



*Photograph courtesy of Les Frederick*

## Remembrances of Jean Harris By Kay Tobler Liss

Jean Harris, who was active in CSC for many years, especially as a member of the events committee, passed away on March 20, 2018 at the age of 85. For someone who was fairly well-known in the community and remembered by those who knew her as a strong and vibrant presence, it struck me as strange that her passing was so quiet. I only heard about it a week later from a mutual friend in the art community, and then there wasn't an obituary in the local paper until April 19. But it turns out, Jean wanted it that way. She did not wish for a funeral service either, though I understand friends from the Friends Meeting House in Damariscotta, of which she was a member for many years, want to do something in her honor.

I first met Jean around 2003 when I joined the board and began teaching literature classes at Round Top Center for the Arts and Jean was leading a "plein air" painting class. After the center closed, she continued these popular classes, which her faithful followers seemed to love. Her favorite medium was watercolor, well-suited to her fondness for painting "en plein air." She was a member of both the National Watercolor Society

and New England Watercolor Society as well as a member of the National Association of Women Artists.

I got to know Jean much better when I became a board member of CONA, Citizens Offering New Alternatives. Jean was on the board then, and I think might have been on the board continuously from its inception in 1982 when it was known as Citizens Opposed to Nuclear Arms. She was an original member of that organization, which was founded by Julia and Ed Meyers. I remember her as always having the most incisive things to say. After much bantering back and forth on an issue among board directors, Jean would cut to the chase and come up with the best idea.

As a member of the CSC events committee, she is remembered by Jack Farlow, a long-time participant in that group, the same way. She would quietly listen to everyone, he said, and then “zing,” she would come up with the right way forward.

Jean was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and was married to Richard Harris, who passed away in 2017 and whom she patiently took care of in his ailing last years. She had a career in advertising and copywriting in New Orleans before she began painting and teaching art in the mid-1960s. She became director of Grove House, an arts and crafts school in Coconut Grove, Florida.

The last time I saw Jean was last fall when she was in a class of Rolf Winkes, I think among her favorite CSC classes. She looked a little frail, the first time I had seen her using a walker. But she had the same cheerful, warm smile, and the same alert look on her face as she always had, listening carefully, processing, and understanding. Jean was one of the great elders – someone of great character, integrity and wisdom – of our area whom I, and I’m sure many others, will miss and remember fondly.

***Kay Liss has contributed numerous pieces to the eNewsletter and has been active in the administration of Coastal Senior College.***