



THE
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PRESS RELEASE

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REFLECTIONS ON THE

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RIVER



The Library Celebrates
TALL STACKS

Renowned Maritime Artist Michael Blaser
at the Main Library September 21, 2:00 p.m.

The Painted River: Incorporating Great River Stories and Photo Archives into Original River Art Work

Renowned maritime artist Michael Blaser will describe how he combines river stories and historical photographs to create original works of art when he presents **The Painted River: Incorporating Great River Stories and Photo Archives into Original River Artwork** at the Main Library, 800 Vine Street, on Sunday, September 21, 2:00 p.m. The program is part of *Reflections on the River: The Library Celebrates Tall Stacks*, a series of free programs and exhibits that pays tribute to the river as part of Tall Stacks 2003. Mr. Blaser's prints will also be on display in the Rare Books & Special Collections Department at the Main Library through October.

Michael Blaser has a time-tested career as a painter of America's river towns. He was born, raised and still lives along the Upper Mississippi in Davenport, Iowa. Working river men and history lovers alike have collected his prints and originals for many years, including Cincinnati, Covington, Louisville, New Orleans, Memphis, and Pittsburgh. Blaser has painted nine canvases of Cincinnati, and seven of the print runs are sold out. His latest print, *Winter Packets*, depicts several steamboats on the Ohio River near the Suspension Bridge, with ice flows surrounding the boats.

"I was born at the end of an era," said Mr. Blaser. "I can still remember back when real wood-hulled, coal-fired steamboats pushed sand and gravel down the Mississippi River to my hometown of Davenport, Iowa. When I was a boy, I passed the afternoon paper and on warm summer days before I had to be on my corner, I'd ride my old fat-wheeled Schwinn down to the Mississippi to fish and cast an eye on the huge diesel towboats pushing their loads and disappearing 'round the bend. In those days, I wanted to sign on for some great adventure and somehow be standing on the deck of a towboat when she was going 'round the bend.' I never did."

"On cold winter nights when the upper river was frozen solid, I'd sit in my room in our basement and paint oil paintings of the great American frigate **Constitution**, the clipper ship **Cutty Sark**, or our own steamer **Lone Star**. I painted because I loved the ships and their escapist theme, not because I loved art. When I wasn't painting, I'd read Captain Allan Villers' stories of the last square-rigged sailing ships: Mark Twain's **Life On The Mississippi** and Fred Way's **Log of The Betsy Ann**. These themes of boats, oceans, lakes and rivers have shaped my life to this day. "

The free program will be presented in the Huenefeld Tower Room, third floor of the south building. Information: (513) 369-6957.

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√Information about events at the Main Library and 41 branch libraries is available on the Internet site: www.CincinnatiLibrary.org.

√Interpreter available upon request for the hearing impaired. Please call 369-6944 (TDD 369-6946) at least one week before program.