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Author provides clear prose about war's battles

By PATRICK T. BEARDON
Chicago Tribune

As the crucial battle of Saratoga was shaping up in late 1777, American generals were missing and dismay among the soldiers was great.

His presence was so very necessary," wrote Col. Henry Livingston to a friend. "He is the life and soul of the troops. Believe me, sir, to him and to him alone is due the honor of our late victory."

And who was this paragon of military virtue?

No, it wasn't George Washington. It was Benedict Arnold.

Benedict Arnold? The man who came within a whisker of selling out West Point and the infant United States to the British army for 6,000 pounds? The man whose name has become synonymous with treason?

Yes. Although few modern Americans realize it, Benedict Arnold was a military dynamo who had a major hand in several of the most important American victories of the Revolutionary War.

But then, hounded by rabid rebel leaders because he wouldn't join them and Tory jihad and criticized by his teenage pro-British wife, he turned his back on his

young country and offered his services to the enemy.

Robert Leckie's illuminating account of Arnold's career is one of the highlights of "George Washington's War."

Indeed, Leckie does very well whenever he writes about battles. At those times, his prose is brisk, clear and concise. He makes it easy for the reader to understand the movements and actions of the army.

But Leckie, who has written numerous books on military matters for adults and young readers, runs into trouble when he's writing about events away from the battlefield.

On subjects such as politics and personalities, his prose gets clogged with overdrawn characterizations and an insistence on doing the world in terms of good guys and bad guys.

There is an unfortunate program relating to particular subjects and a broad sarcasm directed at nearly every British general and politician, as well as at some Americans.

As for Washington — well, Leckie might as well have called him St. George for all the unscientific adulation he accorded him.

Island artist paints at the edge of the world

By GRAMM HEATHCOTE
Associated Press Writer



Artist Janis Cutler and her husband Ross Gear pose near the water in Foula, Shetland Islands earlier this year. They share Foula, an island in the North Atlantic, with 28 other people, 1,700 sheep, 30 ponies, a black-and-white cow, a goat and thousands of sea birds.

FOULA, Shetland Islands — Janis Cutler, whose last address was a third-floor apartment in Brooklyn, lives in a 150-year-old stone cottage on Foula, the island at the edge of the world.

"This is my favorite place," she said, standing with her islander husband, Ross Gear, on the sheep-cropped turf looking out to the rocks.

"When I saw it I was captured. It was so wild, so tormented by nature and so spiritual. I always dreamed about a place like this and there it was and I had lots of time to paint."

Tredous Foula is just over three miles wide. It lies west of the Shetland Islands, the most northerly part of Britain. Shetland is north-east of Scotland and nearer to Norway than to Edinburgh, the Scottish capital.

Cutler, 30, paints, runs the home and looks after the black rock hens and their chicks while Gear, 26, does as their neighbors do — whatever must be done and needed.

He milks his 40 sheep, looks after the island's sheep-sheepers runs the post office and fixes buildings, fences and gates. His brother, Kevin, catches fish and lobster, helps the mail boat crew and delivers staff around the island.

Cutler studied art in Pittsburgh and New York, getting her master's degree from the Graduate School of Fine Arts at the New York University in 1987.

Preparing a lunch of smoked mackerel — caught outside the harbor — the artist recalled, "I looked forward to visiting Foula which had sort of on TV and it sounded so unusual and mysterious and I read that it was cheap. 'Oh good,' I thought, especially when I read that it was believed to be Ultime Thule, the end of the world, where the sun."

"When I saw it I was captured. It was so wild, so tormented by nature and so spiritual. I always dreamed about a place like this and there it was and I had lots of time to paint."

— Artist Janis Cutler

"My father said, 'I don't know why but I feel you'll never be the same. This trip will change your life.' And he was right."

She went for a week and intended to go on to the other islands of Orkney and the Hebrides but the grandeur of Foula's north end held her. Shetland is a smudge on the horizon to the east. On the west there is nothing but sea all the way to Greenland and North America.

"When I said I was going back, my mother thought it was a passing phase but I said no. And when mother came and saw the island she understood. Now she writes to me that I'm not missing anything as life there is more of the same, just madder."

The Rev. Barry Knight of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland went to Foula in May to marry Cutler and Gear in the island's first wedding for nearly five years. It was also the first time for more than 40 years that newlyweds decided to stay on Foula.

"I was pleased because these little islands do have a place in modern society," Knight said.

"I had imaginations that someone like Janis from outside and from such a different environment could cope with the long-term isolation. But she has become accepted by the people, which doesn't always happen to outsiders, and she's

made a tremendous effort to learn the crofting, the sheep and poultry. Her inner sources of strength and her artistic temperament and her appreciation of her surroundings will help her to live there," he said.

She had just sold three of her landscape paintings which were exhibited in Lerwick, the main — the only — town in the islands. The Shetland Islands Council, to present to the Foula Islands, 200 miles to the northwest.

Her watercolors, in which blue often predominates, are views of the land, sea and sky, with determination to capture the atmosphere. Some include fantasy figures such as those of the symbolists in France at the end of the 19th century.

"I want to create a world that exists within that painting, to make whoever sees it feel they could go anywhere to have that experience but in that painting," she said.

Springville museum hosts colored pencil art exhibit

SPRINGVILLE — The first annual exhibit of Utah colored pencil art will be on display at the Springville Museum of Art through Nov. 15.

The Colored Pencil "Utah '92" exhibit is open to the public. The museum, located at 10 E. 400 South, Springville, is closed on Mondays.

Vern G. Swanson, juror and director of the Springville Museum of Art, selected the winning illustrations from nearly 100 entries received from Utah colored pencil artists.

Best of Show was awarded to Jan Henderson for "Frozens Notice." Richard Hull was given second place for "Ride the Wings of Imagination: Read" and Marilyn H. Garner was awarded third place for "Stepping." Jayce's Choice awards were presented for 18 additional illustrations.

The show is an annual exhibit event open to all colored pencil artists in Utah. This year's Best of Show winning piece will be featured in full color on the cover of next year's show catalog.

For more information about the Colored Pencil Society of America-Utah Chapter, contact Sheri Dow at 467-8153.

The Utah Chapter will sponsor a watercolor pencil workshop Nov. 6 and 7. Mary Lou Romney, instructor at the University of Utah and Brigham Young University.

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