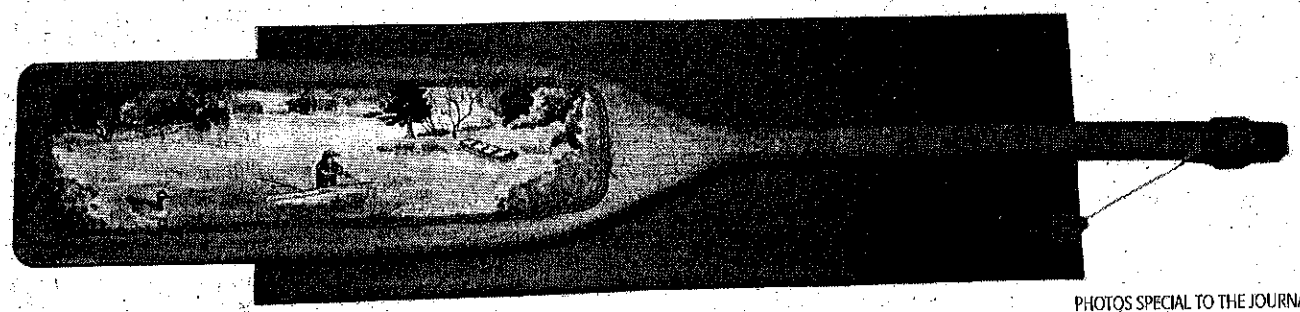


PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Artist in residence Deborah King Scherer used this old oar as her canvas. Titled "Bobbers and Oars," the piece, along with two others, is on display at Oconee State Park.

A piece of the park



Oconee State Park manager Jo Anna White, left, holds "The Oconee Bathhouse," artist in residence Deborah King Scherer holds "Bobbers and Oars" and DKS Studio owner Paul Scherer owner holds "Is This My Good Side."

BY STEPHANIE JADRNICEK
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — When Deborah King Scherer was selected as an artist in residence by the South Carolina State Parks, she asked park manager Jo Anna White to save her a piece of the park.

"Something that belonged to the park. An old piece off of machinery, part of a boat, a slice off of a fallen tree — anything that I could make a conversation piece out of," Scherer said. "When I arrived, they had a broken boat oar waiting for me. I let inspiration and creativity take over."

With watercolors and a bit of ambiance provided by the peaceful surroundings of the park, she painted "Bobbers and Oars" on the old oar.

The piece, as well as "The Oconee Bathhouse," is currently on display at the Oconee State Park main office for public viewing.

Scherer is a Charleston native who now lives in Summerville. A self-taught artist, she primarily draws inspiration from nature. And she has an eye for the old, odd or unusual.

"I'm not much for modern architecture, but I love historical buildings," she said. "Walking around the Oconee bathhouse, you can almost feel the history and see the craftsmanship. These buildings were built to stay, with hard work, hand tools and pride."

Scherer considers the bathhouse to be the pride of the park and painted "The Oconee Bathhouse" in honor of the building.

The third and final piece Scherer created is titled "Is This My Good Side." While staying at the park, she made friends with the Canadian geese that were preparing to nest near her cabin.

"They came to visit every time they heard our voices. I was outside one afternoon taking pictures, and the male came swimming over and almost seemed to strike poses for the camera," she said. "The next day while I was painting outside, he came over and tapped my easel — either out of curiosity or to get my attention — then he settled down almost as if to watch me paint."

Her work will become part of the state parks' permanent collection. To her and her husband, the parks represent a peaceful refuge, a place where they can recharge from life's rat race.

"The opportunity to stay at one of these great places for a week — to paint, hike, meet amazing people and support the parks — was amazing," she said. "And the chance to give back and support the park system with the things I know best is incredible."

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