



Supporting and Informing Coast Guard Artists

Summer 2025

COAST GUARD ACCEPTS 2025 ART COLLECTION; REAR ADMIRAL PLATT AND CAPT ANDRECHIK PRESIDE



U.S. Coast Guard and Salmagundi Club officials and Coast Guard Art Program (COGAP) artists gather for a photo at the 2025 COGAP acceptance ceremony on July 10th at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. First row, from left to right are: COGAP artist Debra Keirce, Coast Guard Northeast District Commander Rear Adm. Michael Platt, COGAP artists [Karen Loew](#), Leon Wescoat, III, Kirk Larsen, David Ray and Amy DiGi and Coast Guard Sector New York Commanding Officer Capt. Jon Andrechik. Back row, from left to right are COGAP artists Leendert van der Pool, Michael Davis, and Ken Stetz, Salmagundi Chairman of the Board George Grubb, and COGAP artists Maria Bennett Hock and Todd Groesbeck.

Thirty-four works by 24 artists were accepted into the Coast Guard Art Program's (COGAP) permanent collection during the annual acceptance ceremony July 10, 2025 at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. Coast Guard Northeast District Commander Rear Adm. Michael Platt accepted the new works on behalf of the Service. Capt. Jon Andrechik,

Commanding Officer of Sector New York, served as the evening's master of ceremonies. Leendert van der Pool of Brooklyn, N.Y., was the recipient of the George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence. His winning artwork, "*Daring rescue*," shows a Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater rescue of a mariner and his dog when the mariner's

vessel became disabled off Florida's West Coast.

The 2025 collection portrays the many missions of the Coast Guard. Among these are patrols and inspections, illegal migrant interdictions, search and rescue cases—as depicted in Mr. van der Pool's painting—and training exercises that make the Service *Semper Paratus*—always ready.
(Continued page two, col. one)



Leendert van der Pool holds the George Gary Award plaque presented to him by Coast Guard Northeast District Commander Rear Adm. Michael Platt (far right). The COGAP artist won the award for his best in show oil painting *"Daring rescue,"* displayed here. Also featured on the artist's left are George Grubb, Salmagundi Club Board Chairman and Sector New York Commanding Officer Capt. Jon Andrechik, the event's emcee. The Admiral expressed thanks for this work showing the courage and skill of the Coast Guard.

(continued from page one)

Rear Adm. Platt, in accepting the new works on behalf of the Coast Guard, expressed profound thanks to COGAP artists and the program's many supporters including the Navy League and the Salmagundi Club. He noted that 2025 marked the 44th anniversary of COGAP. "Since the program's inception," he said, "in their stunning works of art, COGAP artists have volunteered their time and talent to capture the vital contributions the U.S. Coast Guard makes to our nation." He noted that Coast Guard artworks were displayed in museums and locations across the nation where they served to teach and show viewers about the many missions the Service performs.

Salmagundi Club Chairman of the Board George Grubb and Capt. Andrechik joined in praise of the Service's art program artists. They both lauded the 34 new works in the 2025 collection and remarked that these added significantly to the visual narration of the Coast Guard's story.

"With every year's collection," Capt. Andrechik said, "the art shows us the high regard in which the Service is held by its artists." The Acceptance Ceremony, he added, "allows us to show the artists the high esteem we have for them."

President of the New York Council of the Navy League James Spear added his thanks to the artists and COGAP supporters. He remarked that in honoring the Coast Guard, "we honor what is best in America—honor, duty and sacrifice. Coast Guard art" he added, "illuminates this remarkable Service and its many contributions to our nation."

The Navy League provides its support to both the Coast Guard and its art program. It speaks on

behalf of the Service to organizations and leaders around the country. Moreover, as it has done repeatedly in past years, the New York Council hosted this year's reception.

Karen Loew, Salmagundi Club COGAP Committee Chair and COGAP artist, in her remarks said: "I am grateful for every COGAP artist who translated the Coast Guard work into works of art... We are proud to show that the Coast Guard is everywhere they need to be for all of us."

Contributors to this year's collection are Echo Baker, Tustin, Calif.; Susanne Corbelletta, Southport, N.C.; Michael Davis, New York, N.Y.; Chris Demarest, Bainbridge Island, Wash., Amy DiGi, Yorktown Heights, N.Y.; Charles Fawcett, Bellevue, Wash.; Todd Groesbeck, Hagerstown, Md.; Don Hatcher, Newport, Wash.; Maria Bennett Hock, Cary, N.C.; Debra Keirce, Broadlands, Va.; Kirk Larsen, Hicksville, N.Y.; Karen Loew, New York, N.Y.; Bill Mast, Middlefield, Ohio; Priscilla Patterson, Post Falls, Idaho; Thomas Plantz, St. Joseph, Mich.; David Ray, Wilmette, Ill.; Stephen Roberson, Arlington, Va.; Oscar Romero, Sacramento, Calif.; Ken Stetz, Collegeville, Pa.; Christopher Tupa, Edna, Texas; Leendert van der Pool, Brooklyn, N.Y.; CWO3 James Wall, USCG (ret.), Bloomington, Ill.; John Ward, Saranac Lake, N.Y.; and Leon Wescoat, III, Absecon, N.J.

COGAP artists with works from previous collections on view at the Salmagundi Club are Dennis Boom, Hillsboro Ore., Peter de Weerd, Tucson, Ariz., Kathleen Denis, Palm Beach Shore, Fla., Louis Stephen Gadai, Los Angeles, Calif., Frank Gaffney, Mountlake Terrace, Wash., Ron Guthrie, Solvang, Calif., Tom Hedderich, Westtown, N.Y., Daniel Coolbrith Jones, Arroyo Grande, Calif., Steve Lush, North Andover, Mass., Hugh O'Connor, St. Clair Shores, Mich., Robert Semler, Bradenton, Fla., Ken Smith, Pulaski, Va., Lt. j.g. Thomas Unger, Houston, Texas, and Elizabeth Whelan, Edgartown, Mass. Artists from locations noted above are Susanne Corbelletta, Amy DiGi, Don Hatcher, Maria Benett Hock, Debra Keirce, Kirk Larsen, Karen Loew, Stephen Roberson, Leendert van der Pool and John Ward.

Following the show at the Salmagundi Club, the 2025 collection be on display at Federal Hall National Memorial for a two-month exhibition starting Aug. 4th. The memorial is located close to the New York Stock Exchange in Lower Manhattan.

Photos courtesy of:

PA3 Breanna Boardman, U.S. Coast Guard Northeast District, PADET New York
Paul Backalenick, New York, N.Y.
Philippe Debeusscher, Arlington, Va.
Eleanor Winters, Brooklyn, N.Y. and Paris, France

Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty: Leendert van der Pool wins 2025 George Gray Award for his oil painting “*Daring rescue*”

Each year jurors select a recipient for the George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence from the collection of artwork submitted to the U.S. Coast Guard Art Program. Leendert van der Pool is this year’s award winner for his artwork “*Daring rescue*.” This remarkable oil painting shows a Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater rescue of a mariner and his dog off Sanibel Island on Florida’s West Coast.

The award-winning work was chosen by a panel of judges comprised of Rear Adm. Michael Platt, Coast Guard Northeast District Commander; Patrick O’Brien, artist and president of The American Society of Marine Artists; and artist Charles Yoder, a Salmagundi Club member and a former Art Committee Chair of the Club.



Leendert van der Pool's George Gray Award winning oil painting “*Daring rescue*.”



COGAP award winning artist Leendert van der Pool relaxes in a Paris café.

In talking about van der Pool’s award winning work, Rear Adm. Platt said, “A rescue can be a complex and dangerous mission for our service. Leendert’s work brilliantly captures the action of a rescue mission and the painting’s artistic execution is outstanding.”

The Dutch born artist, a former sailor for the Dutch merchant navy, worked on various ships including coasters, freighters and salvage ships. These experiences gave him insight into maritime subjects.

While van der Pool has never served in the Coast Guard, he has contributed 13 paintings to the Coast Guard Art Program, and 11 of these annual contributions were made consecutively, starting in 2015. He also won the prestigious

George Gray Award in 2018.

Since the late 1970s, the self-taught artist has exhibited his work extensively in museums and galleries in Europe, and since 1990, in the U.S. including exhibitions of his series of works on Ellis Island. He is the recipient of many awards and grants and has taught at several universities in the New York Metro area. He currently conducts workshops on painting, drawing and color theory and has been invited to conduct an artist retreat in Vietnam next year.

The artist is a member of the Pastel Society of America and was awarded first prize in its 30th annual exhibition. He is also a member of the Salmagundi Club. In 2010, the artist was knighted by the Government of the Netherlands for his cultural contributions to that nation. He and his wife Eleanor, herself an artist, reside six months in New York and six months in Paris.

Upon learning that he had won the George Gray Award, Mr. van der Pool remarked: “It came as a big surprise, indeed an exciting and joyful moment in my life. Thank you for this honor. I have always enjoyed participating in the Coast Guard Art Program and hope to continue to do so for many years to come. Knowing that my artwork, and that of my fellow Salmagundians, is being enjoyed by many is a humbling experience, for which I am truly grateful.”

The July 10th COGAP Acceptance Ceremony in Pictures

The jurors faced a formidable task in deciding which work from the 2025 collection would win the George Gray Award for Artistic Excellence. Shown here are the three award jurors. From left to right they are: Patrick O'Brien, artist and president of The American Society of Marine Artists, Charles Yoder, artist, Salmagundi Club member and former Salmagundi Club Art Committee Chair, and Rear Admiral Michael Platt, Coast Guard Northeast District Commander.



Four members of the Coast Guard Ceremonial Honor Guard present colors at the opening of the 2025 COGAP acceptance ceremony.

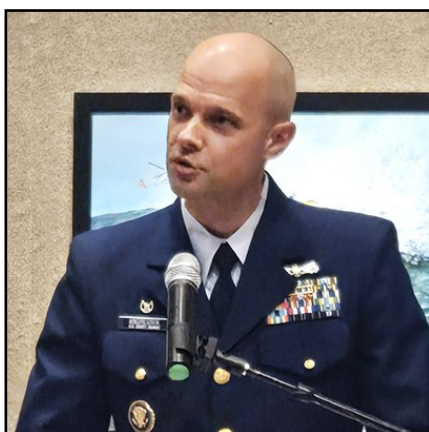
Coast Guard Band Chief Musician Megan Sesma (harp) and Chief Musician Laura Pirruccello (flute) provide music during the reception. The duo also performed the National Anthem during the Presentation of Colors by the Ceremonial Honor Guard.





A capacity audience of over 100 attendees is welcomed to the July 10th COGAP acceptance ceremony. Featured in the first section of the front row (left to right) are Executive Director Jessica Hitchen of the New York Council of the Navy League, Salmagundi Club Board Chairman George Grubb, Dr. Drew Mendoza and James Spear, President of the New York Council of the Navy League. Among leaders in the second section of the front row (left to right) are Coast Guard Northeast District Commander Rear Adm. Michael Platt, Sector New York Chaplain Joseph Roach, James Hendon, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Veterans' Services and COGAP artist and Salmagundi Club COGAP Committee Chair Karen Loew.

Speakers at COGAP's Acceptance Ceremony



Master of Ceremonies
Sector N.Y. Commanding Officer
Capt. Jon Andrechik welcomes guests.



Sector N.Y. Chaplain Joseph Roach
delivers the invocation.



New York Council of the Navy League
President James Spear
offers remarks.



Karen Loew, Salmagundi Club
COGAP Committee Chair and COGAP
artist, addresses guests.



Salmagundi Club Chairman of the
Board George Grubb presents the
2025 collection to the Coast Guard.



Coast Guard Northeast District Com-
mander Rear Adm. Michael Platt ac-
cepts the 2025 collection on behalf of
the Coast Guard.

COGAP Artists receive the Public Service Commendation Award July 10th

Coast Guard Northeast District Commander Rear Adm. Michael Platt presented COGAP artists attending the July 10, 2025 ceremony with the Public Service Commendation Award. The award is given in recognition of contributions to the Coast Guard. It can be signed only by a Flag officer or the civilian equivalent. George Grubb, Salmagundi Club Chairman of the Board, is also pictured with the COGAP artists. Eleven of the 24 artists contributing to the 2025 collection were present at the ceremony which took place at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. Public service awards for artists not attending were sent to Echo Baker, Susanne Corbelletta, Chris Demarest, Charles Fawcett, Don Hatcher, Bill Mast, Priscilla Patterson, Thomas Plantz, Stephen Roberson, Oscar Romero, Christopher Tupa, CWO James Wall (USCG, ret.) and John Ward.

COGAP artist Michael Davis receives his award for his two oil paintings *“Operation Vigilant Sentry”* and *“Providing supplies.”*



COGAP artist Amy DiGi receives her award for her oil painting *“Boarding and inspection.”*

COGAP artist Todd Groesbeck receives his award for his two charcoal works, *"AMT at Air Station Kodiak"* and *"A Coast Guard fireman drills."*



COGAP artist Maria Bennett Hock receives her award for her oil painting, *"Setting the Francis Scott Key Memorial Buoy."*



COGAP artist Debra Keirce receives her award for her three oil paintings. Two works, "*Assigning while at sea*" and "*Tight squeeze*" were based on her selection by COGAP for deployment to the Cutter Stone in Charleston, S.C. The third work, also oil, is "*The joy of music*," featuring the annual COGAP ceremony and Coast Guard Band musicians.

COGAP artist Kirk Larsen receives his award for his oil painting "*Keeping Superbowl LIX safe.*"



COGAP artist and Salmagundi Club COGAP Committee Chair Karen Loew receives her award for her oil painting "A rescue swimmer on mission."



COGAP artist David Ray receives his award for his oil painting "Coast Guard Auxiliary—Semper Paratus."



COGAP artist Ken Stetz, last year's George Gray Award winner, receives his award for his oil painting "*Heading into the rip.*"

COGAP artist Leendert van der Pool receives his award for his oil painting "*Daring rescue.*" The artist was also this year's recipient of the George Gray Award—COGAP's best in show award (see page three).





COGAP artist Leon Wescoat, III receives his award for his oil painting *"Floating inferno."*

The Joy of music by COGAP artist Debra Keirce

The 2025 annual acceptance ceremony was enhanced by the music of two Coast Guard Band musicians, one playing harp and the other, flute. In a case of art imitating life, the painting here features two Coast Guard musicians performing while on display just behind is artist Keirce's 2021 work of three military musicians.



Chaplain Joseph Roach's Invocation and Benediction Blessings

Invocation

Let us pray:

Eternal Father, strong to save, able to deliver and protect all who call to Thee for Help,

We gather in reverence to honor those who serve and those who create. We ask You to bless this moment, this gathering of purpose, the 44th Anniversary of the Coast Guard Art Program, where artistry meets valor.

We call forth a Divine blessing upon our beloved United States Coast Guard, men and women of mettle, who brave the turbulent seas; Who rise in storm and calm alike to rescue, protect, and defend, Our Coast Guard Sentinels who daily embody our core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. May their selfless watch over coast and country be forever remembered.

And also we ask You to bless the artists who bear witness, Those who, through brush and vision, capture heroism with reverent precision. May their work be as enduring as the service they portray: Each canvas a testament, each stroke a salute.

Eternal Father, it also gives us great joy to honor the Salmagundi Club who faithfully supports the Coast Guard Art Program, where tradition meets imagination, a haven for artists and creators whose vision shape national memory. May this hallowed institution continue to uplift the nobility of service through the power of art.

And finally, oh Lord, grant each of us inspiration, unity and awe, So that the Coast Guard stories of courage do not fade, but instead rise in painted light.

Let Your Holy and Divine Presence be manifest among us now for the duration of our ceremony and forevermore into the future, we pray in Thy most Holy Name.

Amen.

Benediction

Most Holy and Awesome God, who dwells in eternal light,

As we part from this space of tribute and beauty, May the spirit of courage and creativity abide with us, as it does with Thee.

We ask You to allow the Coast Guard to remain forever shielded in their vigilance; Their sacrifices honored and their bravery never forgotten. May the seas they traverse be sailed by Your wisdom and providence, And their missions be touched with success, integrity, and peace.

For the artists: Lord, may their hands be steady and their hearts be bold and their vision forever reach beyond the horizon. And may their work remind generations of the valor we witness today through these beautiful works of art.

And finally, dear Lord, for the Salmagundi Club. May these walls forever echo with the whispers of inspiration and their legacy illuminate the path where art and service intertwine.

Strengthen now all our hearts and minds with renewed purpose, To serve, to create, and to honor.

These things we ask of the One who is worthy to be praised both now and forevermore.

Amen.

