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**Avery County Arts
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Mary Vogel Photography Exhibit at Cannon Hospital

Banner Elk, NC February 4, 2008 – The T. Alan Dickson Gallery at Cannon Memorial Hospital in Linville features art photographer Mary Vogel during the month of February. The exhibit is sponsored by the Avery County Arts Council (AAC).

Mary Vogel's first camera was a present for her 26th birthday. Although she demonstrated artistic talents as a child, her life took other paths and she was not given the opportunity to pursue arts training. As an adult, she became interested in taking pictures through a friend who was an amateur photographer. As her interests grew, she took night classes and learned the process of film development. Finally, at age 35 she quit her day job and used up her savings to complete a professional program at the Southeastern Center for the Arts in Atlanta.

Vogel moved to upstate New York where she had access to a community darkroom and won first place in a citywide photography contest in Rochester, the home of Kodak and the Eastman Museum of Photography. However, creative anxieties got the upper hand, and she found it easier to slide back into her professional role as a nurse instead of promoting herself as a photographer. But she never stopped shooting, and ultimately developed her style by photographing thousands of images over the years, convinced that she was simply shooting for herself.

By 1998, Vogel had become acquainted with photo manipulation through the use of computer programs. She liked not having to use darkroom chemicals and found the process enhanced her creativity. She began showing her work again, and was encouraged by the positive response. Vogel now uses a digital camera, although she still sometimes works with her old film images. She feels that "the degree of control in the digital domain results in prints of astonishing beauty."

The Avery County Arts Council is a non-profit organization that strives to enrich the people of Avery County through meaningful arts and cultural experiences. For more than 30 years the council has supported schools in their art programs and served as a resource for local artists and the community. Contact the Avery County Arts Council at 828-898-4292 or info@averycountyartscouncil.org