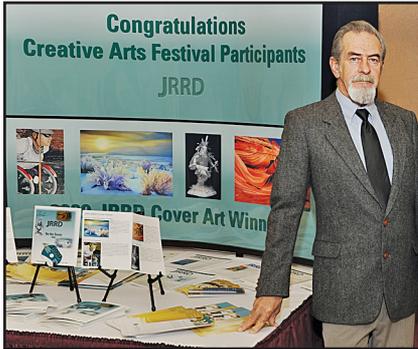


About the Cover Art



A first-time entrant in VA’s creative arts competition, Benjamin Snider was motivated to compete by the opportunity to display his art. “There are very few venues in which to show your art in the community,” said Snider. “I stumbled onto this one while going to an appointment and thought I’d give it a try.”

He entered an oil-on-canvas painting called “One Morning in December” into the competition. The painting had been in competition at another local art show, but hadn’t won anything. Still, Snider said, the painting was “one of the newest ones I’d done, and the one I liked best at the time.”

The painting was inspired by what he saw driving early one morning in the mountains. The painting depicts an almost desert-like landscape with anemone-looking plants springing from the ground and lit by a soft but shining sun. Soft blue snow blankets the ground, muting the shadows and making the scene appear endless.

Snider is mainly self-taught but learned some basics of art composition by visiting the crafts department of the service club on the army base in Hoechst, Germany, where he was stationed from December 1967 until December 1970. The head of the crafts department, whom Snider fondly remembers as “Herr Erish,” gave Snider his first lessons. Snider recalls, “He was a very accomplished artist, and I would go there almost daily to watch him paint. One day he had an easel and canvas set up for me, and said, ‘Let’s see if you’ve learned anything.’”

Snider was awarded third place in VA’s creative arts competition and is one of three artists whose artwork will be featured on JRRD’s cover in 2009.

