

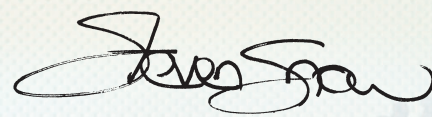
LOCAL ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

STEVEN SNOW

Steven began sketching and drawing in grade school, but it wasn't until his sophomore year of high school that he began studying art. Under the instruction of Mrs. Phylis Bernard, his first works were done in pencil and charcoal. He then moved on to pastels, watercolors and eventually acrylics. Steven did not begin working with oil paints until several years after high school.

Painting has always been part of Steven's heart and soul, but it has not been a major priority in his life. After his late wife, Twila passed, Steven's artwork took a backseat to raising his 3 children. It wasn't until some 8 or 9 years later that he picked up a brush again. This came after his wife, Renee and his kids, Blake, Twanna and Taylor, bought him paint supplies for Christmas in 2012. Since then, Steven has completed dozens of paintings, each with its own personal motivation.

Steven has his own style but most of his influence comes from Monet and Van Gogh but credits his school art teacher Phylis Bernard for his passion to create. Steven lives in Mt. Vernon and may be contacted at 618 316-1450.



In Remembrance

The mural restoration and calendar gift included with this month's newsletter highlight the work of the late Noel Smith. Noel has been our inspiration this year in our art endeavor and we are forever thankful for his legacy.



PEACOCK PRINT & MARKETING PRESENTS

INK LINK

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THE CANDY CANE LEGEND MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY, TASTY SWEET TO ENJOY AROUND CHRISTMAS

Every year as Christmas nears, candy canes show up in stores and millions are purchased and consumed each year. The legend of the candy cane shows that the candy cane was designed to be a delicious reminder of what Christmas is all about – Jesus.

According to the legend, this candy was first created back in the 18th century. At that time, in certain areas of Europe, there was said to be a ban on public displays of Christianity. Christians were oppressed and no Bibles or crosses could be owned at the time. One man found this oppression distressing and wished he could share the love of Jesus and the joy of Christmas with the rest of the world. When Christmas came around, children didn't get to see nativity scenes or enjoy learning about the truth of Christmas. As a candy maker, this man prayed to find a way that he could offer local children a Christmas gift that would allow him to communicate the real story of Christmas. His prayer led to an idea--The Candy Cane.

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF He chose to make the candy cane in the shape of a shepherd's staff. After all, Jesus is the shepherd to his followers and the Bible notes that the "sheep" would hear His voice and follow him (Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, John 10:27-30, Isaiah 40:11).

THE LETTER J FOR JESUS Not only was the candy cane in the shape of a staff, but when held upside down, it formed a "J," which stood for Jesus (Luke 1:31, Matthew 1:21).

HE IS A ROCK The candy maker chose hard candy for the candy cane, which was done to remind children that Jesus was our "rock," dependable and strong (Psalm 31:3).

BY HIS STRIPES Wide red stripes were added to the candy cane, representative of the crucifixion and the blood Jesus shed for our sins.

RED-HIS SHED BLOOD Through his blood, we are given salvation and life (Revelation 1:5, John 3:16, Luke 22:20).

WHITE-PURIFICATION FROM SIN There are also white stripes on the candy cane, which represents the holiness, and purity of Jesus, who was sinless (1 John 1:7).

SWEET FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST: Peppermint was the flavor that the candy maker chose for the candy cane. Peppermint was very similar to hyssop, which was used for sacrifice and purification in the Old Testament, reminding us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. It also reminds us of the spices brought by the Wise Men when they came to visit Jesus (Psalm 51:7, John 10:29, Matthew 2:11).

BROKEN FOR US Of course, when the candy cane is eaten, it is often broken, which the candy maker meant as a reminder that when Jesus was crucified, his body was broken (1 Cor. 11:24).

LOVE OF CHRIST The candy cane was also made to be given as a gift, representing the love of Jesus when he gave us the gift of salvation.

Although no one is quite sure if the legend of the candy cane is really true, the beauty of the legend is such a reminder of God's love for us around Christmas. In this legend, it was a way that the candy maker could tell the children the story of Christmas and still today, we have candy canes as a reminder of the real reason we celebrate Christmas. I hope you enjoy teaching your kids about the Legend of the Candy Cane and instilling some Christ-centered focus for Christmas this year.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

(Article from www.thebettermom.com)

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE

- Over the River and Through the Woods
- Lights, Camera, Action
- Five Tips for Holiday Marketing on Instagram
- Five Last-Minute Gift Ideas





OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS

HERE'S HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR TRAVEL PLANS

Traveling for the holidays? Don't just rely on Post-it notes and your email inbox. Thanks to all the travel apps and websites that have popped up in recent years, organizing your travel plans has never been easier.

Here are a few of the most popular.

FOR FINDING AIRFARE:

Google Flights, Kayak and SkyScanner help you draw a quick baseline for the cost of flights. They also suggest alternative days to travel if you can be flexible on your travel dates to save a little money.

FOR RESEARCHING HOTELS:

The professional photos a hotel posts on its website aren't always reflective of the truth. TripAdvisor offers thousands of consumer reviews along with photos that have been uploaded by travelers rather than advertising

professionals. If you do arrive at a hotel and don't like it, apps HotelTonight and Roomer can help you find a suitable (and likely discounted) alternative on the spot.

FOR TRACKING DETAILS:

Flight times, your hotel's address, rental car info, confirmation numbers—so many numbers you want at your fingertips when traveling. TripIt and TripCase are two apps that strip out unnecessary information and put what you need to know from confirmation emails into a well-ordered itinerary. They're

both free, but you can pay \$49 annually for a more robust TripIt Pro with extra features like notifications of gate changes and alerts when a better seat becomes available.

FOR ROAD TRIPS:

iExit tells you what services are where at various U.S. highway exits so you can decide whether to wait or turn off now. Roadtrippers finds all the great American roadside attractions as well as restaurants and other services that are close. And GasBuddy compares gas prices of all the nearest stations.



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

QUICK TIPS FOR CREATING SUCCESSFUL VIDEOS

Whether you're shooting a video for your website, a marketing campaign or your YouTube channel, you want one that doesn't suck and does represent your brand well.

Here are six ways to make sure that happens.

Try to shoot during the day. Natural lighting is your friend, especially if you don't have a legit lighting setup (and most people don't). Natural lighting complements people's skin and won't make them look washed out.

Don't shoot backlit or with a window behind you. This will make faces dark. Turn the camera around so you're facing the light source, and your lighting should be much better.

Be aware of where you're looking. If you're watching your face on the screen, you're not looking at the camera—and not engaging with your audience. Be sure you're looking right at the camera lens.

Be wary of shooting outside, especially in a public place. The number of background noises is endless and can make for an editing nightmare.

Know that your hands are not as steady as you think they are. Your best bet is to put your phone or camera on something steady, even if you think you have good control.

Consider the editing process before you decide you're done shooting. Watch for any weird lighting changes—did your phone try to switch light sources? Listen to your video with headphones—did you capture a lot of background noise? If yes, then reshoot. It'll make the editing process much easier.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

The average value of a sale referred through Instagram is \$65.

FIVE LAST-MINUTE GIFT IDEAS

(THAT DON'T REQUIRE A TRIP TO THE MALL)

1. For readers: An e-book for their Kindle, Nook or tablet.
2. For entertainment buffs: A subscription to a streaming service like Netflix or Spotify.
3. For bargain shoppers: A one-year gift membership to a warehouse club like Costco or Sam's.
4. For foodies: A monthly subscription to a wine or food club (there are several).
5. For someone who has everything: A charitable donation in their name.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

"A brand that captures your mind gains behavior. A brand that captures your heart gains commitment."
—Scott Talgo

FIVE TIPS FOR HOLIDAY MARKETING ON INSTAGRAM



Instagram is one of the most active social media sites with more than 400 million monthly users, and it could be your ticket to revving up holiday sales. Did you know that 33% of consumers will act on promotions shared on a brand's social media channels?

Target is brilliant at Instagram marketing with their engaging posts. Here are a few takeaways from how they do it.

1. **Involve your audience.** One easy way to do this: Ask a question. It can be holiday themed, but keep it centered on your brand. For example, if you sell books, ask your followers what they're cozying up to this winter. Another way is to post something humorous or silly and ask followers to tag friends that could relate.
2. **Start a conversation with your posts.** Nothing heavy. Just something easy, like asking people white vs. color lights or eggnog vs. hot chocolate. If you can work your products or brand into the discussion, all the better.
3. **Promote your items.** This one is obvious, but it's not easy. You want

to be fun and engaging without being salesy. Use pictures of your products (no stock photos), and be clear about what you're offering in terms of discounts or BOGO deals.

4. **Create urgency.** Here's your chance to call out last-minute shoppers (in a friendly way) and show them how you can help. A sense of urgency or the possibility of missing a great deal encourages buyers to act.
5. **Share user content.** Invite followers to share pictures of their best finds this month or perhaps how they're using your products this holiday. Create a campaign-specific hashtag and ask people to tag their pictures with it.