**August Artwalk shows off fresh talent**By Lyn Ring August's second Friday Artwalk in Colonial Beach was, as always, a great treat for the senses. Art enables us to focus on the common place and make it extraordinary. It does not matter whether a piece is a portrait that catches the nuances of another human, a landscape that brings us a glimpse of some panorama that we yearn to visit or one that is familiar and meaningful to our lives, or splashes of colors in some abstract that stimulates or soothes. Art has a magic that nothing else comes close to.  
  
The Potomac Fisheries building is a great venue to display art and this month was incredible. The show is entitled "River Fantasy" and highlights the work of three artists, **Robert Wayt Smith**, in oils, Marietta Dantonio-Fryer, in watercolors, and Joel T. Keener, in pencils. I think the word Wow would appropriately describe this showing. Dantonio-Fryer has many academic degrees and is chairperson of the humanities and arts department and professor of art at Cheyney University, of Pennslyvania , and holds the title of a Lindback Distinguished Educator in 2005-2006. In 1998, she was awarded "Art Educator of the Year" by the State of Delaware, and recently won the Citation award of excellence from Kutztown University. She has had numerous international exhibits. Suffice it to say, when you view her work you know in an instance you are looking at something very, very special. Two of the magnificent watercolors she brought to the building were from her visits to Ireland. One is of a pub and truly shows the warmth, gaiety and charm of the landscape and people. The other painting is of the shore and cliffs with sirens of the water calling to the men who went to sea. It is heaped in folklore and wonder. But what makes Dantonio-Fryer so unique is her compassion. Her work has been called healing art. She has worked with the US Army and US Space and Missile Defense Command assisting soldiers and their families respond to the events of trauma, especially since Dessert Storm, 9/11, and the Iraq War. The end product of "Operation Healing Arts" is a mural that hangs in the Pentagon. Two paintings and one mural are on display in a museum in Nashville. She has also helped many other groups of people who are physically, mentally, or emotionally challenged using art to transcend many of their problems.   
  
Alongside Dantonio-Fryer is Joel T. Keener, an associate professor of art at Cheyney University and adjunct professor at Wilmington University in Delaware for art and design. He is a published author, artist, photographer, sculptor and graphic designer. Keener has also exhibited internationally at locales including the United Nations in New York and Cairo Egypt. He has an extensive list of prestigious awards. His website can be seen at http://www.mksgallery.com. This is the first time in my coverage of the Artwalks I have seen work done in pencil. It is totally fascinating. I couldn't believe how much feeling and how much of a story could be told with pencil. One such story showed a scene with woods and sprites looking out from the trees. All sorts of odd but interesting creatures abounded. It was a large drawing and each pencil line was precise. It was a living fantasy. He loves the act of creating and it is so obvious when you see this very different form of expression.  
  
**Robert Wayt Smith is inspired by the old masters such as Waterhouse, Gerome and Rembrandt. He is a realist painter with over 25 years experience as a freelance artist and illustrator. His awards are many. In 2006 he was honored to exhibit his work in Cairo Egypt as a member of the "International Artists for Peace and Humanity." He is an active member of the artist advisory committee of the Mattawomen Creek Arts Center. His work is on display in the Wayt Gallery at the Maryland Renaissance Festival weekends through October. Walking into the building, I must say the first painting I was drawn to was one of Roberts. He explained that he often used his 15-year-old niece for portraits and in viewing the picture "Innocents," I can see why. The delicate purity of the young woman curled up against the dark background representing life is absolutely riveting. You can't take your eyes away from it. When I finally did look across the room, on the opposite wall was another portrait. This was a dramatic and sultry oil of a flamenco dancer with her arms over her head in a dance move. Again, I was struck by the museum quality of Smith's work. In this room with the three artists of the show, I knew I was surrounded by something very special that might never happen to me again. When you meet greatness you know it.**  
  
Well, before we know it, summer will be over and we can look forward to the beautiful autumn days . September will find me back on the path. Perhaps I will ride the golf cart that the Artists Guild has provided and take the tour at a more leisurely pace. Once again, if you haven't taken the time out of your busy schedules to enjoy one of the walks try to do so. The art is wonderful, the gallery owners are happy to see and talk to you and in most of the venues there are delightful refreshments. You do not have to purchase anything, nor are you ever pressured to do so. But with the holidays coming up and so much of the works reasonably priced, just think what a great gift of beauty you could give a loved one. See you next month.