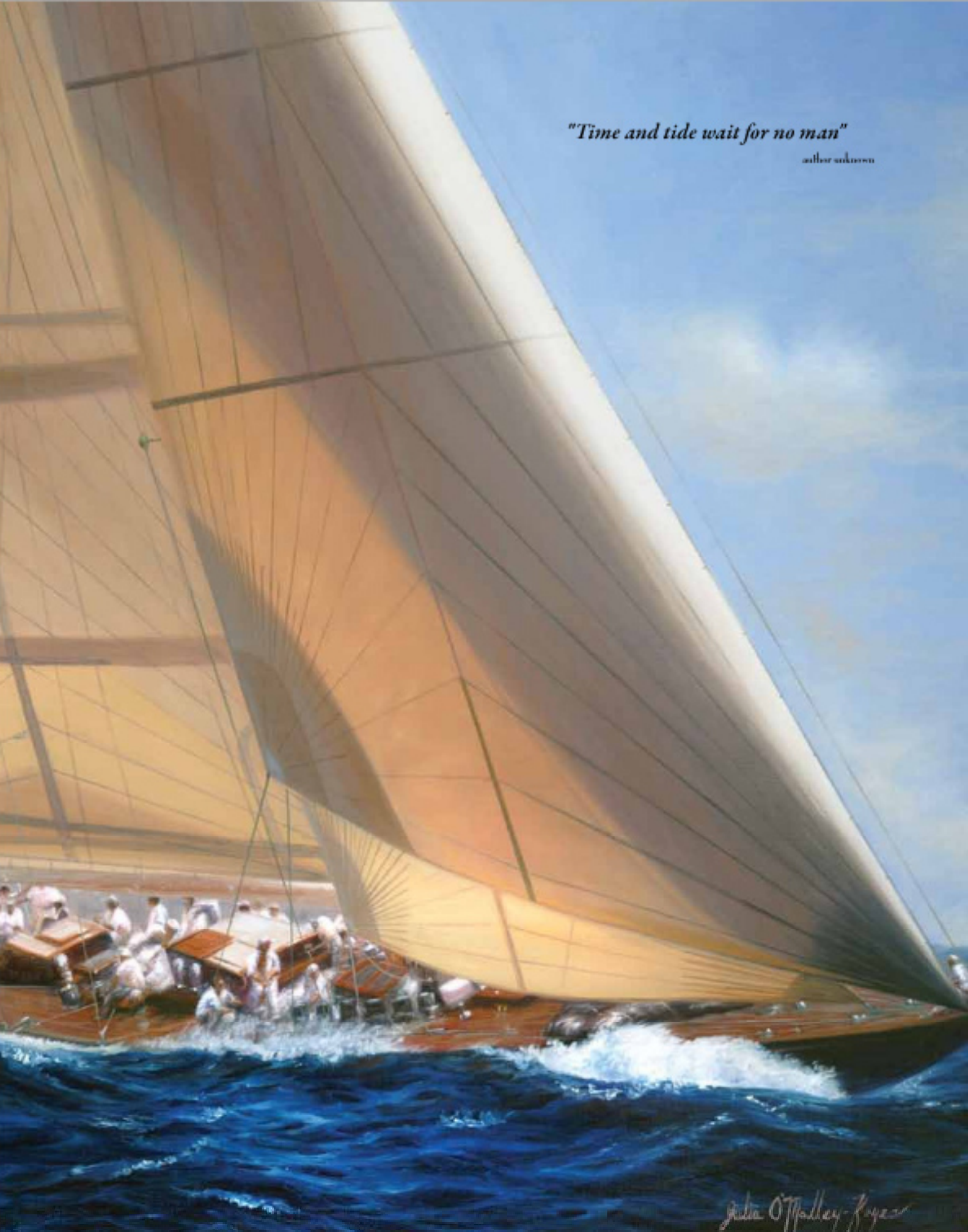




the Next Stage

Recognized marine artist Julia O'Malley-Keyes is moving on to the next stage in her life leaving behind the business end of her career and refocusing her attention to painting.

STORY BY BETH PERDUE
EXCLUSIVE TO COASTAL LIFE

A large sailboat with a massive white sail is shown sailing on a blue sea. The sail is the central focus, billowing out and casting a shadow on the deck. The crew is visible on the deck, and the boat is moving through the water, creating a white wake. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

"Time and tide wait for no man"

author unknown

Julia O'Malley-Ryder



Ticonderoga Mariella at Antigua - 24x36

Over the course of her long career, recognized marine artist Julia O'Malley Keyes has built a solid reputation for quality coastal landscapes, seascapes and paintings of life on and by the sea. A well-established painter in a contemporary realist style, her work sells successfully not just here in New England but also on the West Coast, the Chicago area and internationally.

But at age 60, the Falmouth artist has begun referring to the next stage of her life as the fourth quarter.

And for that, she's got a whole new game plan in mind.

After spending the last 12 years in a quiet space off Route 28A in North Falmouth, O'Malley-Keyes is selling her gallery, studio and living space to refocus her attention more completely

on painting. What she is leaving behind is the business end of her artistic life, everything from showing and selling her own work, to marketing herself and building and updating an extensive web site.

"I'm incredibly excited," she said. "I can get up in the morning, get in front of an easel and get cracking."

She plans to remain on Cape Cod just in a new studio space that does not include a gallery.

The move won't mean the signature O'Malley-Keyes artistic style will change, just the way she splits her time.

"It's just that the focus is going to be put on what I feel is important right now," O'Malley-Keyes said. "It's time to get down to the nitty gritty. I need to paint."

"If anything I think my work will benefit by it," she continued. "If you

extract the business hours and you apply them to what you're doing in front of the easel. It can't help but change them for the better."

O'Malley-Keyes has plenty of plans in the works for future paintings, a large chunk of which will be focused on helping area charities. Contributing to local nonprofits is something she has spent less and less time on, she said, but it's a love she hopes to return to.

Painting since she was eight years old, O'Malley-Keyes was one of eight children in a family that traveled frequently, sometimes on a whim of her father. She owned a small art gallery and restaurant by age 20, eventually making her way to Provincetown where one of her brothers lived and then to Falmouth about 12 years ago.

Still a frequent traveler, O'Malley-Keyes uses her trips for subject matter,



Woodneck Stroll 24x36

collecting charcoal and oil sketches as well as notes on color, lighting and other variables. She recently returned from a trip to Big Sur with an excess of photographs, sketches, and her own recorded notes, all of which, she said, she'll translate into new paintings.

Two additional projects she's currently excited about are a lighthouse commission for Portsmouth Harbor Lighthouse in New Hampshire and a painting to support a daring motorcycle ride that will benefit ALS care.

The 8,300 mile motorcycle ride is being planned by a Falmouth resident who was recently diagnosed with ALS. The project combines both of O'Malley-Keyes' loves – painting and fund-raising for good causes.

To start, O'Malley-Keyes is giving one of her original paintings to be raffled off to benefit the ride, officially called Doug Oakley's Four Corners Motorcycle Ride. The trip will be made by Oakley and Paul Zepf, a retired Boston firefighter who is also a good friend of O'Malley-Keyes.

Commissioned by Harry Connick Jr. 40x40





TOP - A Little Day Sail Guisselt Harbor 20x36
A Place of Peace 26x40

The pair will ride their motorcycles to the four points of the U.S. – Key West, Fla., San Luis Obispo, Calif., Blaine, Wash. and Machais, Maine to benefit Compassionate Care ALS, a Falmouth organization which helps patients, caregivers, and loved ones through their journeys with ALS.

In addition to the initial painting, O'Malley-Keyes plans to paint something based on the trip using photographs brought back by Oakley and Zepf.

The chance to use her talents for causes like this one is one of the reasons the artist is stepping back from her gallery business.

"You see I've got to get back to what I'm about," she said, referring to her need to give back. "And I can't do it if I'm running a gallery."

"I need to leave some sort of a positive imprint before

I decide to buzz off. And I can't leave an imprint if I'm spread so thin," she continued. "I don't want to do the fourth quarter like that."

The decision to shift energies solely to painting came after O'Malley-Keyes began experiencing eye problems a few months ago. Her doctor attributed the problems to the extensive detail work she does, on canvas and in front of a computer screen.

From her smallest 8"x10" paintings to her 5'x6' largest, O'Malley-Keyes' work is so detailed that she sometimes uses magnifying goggles like the ones used by dentists.

"You need to see really small things," she said, "like the way the rope twists, or the tiny little piece of reflective light."

According to O'Malley-Keyes, her run at the Falmouth gallery, called Day Hill Fine Art, has been incredibly



Full Bore/Velsheda II 26x40

successful even in this rough economy. Part of her success, is the customer base she developed over the years, but part too is selling in markets other than New England.

"My sales on the West Coast have done nothing but accelerate," she said.

She attributes the sales to the cultural differences between the West Coast where she said, folks will cheer themselves up by buying a new painting, and the East Coast where fine art is one of the first things to be given up in tough times.

But, she said, she has started to see a shift in the region.

"As people spend less time traveling they want their home to be as visually appealing and inspirational as possible because they're spending more time there," she said. "Having art in your home is not a luxury it's a necessity."

Even with her upcoming move, O'Malley-Keyes said

she'll continue to do business with her existing customer base, those who have been with her for a decade or more. Much of her other business will be done through a Wellesley gallery, J. Todd Galleries, that she recently began showing with.

Leaving her gallery space and home will have an emotional impact, she said, noting that the space is an exact replica of her father's studio and has much emotional significance for her. She hopes another artist will step in and continue "painting like mad" in the space.

If all goes as planned, O'Malley-Keyes' fourth quarter promises to be another action-packed time for the artist.

"It's been a wild ride and it's going to continue to be a wild ride," she said. ☺

To see more of O'Malley-Keyes' work, visit www.dayhillfineart.com or call 774-994-1096.