

Recent Highlights

by Liz Gibbons

There are two activities that I have been engaged in since moving to Windsor Gardens in the fall of 2017 that I feel have been some of the highlights of living here. One is the Writer's Group. I joined, not because I see myself as a good writer, but because I recognized I was having some memory problems, those pesky senior moments, but intensified. I felt that writing would help with that, and I believe it has. Having a new topic to focus on each week keeps my brain active in a variety of ways.

The other highlight has been learning to draw. I was often frustrated because I could not draw a person or animal, an object, or a nature scene. It puzzled me because being a biology major in college I had to do many lab drawings, and I could do those quite well. Why couldn't I carry that over into pleasurable drawing. At the Classes Expo in August 2018 I stopped at the table promoting the drawing class and asked if they could really teach someone who was hopelessly lacking in drawing ability to be able to draw. I was assured that could be accomplished. So in September, with much doubt that they could teach me to draw, I joined the class.

The first class we were given a picture which we were to draw upside down by covering the top part of it and then gradually uncovering more of the picture as our drawing progressed. That was to train our brain to look at shapes in a portion of the picture and not be swayed by the whole picture. Surprisingly my drawing turned out pretty good. As the weeks went on we learned about perspective, proportion, shapes, angles, focal points, horizontal and vertical relationships, and light and shadows. No wonder I could not draw well. Lab drawings were two dimensional and this was three dimensional. There were a lot of factors I was not aware of. Gradually as I drew a picture each week in class I applied these composition principles, and my drawing began to improve. My first attempts at shading were very cautious. Jeanne, the teacher, encouraged me to keep adding more shading. I thought I had done enough. But I added more, and soon I saw how the shading made the drawing come alive. I also noticed that I lost sense of time as I became absorbed in a drawing project. We have done drawings of objects such as a small squash, a fall leaf, a lilac flower, a tea pot, and a variety of photographs to copy. Occasionally we have gone outside to draw from nature.

The writing and drawing have opened up a side of me I was unaware of. I am very grateful that I pursued these avenues and that they are available to us.