

# *Botanically Speaking*

## The Quarterly Newsletter of DK Designs

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### *Cultivating Community*

One of the great joys of being a botanical artist is getting to know the local growers whose fruit, vegetables, and flowers are the models for my paintings. The turk's turban squash above—our DK Designs logo—is one of my favorite botanicals. I love this distinctive fall beauty, and I have developed a wonderful working relationship with (and I get *great* gardening advice from) the local grower who sold it to me.

Loch's Greenhouse on old Route 2 is open nearly all year round. Fred Loch and his wife, Theresa, start in the spring with perennials and annuals; move into autumn with virtually flawless pumpkins, gourds, and Indian corn; and round out the year with greens and mums.

I can't wait to get to Loch's in the spring when I'm in the heady rush of gathering new plants for our one-acre yard. Fall is a favorite time, too, when my husband and I start collecting Loch's pumpkins, sometimes as early as

Labor Day. Frankly, I'm more than a little smug (okay, I'm *really* smug) to be one of the first in our village to have pumpkins on the front porch.

One of the proudest days of my life as an artist was the afternoon I presented Fred with my studio card that featured his turk's turban squash.



*With Fred Loch and a future botanical illustration!*

I'm extremely loyal to local growers like Fred and Theresa who make their living working our fertile Ohio land. I'm cultivating community, and gaining a deeper understanding of what it takes to produce the botanicals I treasure.

You'll find your own botanical treasures at Loch's! Visit the greenhouse at 11310 Airport Highway, Swanton, Ohio, 419-825-3733.



### *Private Lessons Available This Summer*

I'm taking the summer off from teaching classes to work on my art, my books—and our gardens! However, private lessons are still available for those who want personal instruction, help with a self-selected project, or tutoring for home-schooled children. Please call me at 419-873-8426 or email [dkopka@ameritech.net](mailto:dkopka@ameritech.net) for schedule and rate information.

Look for **fall classes** in the September issue of *Botanically Speaking*.



*A stone bust I have named Lady of Spring emerges from a violet tuft in our herb garden. The violets are only with us for a few short weeks, but the shiny, heart-shaped leaves remain all summer and serve as the herb garden centerpiece.*

*Do you think amethysts can be the souls  
of good violets?  
L. M. Montgomery*

### *DK Designs Donates Art to Victory Center*



*Cherries. Copyright © 2009. Limited Edition Print.*

DK Designs was proud to donate a signed, limited edition print entitled *Cherries* to the Toledo Victory Center's Treasures of the Vine Wine Tasting and Art Auction held May 15, 2010, at the Hilton on the University of Toledo Health Science Campus.

The Victory Center is a nonprofit wellness center serving Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan by providing support and education to cancer patients and those closest to them. It is funded by donations, grants, special events, and corporate contributions.

As an ovarian cancer survivor (I prefer to call myself a post-cancer **thrivor**) who has experienced the Victory Center programs and personnel firsthand, I can attest to the staff's helpfulness and sincerity in nourishing body, mind, and spirit. We welcome the Victory Center to the DK Designs family! For more information on the Victory Center, call 419-531-7600 or access [www.thevictorycenter.org](http://www.thevictorycenter.org).



## *Become a Candle-Keeper*

Our village of Perrysburg is in Northwest Ohio, a key area for “stations” on the Underground Railroad. As the story has come down through the decades, the “safe houses” that were prepared to shelter weary fugitives signaled their welcome with a single candle in the window. One candle in one window doesn’t sound like much help. But the collective glow from the safe house candles on Underground Railroad routes helped lead some 100,000 people to freedom.

Many homes in Perrysburg today are still illuminated by candles (albeit electric) in the window that burn throughout the night. They certainly add a great deal of warmth to our historic town’s charm. But I have a feeling that many of my neighbors are after more than charm. They’re proud to be candle-keepers, shining light into the darkness for the good of the community *and* the good of the world. I am equally proud to do the same.

Every night when the sun goes down, I turn on the electric candle in my studio window. As I do, I dedicate its glow “to those who are not free.”

I’ve done this for many years now, and I will do it for the rest of my life. I often wonder how all of those candle-keepers in another century felt when risking their lives during that dark time of slavery. I’m sure they were incredibly afraid. But I’m also sure they were uplifted by the happiness born from the strength of their conviction that they were making a profound difference in someone’s life.

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*We can make a difference with the  
simple act of  
lighting just one candle.*

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We may be well past the days of slavery in the United States, but many people all over the world will never have the freedoms we enjoy. And many in our own country are struggling as much or more than at any other time in our history. What can we really do to help the world? If nothing else, start with one small candle.

Consider becoming a candle-keeper by lighting an electric candle or lamp in your window tonight and every night thereafter. And as you do, send your most hopeful and positive thoughts to our beloved Mother Earth—especially to those who are not free. We *can* make a difference with the simple act of lighting just one candle. As Dr. King said many years ago, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that.”

Let *your* light pierce the darkness.



## ***Books by Deborah from Lorenz Educational Press***

My *Milliken's Instant Activities Series* is now available from Lorenz Educational Press in Dayton, Ohio. The more than 100 Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science reproducible activity sheets in each book, Grades K–6, will keep kids thinking over the summer!

Look for my *Global Village* series for Grades 4–8 in the Fall of 2010. It features the history and culture of 27 countries. Each book also includes fun, easy-to-do activities.

To order, visit [lorenzeducationalpress.com](http://lorenzeducationalpress.com). You can also search **Deborah Kopka** on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



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*The love of gardening is a seed that once sown  
never dies.*  
**Gertrude Jekyll**

## ***Have a Happy Summer!***



We hope you take some time this summer to stop and smell (and maybe draw and paint) the flowers—and light a candle in your window, too.

Thank you for becoming a part of the DK Designs family. The positive response and support we have received from all over the country have brought light into our lives. My husband and I send you botanical blessings from our Ohio home and studio where our roots are planted deep!

***May the gifts of nature inspire, enrich, and heal you.  
And may you always remember:***

***"Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads."  
Henry David Thoreau***

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