

Bob Smiley, Richard Norvell and Ernie Gendron wait for the Forest Hills meeting that never happened.

Photo by Joey Garrison

By Joey Garrison
Staff Writer

Two residents and a former mayor came to share thoughts at the city of Forest Hills commissioners meeting, but the three-member board was nowhere to be found.

Bob Smiley, Ernie Gendron and Richard Norvell, mayor of Forest Hills in the 1980s, had hoped to discuss the proposed Forest Hill city hall at the city's scheduled meeting.

Instead, the trio stood outside a darkened city office in Green Hills for 45 minutes, with the door locked, and no note to explain the inactivity.

"It's disappointing," said Gendron, who had hoped to attend

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ing infrastructure, has become a new talking point for Dean during public appearances. He

"By encouraging infill development, you're improving quality of life," he said. "You can

increase by 1 million people during that period.

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Proposal pits developers against preservationists

By Joey Garrison
Staff Writer

A development team has proposed an 11-unit residential project that would mean the demolition of the majority of the old Ransom school building near West End Middle School.

Franklin-based Advent Land Co. is to present a revamped proposal to the Metro Historical Zoning Commission

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Ransom School, built in 1926 and added to later

Young Nashville artist gets national boost

By Sandy Campbell
Editor

When Michael Griffin learned he had been selected as one of the "21 under 31 Young Artists to Collect Now" by *SouthwestArt* magazine, he was understandably excited.

But that wasn't all - he soon found out his work had been chosen for the magazine's cover.

"I've been familiar with *SouthwestArt* every since I was a kid. I sent my submission last spring and got notified this summer that I had made the '21 under 31.' Then I got a call within a month that they wanted to use one of my paintings for the cover. Needless to say that was probably the biggest

thing that's happened to me in art."

The magazine selects the artists on the basis of their body of work. Griffin sent 10 digital examples of his. "They narrowed it down to two of my paintings to use and chose "Smoky Mountain Bales." The other painting considered was "Atlantic Morning Break," which had been recently purchased by a Nashville collector.

"I've been studying art my entire life. I took private lessons when I was in high school as well as all the classes at Montgomery Bell Academy," Griffin said.

Rosie Paschal was one of his MBA teachers and ironically this year he was asked to sub-

stitute teach her classes after she developed health problems.

He was a Presidential Scholar in art at Wake Forest but chose to major in English. Following college he went to the Portfolio Center in Atlanta, a two-year program for commercial illustrators. He quickly learned he didn't care for illustration because of the control other people would have over his art.

He had spent a lot of time out west since boyhood backpacking, canoeing and hiking so he decided to try to become a fine artist on his own. He moved to Jackson Hole, Wyo., a famous gallery town that is

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Michael Griffin in his Green Hills studio with a painting done from a study at Tims Ford Lake.

Photo by Sandy Campbell

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Artist ...

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set among some spectacular scenery. His parents provided enough support so that he could

devote his energies to developing his art full time.

"I would gather up my art supplies, hike outdoors and spend most days all day outside painting."

His studio wall is filled with 6-by-8 and 8-by-10-inch studies

he did while on those hikes. "There is a feel that comes across with plein air (outdoor) painting, where the air and the atmosphere and the movement - you hope - comes through in your paintings."

Griffin takes those studies back to the studio, along with some photographs, to try to get more dynamic and pleasing compositions.

He works exclusively in oils now, although his training has been in a variety of media. For example, he took sculpture lessons from Alan Lequire, who is perhaps best known for his Athena in the Parthenon.

Griffin uses what he terms a layering process. "I paint the canvas once to establish the feel of the entire landscape, then I let it dry and come back maybe as much as a month or two later before I start reworking the subtleties of it." He works on several paintings at the same time.

The lure of the West is strong, but Griffin also would like to continue painting the South. While teaching at MBA has been a good experience and he hopes to continue as long as he is needed, his long-range goal is to be a full-time painter.

But for now, the exposure in *SouthwestArt* has already reaped benefits for Griffin. Two galleries - in Sacramento, Calif., and New York City - have

asked to represent him. Currently his work can be seen at the Bennett Gallery in Green Hills and in Jackson Hole.



Smoky Mountain Bales



Atlantic Morning Break



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