**Bari**

**Stuff I’ve learned about watercolor in the past 15 years.**

1. I was blessed to have parents who were artists. Dad let me use his watercolors when I was 5 – mom set up a still life for me on the kitchen table. I painted with oils off and on since I was 14 (mom taught oil painting). Also worked as a sign painter, wall mural painter, window “splash” artist doing novelty art and ads. Even painted a billboard on I40.
2. Started learning watercolor painting in 2003 after my first husband died. Life is short.
3. I made a lot of mistakes when I first started watercolor painting.
4. Biggest one was I thought I needed to scan EVERY painting I did, and have professional quality prints made of some really awful paintings. I wasted a lot of money.
5. Another was to buy random tubes of paint without getting suggestions and information about brands, opacity, and how fugitive Opera Rose is. It is still my favorite color, but I only use it now on hand painted greeting cards. What does fugitive mean? A paint that is fugitive is not lightfast, and will fade over time. More about that in a few minutes.
6. My first watercolor class was at Michael’s (I didn’t know where else to go). During my third session I turned a painting upside down to get a better idea of the composition and the teacher literally yelled at me; told me to never, ever do that again. I knew better. Never went back. SWS is full of great teachers who give classes and workshops. Watch for announcements.
7. I paid for and attended workshops meant for more experienced artists. Sometimes one can still learn by doing so, but sometimes it’s just a frustrating experience. Ask around before signing up for workshops with artists you’re not familiar with.
8. I keep a “map” of paints on the lid of my palette. If I put a blob of new color in the working area of my palette I write its name for future reference. It may replace something in my permanent selections.
9. Favorite paint colors:

Winsor and Newton New Gamboge  
Scarlet Lake  
Alizarin Crimson  
Pthalo Green

Cobalt Blue  
Burnt Sienna

You may notice that all are transparent.   
And Dr. Ph. Martin's bleed proof white – a necessary addition.

Brands vary as some paints, such as New Gamboge, vary widely between brands.

1. I keep a 3 ring binder with printed information. For me, it’s easier than keeping track of everything on the computer. It’s handy to carry to meetings to take notes as well.
2. I do, however, make sure I have calendar prompts on phone for annual deadlines such as Art On The Green in Coeur d’Alene, deadlines, etc.
3. How to read the label on a tube of watercolor paint. The three most important pieces of information, besides the color itself, are the lightfastness, the transparency, and the “class” of paint. Always get the best paint you can afford.
4. Photograph progression of paintings. Not only can you keep track of what you’ve done, but seeing your painting in miniature is helpful for critiquing your own work. Also helpful for creating the same painting again.
5. What I do when I travel, particularly air travel. I use good watercolor pencils, then a brush with water to blend and brighten the colors. These make good planning sketches for future paintings.