

# The Lovely Lititz Landscape Frames Moravian Manor Communities

*This community within a community, with two distinctive campuses, is a lifestyle masterpiece waiting to be painted in many mediums by its residents. Meet three actual artists who love Moravian Manor Communities for all it has to offer.*



**By Amy Alkire**

There is a little town not far away that touches hearts with a blissful aura. It is where timeless tradition meets trends of today. Fertile farmland embraces tree-lined streets. The rich 18th century history of its past inspires business and industry of the present.

The town, Lititz. The appeal, infinite.

An exemplar of all that is good in America, Lititz springs from a dream to establish a model Christian village infused with Moravian ideology. Architecture reflects the simplicity of Germanic and Federal styles. Early entrepreneurs founded companies now renowned for inimitable flavor and sweetness. Julius Sturgis Pretzel Bakery is the oldest commercial pretzel bakery in America, while Wilbur Chocolate Company's original Wilbur Buds remain unchallenged for delectability.

The inviting town is also home to Moravian Manor Communities (MMC), a Life Plan retirement residence surrounded by Lancaster County beauty and unassuming Lititz charm. The community within a community is a lifestyle masterpiece waiting to be painted in many mediums by its residents. Meet three actual artists who love Moravian Manor Communities for all it has to offer.

**The town, Lititz. The appeal, infinite.  
Legendary Wilbur Chocolate Company  
appears in the background.**





"I have a passion to paint, and it makes me feel really good when people buy my work." An apt assessment from Margaret Thorn, who lives on the Warwick Woodlands campus with her husband Art, a retired geologist. Margaret takes a moment to pose for *Chester County Life* at the Lititz Outdoor Fine Art Show.

#### French Quarter Street Artist

"I have a passion to paint, and it makes me feel really good when people buy my work." An apt assessment from Margaret Thorn, who lives on the Warwick Woodlands campus with her husband Art, a retired geologist.

Margaret grew up in Berks County and earned her undergraduate degree from Penn State University, where she met her husband. She holds a master's degree in Fine Arts from Tulane University. While in New Orleans, she was a fixture in the French Quarter. "I rode the streetcar to the heart of the cultural center, set up my easel, and painted watercolor portraits and scenes," she recently recalled.

The couple moved to Houston and had two children, a boy and a girl. After 16 years, they relocated to Lititz, Art's hometown. "Houston was racing too fast for us," Margaret explained. "We decided to slow down and live where the kids could walk to school and stop worrying about the brand of clothing they wore. I got a job teaching fourth grade, and Art landed a geology-related position. On weekends, I painted."

Margaret didn't intend to be a traveling artist; her works were created as gifts. However, when she captured Lititz Elementary School on canvas before it was torn down, her career path led to exhibitions. "Another teacher suggested I have prints made of the school painting. I sold a lot and decided to apply to art shows."



For the next 15 years, Margaret exhibited and sold her watercolors in eastern Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. "We have a trailer, and Art is my *roadie*," she said with a laugh. "We used to do up to 25 shows annually, but COVID reduced that to five."

The Thorns moved to Moravian Manor Communities four years ago. Art's mother was the community's head nurse when

it opened in 1975. His grandmother was a resident. "The most important requirement for us was location," pointed out Margaret. "We wanted to be part of a small town where we can walk or ride our bikes to the park, shops, and restaurants. Some communities we visited were beautiful, but very isolated. Moravian Manor Communities is just what we were looking for."



Margaret and Art chose a three-bedroom, three-bath Klein model carriage home. She finally has a room devoted to her work. "Art is so pleased not to find paintings and supplies strewn all over our dining room table. We have settled in and met wonderful people. I exhibited in the Lititz Outdoor Fine Art Show and Mount Gretna Outdoor Art Show this summer, am involved in Moravian Manor Communities' book club, and also love gardening around our home."

*At the center of community life on the Warwick Woodlands campus is the Oaks Campus Center, with the Owl's Nest Restaurant & Sippery, Fireside Lounge, SmartFit Studio, Hall of Fame room, and Tree Top Terrace.*

### Inspired by History

Another Warwick Woodlands campus resident, Frederick Swarr, too, exhibited in the coveted Lititz Outdoor Fine Art Show. Although he and his wife Valerie moved from Mount Gretna not long ago, many Moravian Manor Communities folks look forward to his 75th birthday next year. He has an unusual way of celebrating milestones.

"It began on my 60th," revealed Fred. "No parties, no surprises, that's what I told everyone. Instead, I will paint. Valerie pointed out that I paint every day. This occasion would be different, I insisted."

Different may be an understatement. At the time, Fred was Design Director for a corrugated box company. He took 60 26-inch Masonite pieces someone had given him at work, and one by one, he painted until he reached his goal – 60 paintings on his 60th birthday. The idea, he admitted, came from Elton John. "He celebrated six decades by playing his 60th sold-out show at Madison Square Garden," clarified Fred.

"I started painting in the woods at 7 a.m. and finished at 5 p.m. Music played all day. I hung completed works on trees. About 100 people gathered; I gave them paintings in exchange for bottles of wine. I went home with 92 bottles. I repeated the celebration on my 65th and 70th birthdays and hope to do the same next year."

Like the Thorns, Fred and Valerie were attracted to Moravian Manor Communities for its Lititz location. "It's so close to a nice



Warwick Woodlands campus resident, Frederick Swarr, exhibited in the coveted Lititz Outdoor Fine Art Show.



*The Founders campus features residential homes – two styles of apartments, cottages, and townhomes – as well as Life Plan services from assisted living and memory care to skilled care and short-term rehab.*



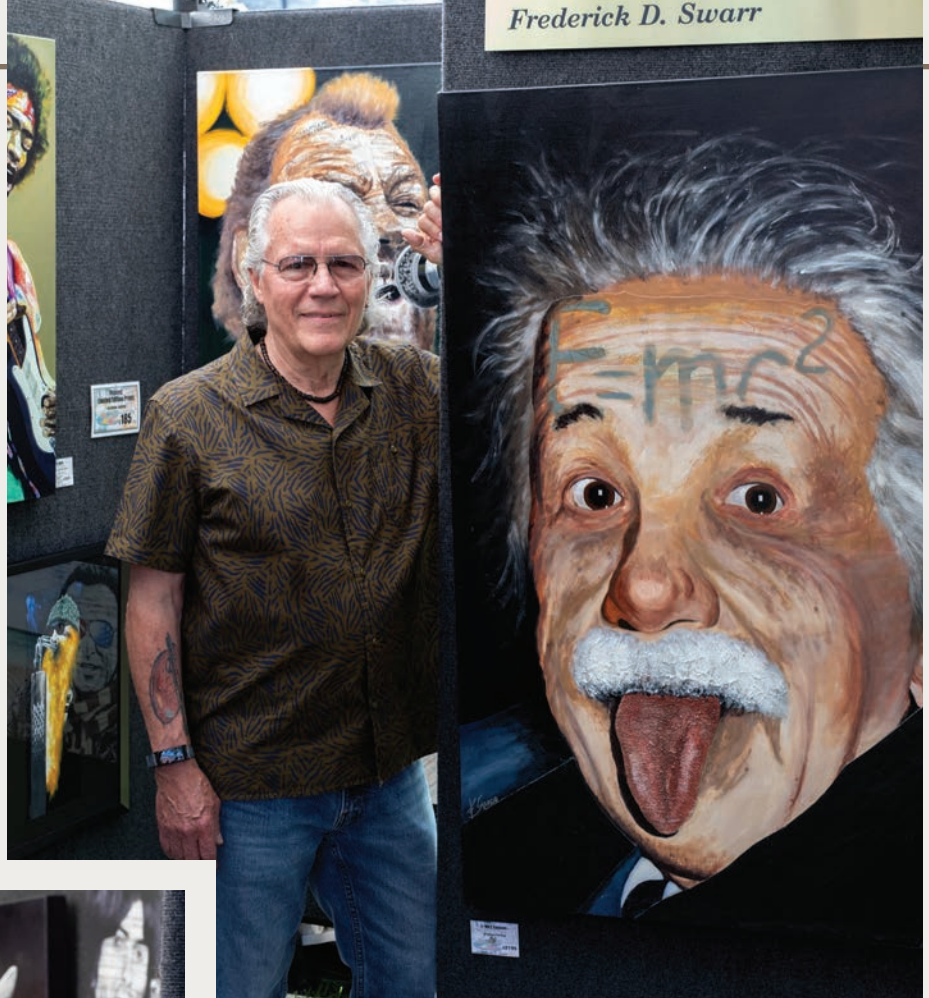
small town with an abundance of attractions. When we lived in Mount Gretna, you had to drive 20 minutes before you got off the mountain!”

Fred admires the mix of architecture, as well. The Swarr two-bedroom, two-bath home is a single-level with plenty of space for his acrylics and canvases. He utilizes one bedroom as a corner studio. “Natural light pours in from two walls, and the laundry room is handy for me to clean up after painting. It’s ideal.”

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FRED SWARR

Many Moravian Manor Communities folks look forward to Fred Swarr’s 75th birthday next year.



Artist Fred Swarr, and yes, Elton John posing at the Lititz Outdoor Fine Art Show



*One of Moravian Manor Communities' lifestyle bonuses is being able to walk or bike into downtown Lititz, named America's Coolest Small Town by Budget Travel.*



Artist Sandy Roland doesn't remember a time that she wasn't drawing or painting. She has been a Lititz Outdoor Fine Art Show exhibitor for 40 years. The first show, she set up a display of watercolors on a stepladder. Today, with canopy and panels, she is deemed one of the more popular artists.

### A Lifetime of Creativity

Sandy Roland doesn't remember a time that she wasn't drawing or painting. In sixth grade, a teacher commissioned the talented child and a friend to create holiday decorations and tallies for bridge classes. She has been a Lititz Outdoor Fine Art Show exhibitor for 40 years. The first show, she set up a display of watercolors on a stepladder. Today, with canopy and panels, she is deemed one of the more popular artists.

Sandy and her husband Tim graduated from Millersville University, but never had classes together. "We met on the boardwalk in Ocean City when we were both 20," she commented. "We got married a year before I graduated. Then Tim was drafted and went to Vietnam where he was wounded. He got

R&R on the base in Hawaii, and I met him there as soon as school was over."

The couple settled in Lititz. Tim became a commercial credit banker with Fulton Financial. Sandy taught at the school responsible for Margaret Thorn's foray into art shows. After their son Brad was born, she painted in abundance. Work was everywhere, so she started a business, which quickly attracted buyers and patrons.

The Rolands joined the Moravian Church, and Sandy volunteered at Moravian Manor Communities. Her father-in-law Jim suffered a stroke and was a patient at MMC. She remarked, "I was very impressed with his care and the concern they had for him. When we decided to move to a senior living community, there wasn't much of

a debate where, but when. We had to sell both of our parents' homes, and vowed we would not put our son through a similar ordeal."

Keeping their promise, Sandy and Tim moved to a Warwick Woodlands campus carriage home last year. "I use one of the bedrooms as a studio," she noted. "It's so handy. In the past, before every show I had to carry boxes down the steps and retrieve the canopy and stands from the garage. We like everything about Moravian Manor Communities. Tim loves to work in the yard, and we enjoy activities, such as murder mystery dinners, wine and cheese gatherings, and bus tours. The location is extremely convenient. I frequently walk to downtown Lititz. We're very happy," she concluded. **CCL**



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*Residential living options on the Warwick Woodlands campus include carriage homes, townhomes, and apartments.*



*The Woods Apartments, on the Warwick Woodlands campus, offer seven different floor plans from 1,040 to 1,944 sq. ft. Another apartment building is planned for construction on the campus in the near future.*



**Moravian Manor Communities**

Sales Center/Model Home | 544 W. Sixth St. | Lititz, PA 17543 | 717.626.0214

Check out MMC's interactive virtual tour at [MoravianManorCommunities.org](http://MoravianManorCommunities.org).

