

ART LOVERS NEWSLETTER

BY GARY CONGER

January 2011



SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2011 (6-9PM)

December events of interest to readers of this newsletter: I discovered a major art lover in my family tree while attending an event at the U.S. State Department with my wife. My muse and I also attended a White House Holiday Party and were able to enjoy its many paintings and lavish décor. And happiest for me was the call I received from my oldest friend's wife wanting to buy him "Blue Manhattan" (below) as a Christmas gift.



Clement Ellis Conger,
White House and State Department Curator, 1961-1992

It was a thrill listening to Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton present Awards for Corporate Excellence (ACE) in the historic Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Room on the eighth floor of the U.S. State Department, and it was wonderful to explore the adjoining rooms and look at paintings and furnishings from the era of Ben Franklin. I was surprised in my travels by a portrait of Clement Ellis Conger, a distant cousin I had heard about from relatives. The charming docent explained that Clement Conger, a career diplomat, had not only renovated the Red, Green and Blue Rooms of the White House and curated its art collection but had also been responsible for renovating the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Room we were standing in and collecting all of its art and artifacts.

The White House Holiday Party we attended was a feast for the eyes as well as the palate. We were overwhelmed by the majesty of the building, the gilt ceilings and sparkling chandeliers, the portraits of presidents and first ladies, and the massive, fluted columns rising to the ceiling as if to declare the strength and confidence of the American president. The strength and confidence of our current president showed clearly when he bounded down the steps with the First Lady and shared in a short speech his good cheer and optimism for the New Year.



Hilary Rodham Clinton
as First Lady



"Blue Manhattan", 48" x 24", Oil on canvas

I was deeply moved when Dianne, the lovely wife of my oldest friend, John, asked me the price of "Blue Manhattan". She had asked him what he wanted for Christmas and he replied that he only wanted one thing: this painting. The painting has been one of my favorites, but I was happy to see it on a wall in our friends' Vermont mountaintop house. It's next to a picture window revealing an expanse of sensuous green mountains and luscious blue valleys, which, in seeming contrast to "Blue Manhattan", somehow harmonize with my view of rooftops and water tanks at dusk while the city's lights are coming on for the evening.

Many of you reading this newsletter will have received our holiday card and may have noticed the back of the card is an invitation to our first annual Art Lovers and Valentines Party on **Sat., February 12, 2011**. Please save that date and plan to come to the party.



"September Afternoon"
30 x 24, Oil on canvas



New York Painter
Cityscapes, Landscapes, Photographs

For art lovers partial to the "magical realism" of Edward Hopper, whose New York paintings I strive to emulate, there's a show of his work and that of his contemporaries at the Whitney that will still be going that weekend. <http://whitney.org/Exhibitions/ModernLife>



Please save **Saturday, February 12, 2011**.

My muse and I will be hosting an Art Lovers and Valentines party from **6:00 - 9:00 pm**. In addition to luscious food and drink, you'll be viewing some of my newer paintings.

Please **RSVP** to Gary Conger,
22 West 26th Street, Apt. 9H, New York, NY 10010
Email to: gbc@nyc.rr.com



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