



"Dancing for Joy" 36" x 48" Acrylic on canvas



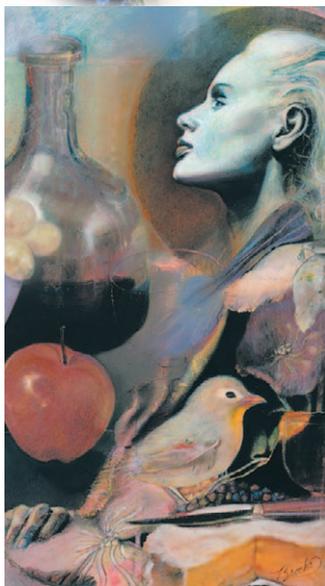
Untitled (jazz piece) 22" x 30" Pastel



"Rise and Shine" 36" x 48" Acrylic on canvas



# Brooks Garten



"Soul Food" 11" x 22" Pastel

We've all heard of "women's intuition" and the mysteries it can uncover. Artist Brooks Garten makes that work for her professionally. "I work on an intuitive level," she says. "I start using my pastels, the images start coming out, and I can visualize it"—the subject.

One of the subjects Brooks has visualized *and* made real, "Shedding A Little Light On the Situation," graces our W3 cover for March. She describes the abstract painting, a 22 by 30-inch work in pastel, as a woman who's being protective and "raising many avenues of awareness." When Brooks painted it, she says, "I wasn't thinking—I was more feeling."

By the way, if you're wondering about her unusual first name, Brooks is named after her father, a Southern Baptist minister. Since she is the third of four girls, her father wanted one of his offspring named after him, even if it wasn't a boy. She was born in New Orleans and later lived and grew up in Southern California. She's been an Ashland resident since 1985.

When Brooks entered Southern Oregon State College (now Southern Oregon University) in 1985 she wasn't sure of what career direction to take. Always drawn to the creative side of life and artistically talented as a child, she rejected pursuing an art degree in favor of being able to make a living. So she took a side trip into the world of broadcast communication, graduating *summa cum laude* in 1988 with a bachelor's in communication.

Art still attracted her, though, since she'd been doing artwork all along. Despite having many job offers in the broadcast communication field, she got back into artwork after graduation, when the SOSOC Women's Center asked her to do some illustrations in 1989. With hope in her heart, Brooks thought she would try to make it as an artist—and has never looked back. She made that decision while in her 30s, a decade when other college graduates are well into their careers. "I felt that my art was truly what I was about," she says.

Brooks confesses to being a self-taught artist. By that she means that she took her pre-existing art aptitude and taught herself to draw what she saw. She likes to work in both acrylic and pastels over watercolor and oil. She switches between abstract and figurative works because she doesn't like "to get stuck in a rut."

For instance, although she's produced the abstract, almost ethereal piece on our cover, Brooks has also painted our recognizable national symbol, the bald eagle, with his characteristic sharp yellow beak. Another piece, showing a hand touching the bottom of a foot, carries the tongue-in-cheek title of "Touching The Sole." Then there is the Navajo medicine man, age 104, wearing turquoise bracelets and with a lot of character in his face.

Brooks' work can be found at the East-West Gallery in Ashland and also at the Dovetail Gallery in Chico, California. She has sold work all over the nation from Ashland but has not shown anything nationally yet. Her pencil illustrations appear in *Energy Medicine*, by Donna Eden and David Feinstein (Tarcher-Penguin-Putnam, Inc., 1998).

A fulltime artist for the last ten or more years, Brooks has never been sorry about switching from a "sure thing" career to something riskier. "I took a chance," she says. "I would always tell people to do what they love to do. It's given me the greatest inner satisfaction."

Editor's note: Works by Brooks Garten will be exhibited in the lobby of the Mail Tribune at 111 North Fir Street in downtown Medford from February 18 to April 15.