July 20, 2015

From: Douglas Rowe
American Society of Aviation Artists
The Sanford Brush & Palette Club

To: U.S. Copyright Office

Dear Madame or Sir,

Thank you for this opportunity to convey my thoughts, beliefs and feelings concerning the revised copyright law that is being discussed. It is an extremely important issue to me and I take great interest in its outcome.

I have been a professional artist for twelve years, and have worked relentlessly and spent a lot of hard earned money to hone my skills in drawing with pencil and charcoal, and painting in oils so as to market it in various forms in order to earn a living. This was my field of study in college, earning a BFA in commercial art. My art has been published in The Wall Street Journal, The Journal of the North American Vexillological Association and the AeroBrush, the journal of the American Society of Aviation Artists. I have had my art accepted into several juried international exhibits and have received an award in the unjuried portion of one of them, in addition to many local awards.

What concerns me most is that I could potentially lose my exclusive right to market my images how I see fit. I am the one who had the idea and did the hard part of creating the work and it is mine, no one else's. If they want a similar type of image, they should create it themselves or pay someone to do it for them, not take mine. What right does anyone have to take my possessions for any reason?

Most of my sales are prints of images I have drawn or painted because they can be sold at a much lower price than an original work. If someone else is allowed to use my image against my will, the value of my print sale business becomes non-existent because someone else has printed it and now has it available as their own work. I'm competing against myself for my own image; the lifeblood of my income from my art.

Another endangered income stream, as previously mentioned in the case of The Wall Street Journal, is that I have licensed my image to appear in their publication and was paid for their use of my art.

Copyright is not some impersonal, abstract legal issue to me, but instead an extremely personal protection on which my business, and therefore my living rests.

Why I should have to register, pay, petition or do anything else to keep what I have created and is already mine for fear that anyone else could, and will, take and use my art with no benefit to me, the owner/creator, is a conundrum to me. There is no difference between this and theft, because my art belongs to me and someone else wants it for their personal or business use and can then legally steal it, and its earning power, from me. It is critical to my survival that I have complete control in determining how and by whom my art images are used.

Everything I create artistically becomes either part of my inventory of original work, digital images for licensing, or fine art prints. Publication of my images does not cause their value to decrease; it increases because more people have seen it and may want a print of the image for themselves. It is this key concept that keeps my business and income afloat.

In summary, I trust that your ultimate decision will be to protect the exclusive right of artists to benefit from their original ideas and work.

Sincerely,

Douglas Rowe