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2016 Wooden Boat Show Artist
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**2016 Wooden Boat Show Artist Judy Maring
The Last Trip of the Day**

If someone wanted an accurate portrait of Judy Maring, the 2016 Georgetown Wooden Boat Show featured artist, imagine the famous self-portrait of Norman Rockwell.

Not that Maring paints in the style of Rockwell, but she would be in her spattered work clothes, in the second story studio at her circa 1882 home at the corner of Prince and Cannon streets, just two blocks from the South Carolina Maritime Museum. Although Maring is in her sixties, it's easy to see a young girl in her eyes, which are full of life and good humor. It was as a youngster that she was first exposed to an artist's passion.

"I grew up in north central Pennsylvania," she says, "in a mountainous area (Blossburg). It was a great place to grow up with a lot of winter sports like skiing, ice skating, sledding, tobogganing, and snowmobiling. And we did it all. My father, Alfred Rogers, was really, really bright, always creating, inventing. His main job was the foreman of my uncle's [coal] mining company, and he was also an electrician. He built a computer long before we had computers."

"My exposure to art was the smell of turpentine when he would paint at night. He would paint quite late into the evening. He painted landscapes, and he was very impressionistic. No formal lessons, but he studied from television programs."

Maring attended Mansfield University and received her bachelor's degree in elementary education, married David Maring, moved south, earned her master's degree at Francis Marion University, had three children and taught elementary school for 25 years in Georgetown County. All those years, she never picked up a paintbrush. She did have artistic moments when she made her own bulletin board art and when she crafted costumes she wore to teach in, to illustrate her lessons.

"One time I dressed as Commander Toad," she said, her eyes dancing. "I made a toad head and large toad feet, and all was well until we had a fire drill. You're not supposed to say or do anything during a drill, but there I was going down the hall, clomp-clomp-clomp. The kids were going wild. We had to have another drill another day. That was so funny!"

About a year after she retired, a friend asked Maring if she'd accompany her to art classes.

“I did, and I LOVED it,” Maring said. “From that moment on I’ve been immersed in it.”

She made up for lost time by attending many advanced workshops led by renowned artists such as James Calk, Betsy Havens and Marvin Mattleson. She also has studied under the guidance of Elizabeth Bronson. The skill level Maring has achieved in nine years is astounding. These days she usually paints six days out of seven, from early in the morning through mid-afternoon, and completes about four oil paintings per month. Her husband, a retired judge, pursues his own passion of writing historical novels in his downstairs studio, while upstairs Maring creates water scenes of marshes, rivers and boats using the landscape around her at East Bay, Morgan Park, Pawleys Island and Murrells Inlet. She also does still lifes, but her favorite subject is portraiture, working from photographs.

Maring says she was honored and humbled when asked to be the 2016 Wooden Boat Show poster artist, and she visited the Maritime Museum for subject inspiration. Information about steamboats caught her eye, because she didn’t know the Georgetown area had steamboats.

She settled on the *Governor Safford*, which was a sidewheeler built in 1884 in Camden, New Jersey. Its paddle wheel was on the side to make it easier to turn around in narrow rivers.

Once she had a subject, Maring studied up. She pored over blurry black and white photos in the Georgetown County Library digital archives and read countless issues of the Sunday Outlook, an early 20th century local weekly newspaper.

She learned the *Governor Safford*, named for the governor of the Arizona Territory who also founded Tarpon Springs, Florida, was first used to carry passengers and cargo between Cedar Keys and Manatee, Florida. In 1893 it worked in New York for “Moonlight Cruises on the Hudson” and cruises to Coney Island. The side-wheeler moved south again in 1897 for a stint as a coastal Georgia mail boat, then ferried troops returning from the Spanish-American war. In 1899, President William McKinley and his wife were passengers.

The *Governor Safford* first came to Georgetown in 1901, when the Atlantic Coast Lumber Co. used the side-wheeler to ferry employees and guests twice daily to Hagley Landing, where they then caught a train to Pawleys Island. In 1906 a hurricane destroyed the railroad bed, and the *Governor Safford* was sold to the Jamestown Exposition, Excursion and Steamboat Co. of New York.

The next year, 1907, despite a marine survey that showed the boat might not be seaworthy, it was sold. Georgetown residents “...were offered a last free excursion on the steamboat,” according to information on display at the Maritime Museum.

In 1908, at age 24, the *Governor Safford*, "...went down in rough weather off Bogue Inlet bar [in] North Carolina. Her crew was rescued by the Katahdin."

Taking refreshing trips on the *Governor Safford*, especially during steamy southern summers, must have been such a treat. Maring found an advertisement that described a moonlit voyage to North Island on the Fourth of July. A band was aboard the elegant excursion boat, and some people brought their bathing attire so they could take a dip in the surf. Young lovers, the ad said, were welcome to wander off and find a secluded area where they could whisper sweet nothings.

Maring created the oil painting, which she calls "Last Trip of the Day," in about a month. She gave it a perspective all her own, because the old blurry black and white photos she studied showed the *Governor Safford* from "straight across." Maring wanted it at an angle, so she found photos of steamboats with the angle she wanted, then ensured the new perspective of the old boat was historically accurate.

"Last Trip of the Day" shows the *Governor Safford* chugging briskly along the Waccamaw River late in the afternoon, on its last trip of the day, headed to Hagley Landing. Passengers are on two deck levels enjoying the breeze, and smoke billows thickly from a central stack.

2016 Wooden Boat Show posters will be available for purchase at the museum for \$20 starting on August 18, 2016 when the original painting will be unveiled. The painting will be auctioned off on Friday, October 14, 2016 at the Goat Island Yacht Club Regatta.

Other works by Judy Maring are on display and available for purchase at Coffee Break Café, Waterfront Books, Townhouse Restaurant and Georgetown Art Gallery, which are all on Front Street just a few steps away from the museum.

The [South Carolina Maritime Museum](#), at 729 Front St. in Georgetown, South Carolina, is home to the prized Fresnel lens of the old North Island lighthouse. Its exhibits and artifacts are entertaining, illuminating and interactive. The museum is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, and the phone number is (843) 520-0111.