

## Arts & Entertainment

# 'Rip Squeak' and friends bring joy to art museum

I hope you will agree that we have several top-notch museums in the area; their current special exhibitions bear out that premise.

First, the newly-renovated Delaware Art Museum just opened a delightful gallery filled with the exciting paintings of Leonard Filgate, a California-based illustrator of children's books based on a wonderful little mouse named Rip Squeak.

"Pirate Tales and Beyond: The Adventures of Rip Squeak and Friends" was organized by Curator Joyce Schiller when she by chance discovered the work of Filgate and his writer wife, Susan, on the Internet.

When Schiller investigated further, she found that Filgate was inspired by the illustrations of Howard Pyle, (particularly pirate paintings like "Marooned" which is one of museum's signature possessions) as he began to sketch the drawings for the Rip Squeak books.

In fact, one of Filgate's illustrations is titled "Marooned" and in it, the mouse named Rip is dressed very much like Pyle's pirate.

The best news of all is that Filgate's "Marooned" has been donated to the museum and will take its place along with the original for posterity.

What is it about these charming paintings that make them so pleasing? Colors are vivid and bright, composition is well thought out, and textures, (especially the fur

of Abbey, the kitten, and the Squeak mouse family consisting of Mom and Dad, Rip and little sister Jesse) are wonderfully executed.

But it is the spark of simple real joy in his work that makes Filgate's paintings so alive. And, Schiller has arranged the displays in such a way that you can see the progression of the illustrations from drawing board sketch (complete with tracing paper, colored pencil, margin notes and masking tape) to the finished product.

I never fully appreciated the brilliance of acrylic paintings until I saw the Rip Squeak

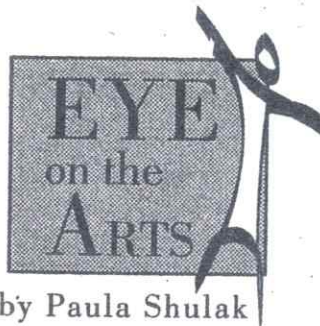
exhibit. They are absolutely stunning in their veracity. And it is also fun to look at the original paintings and compare them to the final illustrations in the books scattered around the Book Nook which has been set up for children in a corner of the gallery by education staffers Courtney Waring and Ann Corso.

Coloring books, story times, art appreciation - there is lots to do for the whole family at "Pirate Tales and Beyond".

The exhibit will be at the museum until January 29. Call 571-9590 for more information.

### Wyeth at Brandywine museum

A very different but equally absorbing exhibit entitled "Andrew Wyeth: Early



by Paula Shulak

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