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The wayward male—known as Ilya—has been stuck near an oil refinery, and officials say plunging temperatures and a lack of food were endangering his life.

—The Associated Press

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## 'Old Virginia' in Switzerland

MELCHERS LANDSCAPE WILL GRACE WALL OF U.S. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AT EMBASSY

BY CLINT SCHEMMER  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

A bit of Falmouth is bound for Bern, Switzerland, destined to represent Virginia in some swanky circles.

Belmont is loaning a Gari Melchers painting of a rural Stafford County scene for display in the official resi-

dence of the U.S. ambassador there.

Ambassador-designate Don Beyer and his wife, Megan, requested an example of a pastoral landscape by the American impressionist to include in an exhibition of Virginia-themed paintings for the chief of mission's residence in Bern.

Belmont was happy to furnish a painting, as it has five times before for other U.S. diplomats, said David Berreth, director of Gari

Melchers Home and Studio.

"It's a terrific method of getting Gari Melchers' name out there, because so many people attend receptions, dinner parties and other functions at the embassies and the ambassadorial residences," Berreth said in an interview late last week.

Most of the other ambassadors to whom Belmont has loaned paintings since the museum opened in 1975

SEE MELCHERS, BACK PAGE



GARI MELCHERS HOME AND STUDIO

'In Old Virginia' by Gari Melchers.

COMING UP >> FLU SHOTS BEGIN AT AREA SCHOOLS

# MELCHERS: Artist's pastoral Stafford scene bound for embassy in Bern, Switzerland

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have had Virginia connections, whether they were natives, had moved here or served in state office, Berreth said. It has loaned works to both Republicans and Democrats, and to presidential appointees as well as career diplomats.

"They have said they wanted to keep those Virginia connections visible and have a little touch of home here, especially with the paintings that are Virginia scenes," Berreth said.

Other Melchers works have graced the U.S. embassies in Vienna, Austria; Mauritius; and The Hague.

## WANT MORE?

People interested in the artist are invited to become "fans" of Gari Melchers Home and Studio's Facebook page to see exclusive videos, photos and more.

The Beyers' request prompted the first such loan in the past several years, Berreth said.

Next month, the large landscape painting—titled "In Old Virginia"—will be installed in the ambassador's chambers in the U.S. Embassy.

The Beyers made their

request earlier this year, and the State Department's Art in Embassies Program worked with them to organize the Virginia-themed display.

The art loan program exhibits some 3,500 original works of art by U.S. citizens in the public spaces of about 180 American diplomatic residences worldwide. Using art on loan from galleries, museums, artists and corporate and private collections, the displays provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope and diversity of American art and culture.

AIEP officials contacted Gari Melchers Home and

Studio for assistance. The museum in southern Stafford County owns the world's largest collection of Melchers' works.

Curator Joanna Catron selected a brightly colored autumnal view of a house and a cow grazing just below the artist's hilltop residence in Falmouth. It was painted about 1918; the cow's home has long since disappeared.

The Beyers were delighted with the choice. In an e-mail addressed to the museum, Mrs. Beyer expressed her thanks.

"As Don and I pack up for this incredible tour of service, it is so nice to know we will have a piece of Virginia's

finest art—giving us a great talking point for the rural roots of Virginia," she wrote. "It expresses it so beautifully and the commonalities we have with the Swiss—an agrarian heritage, rolling hills and simple farm values."

The State Department will send the painting with a courier to Bern, where it will be hung in the embassy before the Beyers arrive, Berreth said.

Beyer, a Northern Virginia resident, is a former lieutenant governor of Virginia.

A Detroit native who won international acclaim for his realistic depictions of European peasants, Melchers

painted portraits of President Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain and other notables, as well as Virginia landscapes and country life.

The Falmouth museum, a 28-acre estate, is the former residence of the artist and his wife, Corinne. Operated by the University of Maryland, Washington, the property is a Virginia historic landmark and a national historic landmark.

### ON THE NET

- [garimelchers.org](http://garimelchers.org)
- Video of 'In Old Virginia' being packed at Belmont for its voyage: [youtube.com/watch?v=\\_YDZW5plCEM](http://youtube.com/watch?v=_YDZW5plCEM)

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