

Visit Stonington Galleries and Studios

In the fall of 2005, a small group of artist/gallery owners got together to discuss how they could continue to encourage people to visit Stonington galleries. During the winter of 2005-2006, they had come up with a plan to host First Fridays – mostly events that could be promoted in the arts section of local newspapers. Like those First Fridays in so many communities across the country, Stonington's First Fridays were a hit.

According to Anne-Claude Cotty, one of the founding members of Stonington Galleries and Studios, the idea grew out of conversations she had with Geoff Warner, a Stonington furniture maker and gallery owner.

"The idea," she said, "was to pool resources for advertising, and to encourage folks to drive to Stonington galleries.

"A couple of galleries had closed in Deer Isle Village and we were worried that tourists would stop coming to the island."

By the summer of 2006, the group numbered 13 members along a 10-mile route, and had produced a brochure with a self-guided tour.

She said that over the years they "have become a unified group with slight changes in membership each year." Although there is no formal board of directors or officers, various tasks are assumed by a few in the group – website, advertising, and brochure have been handled by the same people since the beginning years.

The group, with 10 members this year, has its own website and Facebook page, with links to each business and their individual websites, as well as the Deer Isle Chamber of Commerce. The brochure is distributed by Maine Office of Tourism at its visitor centers, at the Chamber of Commerce Information Booth on the Island, as well as by the members themselves.

The brochure encourages visitors to explore the town "in other ways," she said. "For example, visitors can eat at our restaurants, stay at local inns, hike, bike and kayak, enjoy events at the Opera House."

All of the member galleries offer refreshments and "a festive First Friday atmosphere," Cotty said, "with one or two featured each month to give a gallery talk or studio demonstration.

"Geoff Warner's band often draws a happy

crowd to his openings. The gWatson Gallery holds evening concerts, with the sounds mixing with the salt air of the harbor on Main Street."

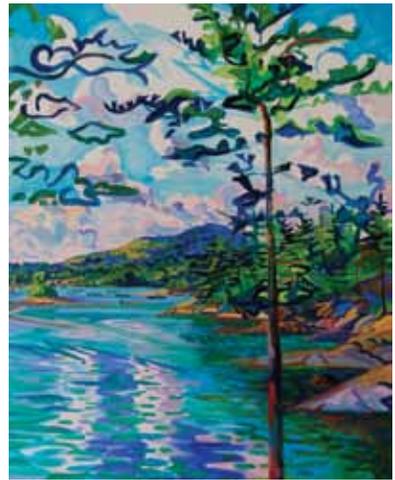
Several galleries offer workshops and classes such as Geoff Warner's Owl Stool workshop, and Cotty's Pin-hole Photography workshops.

This year's roster of artists' studios and galleries include Anne-Claude Cotty Gallery & Workshops, Geoffrey Warner Studio, Shari Ciomei Studio, The Stephen Pace House (new member this year), Jill Hoy Gallery, gWatson Gallery, Isalos Fine Art, Marlinspike Chandlery, Art by Katy, and Siri Beckman Studio.



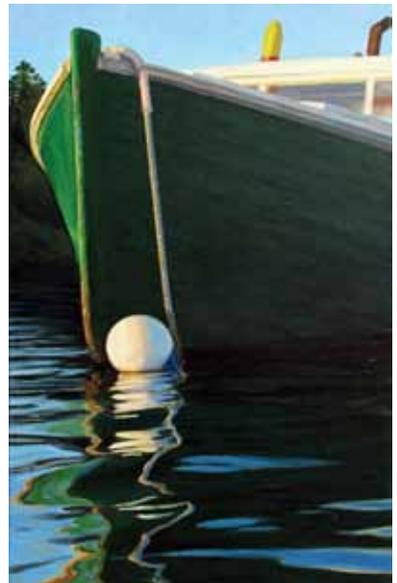
"Strength comes in numbers," Cotty concluded. "We see that we gain by forming an alliance amongst ourselves. Each business benefits by supporting and promoting each other. This collaboration ties into the economic development of the town." ■

Join Stonington Galleries and Studios for festive First Friday art and music events on these dates: July 6, August 3, and September 7 from 4-7PM. Look for their brochure as you travel around the island, and make your way to the individual galleries and studios anytime as well as online at: www.stoningtongalleries.com



Images previous page: A-C Cotty (top), Stephen Pace House.

This page: clockwise from top left: Shari Comei, Jill Hoy, Marlinspike Chandlery, Rebecca Daugherty (Isalos Gallery), Geoffrey Warner, Katy Allgeyer (Art by Katy), Siri Beckman.



All photos courtesy Stonington Gallerie and Studios