



A Light in a Storm



Winter Afternoon

# Wyso's Winter Scenes

By James Stevens

This past April, *Coal People* published an article about the life and art of Frank Wysochansky, or "Wyso" as he preferred to be called.

The following is a brief recap of his life story, followed by a look at his "Winter Scenes." The works are captioned, a practice Wyso avoided, but used here for ease in ordering copies of prints.

## The Artist

"Wyso" (1915-1994) of Blakely, PA, knew both the world of coal mining and the world of art, and he has left behind an incredible artistic account of what was once a miner's world. He was a miner's son, one of 12 children of Ukrainian immigrants, Joseph and Anelia Wysochansky.

"Frank ate, drank, and slept art his whole life. He was just infatuated with the life of a coal miner. He never married,

although, yeah, he was handsome and funny enough to have plenty of girls going wild over him. He married art, and that was it," said brother Walter, an Eastern Orthodox priest.

As a youngster Frank drew on many surfaces, including sheepskin jackets. "He was so talented with pen and pencil, he worked for a high-school yearbook when he was in elementary school," said Walter.

Wyso committed to art, studying water-coloring and cartooning at a school in Scranton, while living with his mother, his schooling funded by the G.I. Bill.

His brothers tried to guide him to a profitable career by encouraging him to focus on mining pictures.

"We pushed him into a unity of theme," said Father Walter. "We told him to paint what he knew best: his back yard."



Snow on the Bridge



Skating on the Pond



Hiyas!

Two years ago, Steve Lichak, a senior producer in Lehigh's Digital Media Studio, urged on by Father Walter and his brothers, decided to revive his interest in Wyso and his art by cataloging 3,000 of his estimated 5,000 works. He has built shelves, and updated a Web site, [www.frankwyso.org](http://www.frankwyso.org), and organized art shows. Backed by the Lackawanna Historical Society, he's assisting a \$40,000 campaign to cast an 8-foot bronze statue of a miner based on Wyso's designs. It will be dedicated to Wyso's father, and is destined for a levee in Olyphant, across the river from Blakely.

In February, a major exhibition of art created by Wyso was



A bend in the road

on exhibit at the Lehigh University Art Galleries in Lehigh, PA. The show, a collaboration between the Frank Wyso Charitable Foundation and the Lehigh University Art Galleries, featured Wyso's humane views of a sometimes brutale industry. It was coordinated by Steven Lichak.

For information on ordering prints of Wyso's Winter Scenes and other products, e-mail, [outsourc@mindspring.com](mailto:outsourc@mindspring.com). Proceeds from the sale of the art prints benefit the Philadelphia orphanage where the younger Wysochansky children were educated following the death of their father in a mining accident.



Miners fight the storm