

Plein Air Artists at the Roller Dam

by Gary Hines

“En plein air” is a French expression that describes the act of painting outdoors, or “in the open air.” Many painters enjoy this practice, as it affords the ability to work in natural light.

On a clear, chilly April 10th morning, ten local artists caravanned up DeBeque Canyon on the narrow road to the Roller Dam to paint en plein air. They arrived, bundled in layers of warm clothing, just as the sun was casting its first light on the tops of the canyon walls.



Palisade Artist Nancy Lewis creates a pastel of the Roller Dam en plein air.

The first order of business was to locate that special vantage point from which to paint the Roller Dam and surrounding structures.

Tentative, sketchy starts led to an explosion of color on the canvases, with each artist’s interpretation of the Roller Dam beginning to emerge. Jackets and sweatshirts were shed as more layers of pigment were applied. The once silent, blank canvases and sketchpads started to tell their stories.

Renowned local artist, Nancy Lewis, is a member of the Palisade Art Lovers (PALS) and has taken on the task of organizing the Dam Art Show, in conjunction with the 100th birthday celebration of the Roller Dam. This show is open to all artists in any medium, and will focus on the Roller Dam and its impact on our way of life here in the Grand Valley.

An avid en plein air artist, Nancy likes the immediacy of the moment one gets from painting outdoors.

Other artists cite their ability, through en plein air, to see the bigger picture of what lies

beyond the canvas, infusing added depth into their work. It is our hope this outdoor painting session will encourage artists to

enter their work in the Dam Art Show to celebrate this iconic engineering marvel.

For more information on the Dam Art Show, contact Nancy Lewis at Nancy@nblewis.com.



Artist Brooks Powell’s finished painting of the Roller Dam will be on display in the Dam Art Show June 27th to celebrate the Grand River Diversion Dam’s 100th birthday.



New Walking Tour Brochures now available

The popular Palisade Historic Walking Tour Brochure has been updated and is now available at several locations. Over 2,200 brochures have been picked up since it’s last printing in July 2013.

It is free and distributed in brochure racks around town so visitors and locals can learn about Palisade’s history on their own schedule.

Thanks to another generous donation from the Palisade Lions Club, the Historical Society was able to update the publication to reflect changes in downtown Palisade.

One of the major updates was replacing the details about the

demolished St. Ann's Catholic Church. Building #21 is now a photo and information about 124 West 3rd Street, which is the offices for CAVE and Winefest Built in the 1940s, it was Park Clothing, and later Beahm Clothing, It housed the Palisade Tribune offices for about 25 years until 2014.

"The Park's grandson, Charles Park Persons, shared one of the family's 1950 photos," said Charlene Weidner, director of the Palisade Historical Society who spearheaded the update.

Another interesting update was 209 South Main Street which was built in 1944 as restrooms with a contribution of \$4,285.65 from the United Fruit Growers, and is currently being restored as public restrooms

Window signs in most of the 42 locations highlighted in the revised guide facilitate self-guided tours.

PALS Suspends Peach Blossom Art Show This Year

Though the peach blossoms in Palisade were especially gorgeous this year, long-time Palisade residents realized something was missing: the Palisade Art Lovers Peach Blossom Art Show.

For what would have been its 35th Annual Event, Palisade Art Lovers (PALS) is taking a break. PALS members are not just resting on their mission to promote art in Palisade, however. They are working with the Palisade Historical Society to create an art show for the 100th birthday celebration of the "Roller Dam" in DeBeque Canyon on June 27th.

Palisade Art Lovers was started by seven artists in 1979. As reported in The Palisade Tribune when women were identified by their husband's names, "officers included Mrs. Albert Phillips, president, Mrs. Jack Barber, vice president, Mrs. David Starks, secretary-treasurer, and William Gerhard, program chairman, Mrs. Albert Merlino, publicity chairman, Mrs. Jim Barnes, art show chairman, and Mrs. Bill Alexander, co-chairman."

These seven women, who preferred to be called Ruth, Lucille, Emmi, Carolyn, Marion, Dorothy, and Maggy, plus Louise Stocking, met the first and third Thursdays each month in the basement of the Palisade Christian Church, They sketched, drew, painted, and shared their expertise to learn new techniques and further Palisade's artistic appeal. Their first Art Show was held on December 15, 1980, not long after PALS began. The show was held at the Palisade Public Library in the Municipal Building on East 3rd Street. Show rules specified paintings be no smaller than four inches by five inches and no larger than 17 inches by 21 inches.

HISTORIC PHOTO OF THE MONTH PALS Founder at 1985 Peach Blossom Art Show

Founding President Ruth Phillips attends to art at the 1985 PALS Peach Blossom Art Show



(PALS photos courtesy of Emmi Starks)

By 1985, PALS was a huge success. The annual Art Show had been moved to the spring in an attempt to coincide with actual peach blossoms! The Town of Palisade and business leaders became involved by purchasing paintings to be hung in Town Hall in the municipal building. The art show expanded to more than a week, with separate events for "Budding artist" high school students and senior citizens.

PALS first sponsored a Senior Citizens Art Show in 1985 with 66 paintings from residents at four area nursing homes and assisted living centers. The PALS Senior Art show continued as an annual summer event at Grand Villa Assisted

Living until activity director Carolyn Gerhard retired.

After 1988, the Art Show was consistently held in the Veteran's Memorial Community Center. Prizes and categories changed to reflect changes in the community.

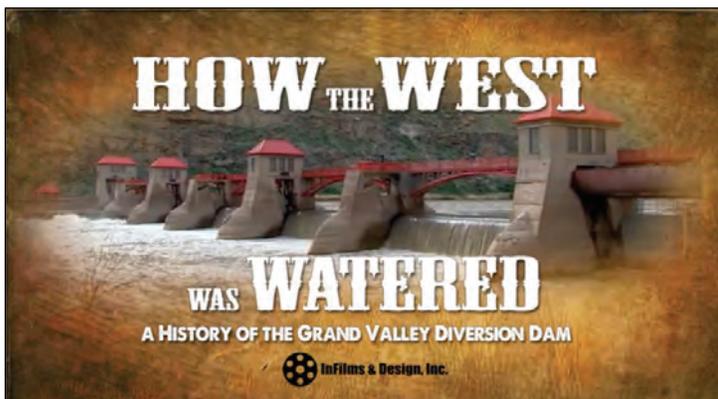
In 1990, the Art Show categories expanded to include photography. Awards from Bill and Jeanne Sisson and Shirley Rice were given for fruit industry paintings. The best grape industry painting received an award from Rocky Mountain Vintners and Viticulturists. PALS awards included best landmark within 15 miles of Palisade, and for professional, amateur, and photo division top places.



Artwork displayed at the 1989 PALS show

How the West was Watered

Larry Seibert (InFilms & Design, Inc.) and his longtime associate, video photographer and editor, Scot Stewart, have created a docu-mentary about the Grand Valley Diversion Dam story. How the West Was Watered will be featured at the June 27 birthday celebration. Click here to see the trailer: <http://youtu.be/w7IyDAoC3Uw?rel=0&vq=hd720>



The Lavender Lady Boutique is Now #33 in the New Walking Tour Brochure

Lavender Lady Carol Mueller poses in front of her new location in the Palisades National Bank building on Main Street. The space was once Voorhees funeral parlor, Palisade's first mortuary. It was also home to Gene Cutter's Shoe Store until 1952. Carol's popular store recently relocated from what had been the long-time Palisade Liquor Store on North Main Street.



Renew Your Membership Today!

Our success is made possible only through the work of volunteers and donations. Everyone is invited to join the Palisade Historical Society – through volunteer time with committees and projects – and by membership.

Annual membership in the Palisade Historical Society is just \$25.00 for Individuals, \$50.00 for Families, \$100 for Businesses, and \$500 for Patrons. New this year, are 10-year memberships for \$200 and lifetime memberships for \$400. If you haven't signed up or renewed your membership, please do so today. Mail your tax-deductible checks to the **Palisade Historical Society, P.O. Box 631, Palisade, CO 81526.**

2015-2016 Directors of the Palisade Historical Society

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Thank You Lions!



Charlene Weidner of the Palisade Historical Society shakes hands with Palisade Lions Club president Donnie Bishop and presents copies of the new Palisade Historical Walking Tour Brochure at a recent Lions Club Meeting. Other Lions Club members include John Erven, Nancy Orr, Dan Spaid, Bennett Young, Bill Floryancic, Laura Farmer, Peter Hodges, Shanna Fox and Rick Fox. The Palisade Lions Club donated funds for updating and reprinting the popular publication.

Volunteers needed for 100th Birthday Party

If you'd like to be part of the historic, once-in-a-lifetime "Roller Dam" Centennial Birthday Party — especially at the June 27th event — please contact one of the directors listed in this issue, or call (970) 464-2177.

1915 attire optional.



The Fruita Historic Preservation Board presents

A Fruita History Fair.



Saturday, May 9

Fruita Civic Center

325 E. Aspen Ave.

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Photos, Artifacts, Music.

Bring Your Historic Photos & Artifacts for Identification.

Contact: Steve Hight 858-6375.