



*Dicky's Steers – oil on canvas, 20x30. Steers at Renn Farm in Maryland, the site of many an ASCA show and trial over the years.*

It was probably about halfway through nursing school that I started thinking about what I really wanted to do again, and art reentered the picture. It was the year I graduated nursing school that I went to a major art festival on the eastern shore of Maryland and saw work in all media, depicting mostly waterfowl and marsh landscapes. But what really caught my eye was that there were scratchboards there! I had not seen this drawing medium done by anyone besides me since eighth grade art class when we were introduced to the medium; I had continued with it ever since then.

So seeing scratchboards (by more than one artist, yet) was very motivating to me in a couple of ways; one artist was very good and her work made me aspire to such quality; the rest? My thought was, "Wow, I know I am already better than that!" (I may



*Thoughtful – oil on board, 9x12. A Berner friend.*

have lacked self-discipline but evidently I did not lack self-regard!) I went home that day with a REAL resolve to work seriously at developing my art as far as I could, with a goal of becoming self-supporting with it.

Well, that goal only took seven-teen years! During that time I worked in coronary ICU at Washington Hospi-

tal Center (now one of the busiest heart programs in the U.S.), reducing my weekly hours from full time to per diem over the course of fifteen years before finally letting the job go in around 1999.

I was at first working exclusively in scratchboard, as before being one of the rare artists doing the medium. The year after first seeing those scratchboards at the art festival, I was invited to exhibit there myself through their jury process. Birds were then (as now) my primary focus and I spent the next several years developing my technique, getting gallery affiliations, and participating in other juried exhibitions.

In 1996 I decided I needed to try the gold standard in color media, oil painting. I'd worked in watercolor for several years but had found I wasn't suited to its requirements. Oil painting turned out to be what I was looking for