grebenstein at
www.abbey-studio.com





Our own beautiful banner ...

From the Editor

Greetings,

As I woke to a rather chilly morning, and realized that the day isn't going to warm up at all, I am saying goodbye to summer. What a glorious September it has been so far—and hard to believe that it's been 6 weeks since our conference.

I think Masscribes did a beautiful job of representing our little corner to the world. What a week! I know I'm only one of many who was proud to have played a part in the planning and organization.

I had the opportunity to meet our 4 scholarship recipients — I must say I was so impressed with the choices made by the scholarship committee. These were poised and talented young women who did us proud — they share a bit of their experiences with us.

The Odyssey experience was truly a beautiful one. Both the campus and atmosphere were completely peaceful.

The classes were very insightful. The amount of knowledge at Odyssey was truly priceless.

I would like to thank the members of Masscribes for the amazing opportunity. If not for them, and the scholarship program Odyssey would not have been possible.

I am greatly yours,
Angel L. Huertas

So, without further ado—we have MUCH to share — a feast for the eyes of artwork, some reviews, (and when I asked Angel Huertas to write a review, I didn't think he would actually "write" it — but he did and we are in awe of his work!) and, a little bird has a secret about a famous wedding...

So, read on, enjoy and write when you can. This will be Claire Spellman's last issue—she has been with us for several years as designer and it's time to take a break. So, tell her how much you appreciate her — she's at spellmanpc@verizon.net

Take care and be well—
Jane Parillo

Workshop Review

My Odyssey Experience

Perhaps to others it may sound like a 4th grade summer camp adventure, but as a calligrapher and lettering artist, finding new writing tools, playing with inks, papers and pens at Odyssey was one of the best weeks of my life, both on a professional and personal level.

Connecting with old friends and making new friends was just awesome! It was fun to finally connect faces with names, and to tap into the creative energy and talent shared by my fellow artists was amazing. I came away with a new passion to create and explore different things.

The entire week was orchestrated perfectly and the flawless execution of all the details that demanded attention would suggest that this was run by a team of conference professionals, but no, it was through the effort and time given by humble volunteers who were so much appreciated by everyone.

I had the privilege to be on the signage committee and managed to set up shop outside the registration area to handle last minute changes and revisions to any signage needed. It was an awesome experience allowing me the opportunity to chat with so many people from so many places throughout the day.

The conference started with a fantastic concert by Cheryl Wheeler followed by a reception featuring the Cheryl Wheeler exhibit "Nice Rendition", a compilation of original calligraphic pieces using the lyrics of

the songs by local folk singer Cheryl Wheeler. These pieces were compiled into a book "Nice Rendition" showcasing the work of dozens of calligraphers and their interpretation of the song they each chose. The Exhibit and all the artwork were breathtaking!

Another evening featured dance and calligraphy. This special performance by dancEnlight, a multi-cultural modern dance company based in Hartford, CT, beautifully merges the elements of Chinese calligraphy – line, shape, rhythm, accent, flow of energy and relation to space, with the elements of choreography and performance.

There were so many shopping opportunities at both John Neal Bookseller and Brenda's Paper and Ink Books! I found so many new toys to play with! It was like being a child in a candy store... with a credit card! I found a beautiful T-shirt displaying the word "SCRIBE" nice and loud. Since my website is scribedan.com, how could I not purchase one of each color? I found COPIC EXTRA WIDE marker which are GIANT broad edged alcohol based refillable markers which are perfect for teaching! The pens, and papers and inks and markers and so many other items were enough to make any calligrapher drool!

The demonstration of stone cutting by our very own Adam Heller was amazing and watching professionals stretch and scrape animal skins courtesy of Jesse Meyer for hours makes me really understand and appreciate the high price ... certainly worth every penny! The exhibit of all the hundreds of envelopes mailed to Odyssey were such fun to look at. The variety of color, letter style and concept were all so different and creative!

The workshop I took was "Polyrhythmic Calligraphy with Denis Brown" and it was quite a challenge! The first half of the week was focused on learning a new version of Italic that would lend itself well to Polyrhythmic calligraphy. The concept of polyrhythmic lettering is that lettering has a sense of rhythm, for



by Dan Mooney

instance, basic italic has a “picket fence” feel, where all the letters are more or less equidistant from each other. In learning the version of italic for this workshop, it was important that we learn the rhythm of the lettering so that the spaces and strokes all were even and similar. We used brause nibs because they are very stiff and can withstand the torture we were going to put them through. The lettering was constructed with insanely fast strokes and flicks of the pen, rather than the carefully constructed forms I am used to. At first it was difficult to flick the pen hard and end up with the results intended, but as hours progressed, it became easy and the good forms were no longer the results of a happy accident. (I love it when that happens.) The down strokes were hitting the paper hard with the pen at a precise location and then lifting quickly to produce a light unstructured feel to the letter. It was interesting that this lettering with such a free-form, almost careless look required more structure than my old english!!

Once we were comfortable with the rhythm of this style, we moved to polyrhythm, which was about grouping letters in a series and then breaking the rhythm with a large out of scale letter then finding patterns within phrases and repeating them so that there would be a series of condensed, then a wide space, then back to condensed again, repeat ... at this point, the lettering was becoming almost illegible.

Now we progressed into turning these patterns into an art form, not for easy reading, but looking for design using letters. It was so much fun to not be concerned so much about legibility!

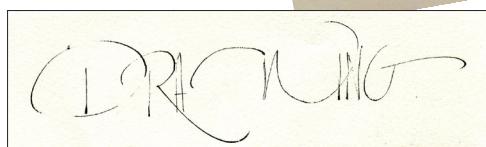
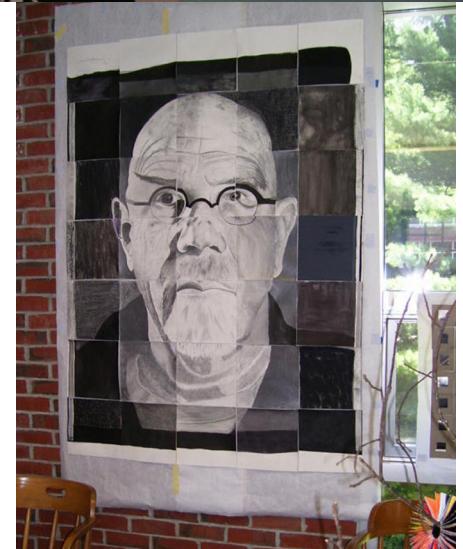
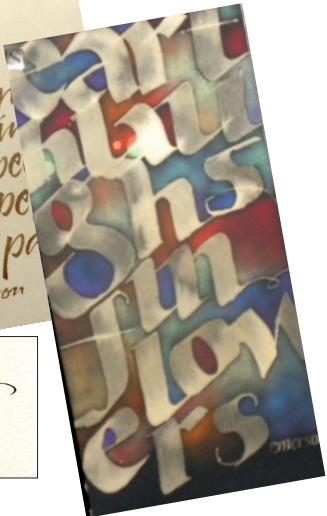
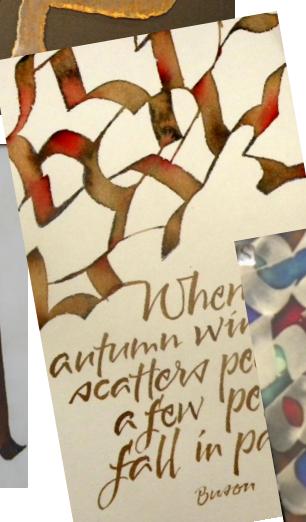
We started using different tools to achieve the desired effect, automatic pens and brushes were a natural choice. We then lettered on mylar, in different colors and because the polyester film is fairly transparent, we then turned the mylar over and lettered on both sides and began making layers of several sheets, maintaining the original design concept.

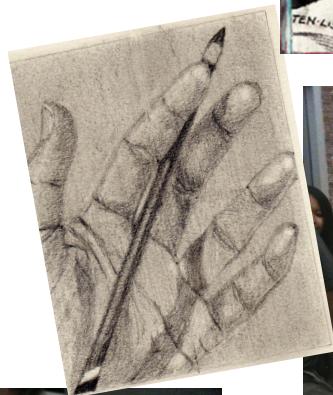
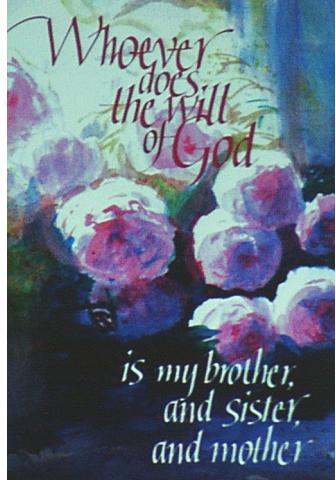
A positive aspect of using the mylar is that because it is transparent, it can be moved around to get a different placement. Using gouache on mylar is so easy to work with because if you need to change something, you simply wipe it off with a damp paper towel, let it dry a bit and then do it again! We also tried lettering on colored papers and layering the mylar over the papers to achieve an interesting effect. This layering process was not only useful with mylar, but using a variety of colors on black paper then writing over your lettering in another color made a very nice design. My final piece was a wine label. I lettered the word “sauvignon blanc” several times on black paper in a pale red. When it dried, I wrote it on the top layer in gold. I could have played forever with this new lettering and technique, flicking and scraping my ink and nib like a lunatic, but the week had to end and so did our workshop. With so much creativity in the class, it was amazing to see how many different ideas came to life on paper or mylar.

I come away from Odyssey with a renewed sense of appreciation for so many gifted and talented letter artists and calligraphers! It was a sensory overload and although I can not possibly retain everything, I have renewed my passion for letterform and am so appreciative for the opportunity to partake in this feast!



*Here are a few
photos from our
wonderful
Odyssey ...*





Workshop Review

My Odyssey in Textured Letters

by Claire Carney Griffin

I've been a member of Masscribes off and on over the years, though I must admit that I have not been particularly active while raising my daughters. Now that my elder is settled in college and my younger almost ready to drive, I find myself eager to take steps in furthering my pursuit of letter arts. On July 23rd I took the first step when I entered Stonehill College to attend ODYSSEY 2010 as a newbie.

Upon opening the doors I encountered what can only be described as a carnival of calligraphic wonders. Every toy for making marks I could imagine, every color ink I could dream of and a plethora of papers called out to me, "let's play!". And that was only in the foyer. Then there were the stars who came to share their knowledge, Sheila and Julian Waters, Nancy Culmone, Denis Brown, Tom Hoyer, Carol DuBosch, Victoria Pittman, John De-Collibus, Georgia Deaver, Carl Rohrs, Heather Victoria Held and so many more, including Barbara Close, who's half week Textured Letters workshop was my first destination.

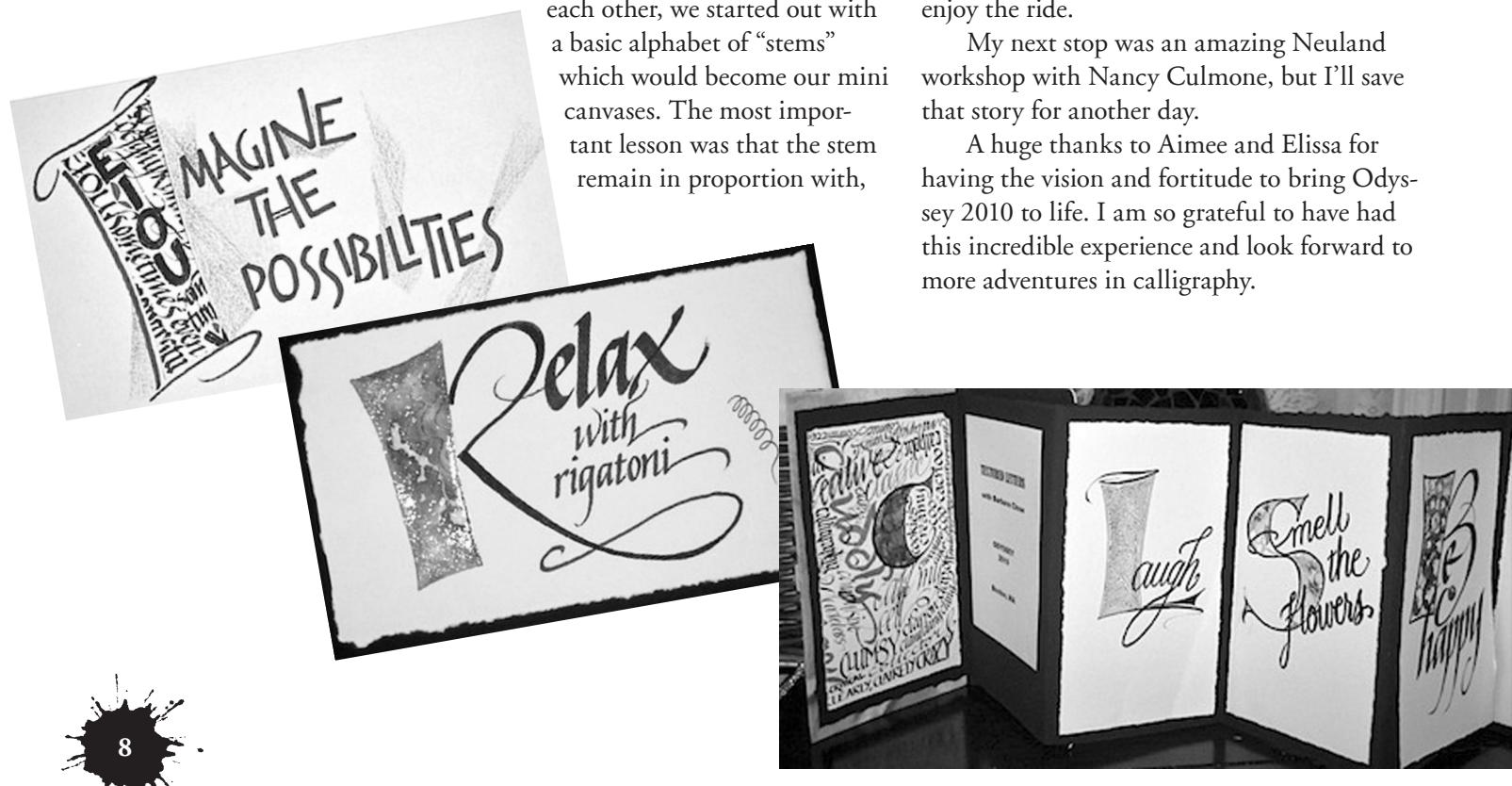
After an introduction with Barbara and each other, we started out with a basic alphabet of "stems" which would become our mini canvases. The most important lesson was that the stem remain in proportion with,

and not overpower the "bones" of the letter, but that's the only rule. Using clear shelf liner, we made a stencil of our stem so that the shape would remain consistent for most letters. We painted, collaged, applied mosaic, decoupage, scratched, cut and created lively forms. Barbara brought her bottomless bag of creative goodies and encouraged the class to try everything, even using the window as a makeshift light table for tracing or embossing and debossing shapes. She shared her many tricks for adding texture with sprinkles, jewels, stamps, die cuts, pastels, even "Diamond Glaze" to achieve a raised effect. We experimented with "Zentangle" designs as well (thank you, Maria Thomas!). We then gathered all our little letter masterpieces and put them into an accordion book bound with our own unique paper we were asked to bring with us.

Barbara Close's workshop opened my eyes to the wonder and whimsy of textured letter forms. It's amazing that in a space of 1/2" by 3" we can make a little world of creativity when we let our imagination loose and just enjoy the ride.

My next stop was an amazing Neuland workshop with Nancy Culmone, but I'll save that story for another day.

A huge thanks to Aimee and Elissa for having the vision and fortitude to bring Odyssey 2010 to life. I am so grateful to have had this incredible experience and look forward to more adventures in calligraphy.



Megan had a secret ...

I heard that this question was asked a lot at conference – who is doing the calligraphy for the Clinton wedding?? Well, I was one of the lucky people asked to work on the “wedding of the decade” and I am so happy to tell you about it!

I was contacted by Rafanelli Events back in May...they simply asked if I would be available to be on-site for a wedding in NY on July 31st. How could I resist? Any wedding Rafanelli does is high-end plus, on-site fees are awesome to get so I said yes, without hesitation. I then had to submit a sample in a certain color and letter style for approval by the bride. It wasn't until a few weeks later that I received the confidentiality agreement and the list. As you can imagine I nearly hit the floor when I started looking through and realized who the ultimate client was.

The job was in two parts...the first being envelopes in June and the second about a week before the wedding in July.

I had to be on-site for both the rehearsal dinner and the wedding. So I packed up all my supplies and pieces of work and drove down Friday morning July 30th, sweating most of the way hoping that I hadn't forgotten anything. Fortunately, I had everything I needed. I was put up at a local hotel along with all the other vendors and after dropping off what I didn't need at the hotel I headed over to Astor Courts to get my credentials. It was really amazing to drive up to a place I had seen on television almost daily for weeks and know that I was supposed to be there! After my stop at Astor Courts I was told to go over to Grassmere for the rehearsal dinner, a beautiful estate just down the road from Astor Courts. It was a stunning weather day, the sun was setting and the venue was finished to perfection it couldn't have been more charming. We were subject to secret service sweeps and parking regulations along with having to have our credentials with us at all times. I will say it was a bit scary to be writing out place cards and then right next to me have a secret service guy scoping out the property for snipers.

The day of the wedding I arrived at Astor Courts around 9 a.m. and worked solidly from about 12 until about 6. With lots of guests there were many changes and additions. The Rafanelli staff was wonderful to work with they gave me a room to work in and a own dedicated person to help me. We were so diligent in our work that we didn't realize the time when we finally finished up. So when we headed over to the tent to see my work set up and in all its glory we were stopped from crossing the road because the wedding ceremony was underway (and outside) so we had to stand off to the side - we got to watch the last part of the ceremony a very unexpected bonus!

After seeing my work in the tent I went back to my room to relax a bit and started seeing some flashes of light. I looked out the window and saw the bride and groom having their photos taken. They looked so beautiful and happy.

Unfortunately, I can't give any specifics about the event, guests or even show pictures of anything I did. As you can imagine they just want their privacy and I have to respect that. I will tell you that grounds, the tent, the flowers, the weather...everything was perfectly lovely – fit for a family of such stature.

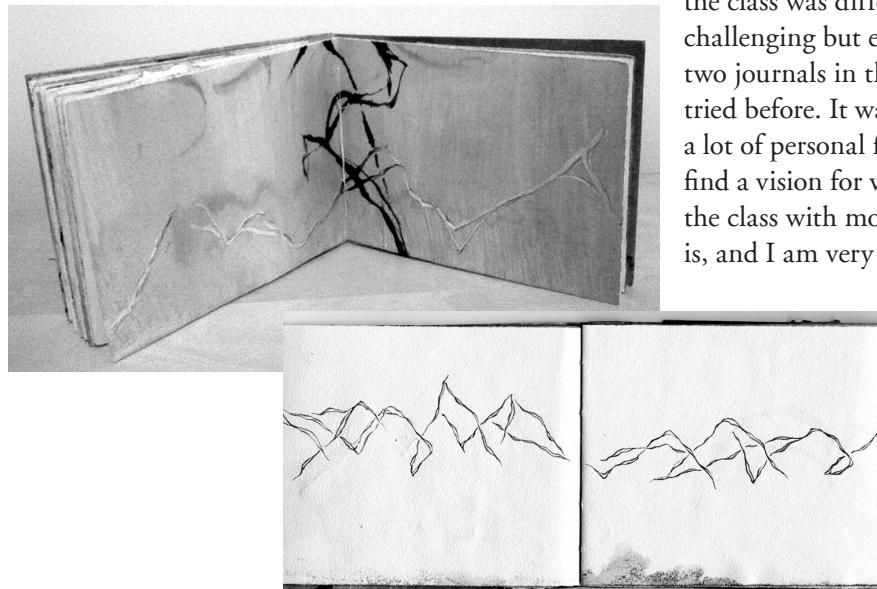
All said it was a wonderful experience. I will admit that I had a bit of a breakdown the Wednesday before the wedding, that's when it really hit me how big this REALLY was and suddenly I wasn't sure my work was worthy of the daughter of the ex-President and the current Secretary of State and I started questioning my place in all of the hugeness of this event. Fortunately I have fantastic friends and family and they helped me through. It was really hard to not say a word about this to anyone before the wedding -do you know how hard it is to keep a secret like that!!!??

Review

Our Dancing Letters Scholarship Recipients

Rebecca Farber In the month that I have been back from the conference I have continued to feel the influence of the time that I spent there. When I arrived at the conference I was not sure about the direction I should focus on taking with my calligraphy. During the week I received a lot of advice and guidance about where to go in the future, and gained a lot of inspiration about how I want to continue with calligraphy.

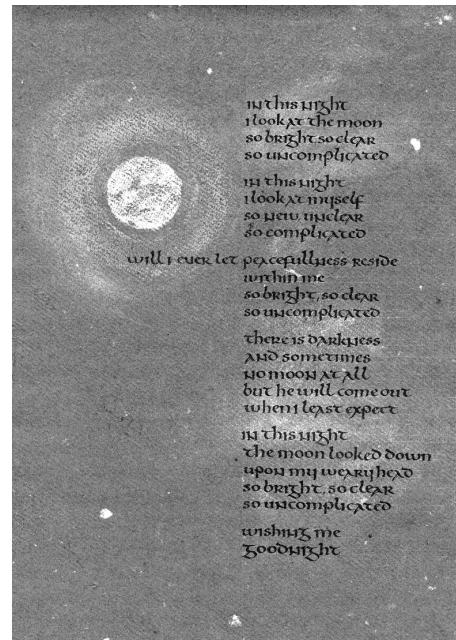
I signed up for the class Vision Quest taught by Sharon Zeugin because I felt like I was seeking direction and looking for answers about what creative path I should be taking. The focus of the class was different from any other I had taken before, and it was challenging but exciting to be exposed to something new. We created two journals in the class, and I learned new techniques I had never tried before. It was a very supportive environment, and we were given a lot of personal freedom in creating. During the week I felt like I did find a vision for what I want my work to look like in the future. I left the class with more understanding and confidence about what my style is, and I am very grateful that I could experience this class.



Because of the scholarship I am committed to attending future conferences, and I am excited to take my art in new directions. I am very thankful for the scholarship that allowed me to attend the conference!

Being at the conference gave me more determination to continue to work hard and to continue to work on my vision. I am even more committed to continuing to take workshops, and also to learning and pushing myself independently to create finished pieces. The week at the conference left me with new ideas for projects that I am eager to work on. It was a busy week, with interesting and fulfilling things happening at every moment, and I am still excited and inspired by the experience.

Bailey Amon Attending the Calligraphy conference this year in Boston has been the highlight of my year. I was so fortunate to win one of the Dancing Letters Scholarships that was awarded this year. It was just the opportunity that I needed to grow in my calligraphy practice. At the conference, I took Ewan Clayton's History of Western alphabets. The intensive and intricate study of the historical manuscripts in combination with learning how to properly analyze an alphabet will benefit me for the rest of my life. Plus, Ewan is a magical teacher and an inspiration for me. It was so incredible to be surrounded by the best in the field and look forward to attending in the years to come.



Tell Us about their Experiences at Odyssey 2010

"Yes! Yes! Wonderful!" Says Ewan as he hops around the classroom looking at the objects of each our attentions. "You've really got it now!" With quill or pen in hand we are syncing the muscle movements in our arms with the lute music playing over the loud speakers. The rhythm is quick and light and soon the arcades flowing from my quill take on a stunning and effortless grace.

This is italic!

The rest of the week was similarly paced and humored in Ewan Clayton's class, History of the Western Alphabet. The breadth of material covered was expansive but as a young calligrapher I now have a better idea and appreciation of the tradition and evolution of Western calligraphy. The timeline started at Roman square capitals and through demonstrations, music, and stories Ewan took us all the way to letters in digital media. Among many things, I learned why developments in letterforms occurred from the influence of different tools and materials, how to cut quills, and how to deconstruct any historical alphabet.

I am grateful to have received a scholarship to attend the Odyssey conference. Thank you, Masscribes! And thanks to all the support and encouragement I received from everyone. The week that you gave me has greatly influenced my development as a blooming calligrapher and artist.

Kathryn Cyr



Coming to Odyssey Calligraphy Conference was my first visit to the East Coast. I used to imagine Boston always being so cold. I was surprised once I arrived. The hot and humid weather actually reminded me of my hometown, Bangkok, Thailand, where I came from 2 years ago.

Alisara Tareekes

Having a chance to study from Julian Waters, Georgia Deavers, and Carl Rohrs was a dream come true. They are definitely what I would call "Calligraphy Rock Stars." Watching their pen and brush dancing on the paper was mesmerizing. We did some pen warm-up exercise and followed their technique for small edge pen, ruling pen, pointed brush, and flat brush. I finally started to understand the magic behind those beautiful letters, and most of it is not just the technique. It's the experience that allowed them to do so. I ended up with tons of practice sheets and no work to show. What's more important to me are the lessons I learned which made me want to practice even more.

My tutorial sessions were amazing. Pat Blair, whom I have admired since I first studied pointed pen, gave me very useful suggestions. Her eagle eyes could see exactly where I should fix in order to move onto another level. Another tutorial was with Sheila Waters, whom I considered "A Queen of Calligraphy". I had the fear that all she would see was mistakes in my work. The fear suddenly went away when I heard her laugh happily on my "Housework" poster piece as she thought it was funny and so true. Her pointing out what I did wrong in my work was truly an eye opening experience. I was delighted when she invited me to her Master Class, which I decided to attend later next year.

There are many wonderful aspects of the conference I didn't anticipate. I found that everyone was so friendly and welcoming. I didn't feel lonely at all. In fact, I had never had a chance to speak English this much in my life. My roommate, Maureen Squires, gave me helpful guidance and introduced me to people who turned out to be important to my future career. It was so inspiring and exciting as I learned deeper and broader about the calligraphy world. I'd like to express my gratitude to Aimee Michaels, Elissa Barr, and everyone involved in making Odyssey happen. The last person whom I can't thank enough is my great teacher, Carrie Imai, who gave me directions until I came to this point. I hope to see everyone and experience more of this again next two years in Portland.

Finding Calligraphers in the Digital Age

by Linda Ohsberg

Odyssey 2010 will be remembered for many things, not the least of which was the awarding of 4 scholarships to young adult calligraphers whose stories are featured elsewhere in this newsletter. The intention was set early on by co-directors Elissa Barr and Aimee Michaels to recruit calligraphers whose hair was not yet gray and who could set the world on fire with their hand lettering — the accomplished calligraphers and perhaps teachers or conference leaders of tomorrow.

A few Masscribes members crafted the criteria and announced the availability, soliciting applications from all over the country. In addition to basic information, the applicants had to submit copies of their artwork and a personal statement indicating why they wanted to attend Odyssey, stipulating their financial need, and identifying how they intend to use what they would learn. The choice was a difficult one; all applicants were qualified. The first year's fundraising was so successful that 4 applicants could be chosen and without reservation, they were. Donna Nolan, Jane Parillo, and I had the challenge of choosing those 4 candidates, carefully weighing all information, and making the final selection. It was exciting to think that these talented young women would be able to study with master teachers, mingle among experienced calligraphers, and enjoy all of the other amenities that were part of Odyssey 2010, something none of them could afford to do on their own.

As you read their stories, pause to thank the many contributors who gave of their resources to this endeavor. For without them, this would never have been possible. Many thanks go to all involved — Aimee and Elissa for bringing this idea to fruition; my two fellow committee members (Donna & Jane) for their time, effort, and thoughtful participation in the process; Lois Rossiter, who set the project in motion and was pivotal in establishing the criteria.

This was just the beginning — the project lives on under the careful guidance of Aimee and Elissa. It is anticipated that scholarships will be awarded to future conferences, allowing some young, inspired hand-lettering artists to partake in an experience that could have a profound impact on their ability and interest in calligraphy. If you are so moved, feel free to contribute to the Ann Van Tassell Young Adult Scholarship Fund (named in memory of this artist whose work was inspiring, the sale of which contributes to the fund) so that other talented, spirited, young people are not so caught up in the world of electronic production that they forsake hand-lettering as part of the creative process. Contributions can be sent to Aimee Michaels at 196 Lasell St., West Roxbury, MA 02132.

INKSPOTS

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ARTICLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Bailey Amon
Kathryn Cyr
Meg Chapin
Rebecca Farber
Claire Carney Griffen
Angel Huertas
Dan Mooney
Linda Ohsberg
Jane Parillo
Carole Roy
Alisara Tareeks

ARTWORK & PHOTOGRAPHY

CONTRIBUTIONS

Bailey Amon
Annabel Belkina
Robin Carroll
Sandi Collins
Kathryn Cyr
Sheila Delahanty
Rebecca Farber
Janet Fraone
Mary Grassi
Claire Carney Griffen
Angel Huertas
Kay Johnson
Norma McKenzie
Dan Mooney
Norm Nichols
Linda Ohsberg
Nita Padamsee
Cynthia Rudolph
Amy Veaner

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Newsletter Production	Claire Spellman
Webmaster	Annabel Belkina

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MASSCRIBES, INC.

P.O. BOX 67132

CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467

617-227-0772

www.masscribes.org