

Palmer Lake Historical Society, April 19

Pueblo steel mill drove Western industry

By Sigi Walker

On April 19, the Palmer Lake Historical Society welcomed Victoria Miller, curator of the Steelworks Museum of the West in Pueblo, as host of the film *Forging the West*. Miller also appears in the film. The film traces the history of Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. (CF&I) in Pueblo from its founding until the present day.

CF&I was the result of the merger in 1892 of Gen. William Palmer's Colorado Coal and Iron Co. and John Osgood's Colorado Fuel Co. It became Colorado's largest employer and private landowner by the turn of the 20th century. Its mines and mill provided steel products critical for the growth of key Western industries, and Pueblo was hailed as the "Pittsburgh of the West." It has continued to be the largest steel mill west of the Mississippi River and the only U.S. mill that makes hardened steel rail.

The film illustrates the complete control by the mine operators over the miners' lives through low pay, hazardous working conditions, payment in scrip, and

company control of stores, homes, schools, churches, and even local government officials. This ultimately led to "labor disturbances" (strikes) in 1894, 1901, 1903, and finally 1913 and 1914, now known as the Colorado Coalfield Wars. The miners were a melting pot of various ethnicities, which made communication difficult. The film examined John Osgood's "welfare capitalism" and his building of the town of Redstone as well as his large English Tudor mansion, which exists today.

While the Ludlow Massacre can be attributed largely to CF&I manager L.M. Bowers, John C. Osgood of Victor-American Fuel Co., and David W. Brown of Rocky Mountain Fuel Co., the media placed the blame on John D. Rockefeller Jr., absentee owner of CF&I. Subsequently, the Rockefeller Plan was offered as an alternative to the miners' being allowed to join the United Mine Workers Union.

Forging the West takes the audience through World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the post-war boom, and the dumping of steel by China. Despite all

its ups and downs and changes in ownership, CF&I has never stopped the production of steel. Now into its third century of operation, its product line also includes steel tubing and steel wire, such as the heavy steel wire used for the Golden Gate Bridge.

The film has been shown three times on PBS. The film is available for purchase in the gift shop of the Steelworks Museum in Pueblo.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, May 17, when Katherine Scott Sturdevant will bring to life the story of Sarah Chivington Pollock Girardin, daughter of Col. John Chivington. Compiling family recollections and the work of local women historians, she unlocks family skeletons and brings a new understanding of Colorado massacre motives. This program is free and open to all. Thursday's venue is the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the program begins at 7. Light refreshments will be served after the presentation. ■

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Ponderosa forest: alfresco dining, kids, bugs, safe salads

By Janet Sellers

Our ponderosa forests are relatively bug-free thanks to the variety of essential oils they send out into the air to protect themselves and their little ones from bugs and pathogens, and humans also benefit from the ponderosa air for optimal health. We know that we can sit in the ponderosa forest and eat our picnic lunch in peace—not so at other spots or even our own backyards.

For a no-sting home garden, mint deters stinging and harmful bugs and can go in pots around the garden; the effective combo of mint and marigolds deters bugs and critters. Short French marigolds save space for crops. Mint deters wasps, ants, spiders, and flea beetles, scourge of garden greens. A study published in the Journal of Pest Management Science in 2013 reported outstanding results with peppermint oil. I use it on a cute pinecone indoors or outdoors. Since ants love to farm aphids on our ponderosas and gardens, cinnamon

sprinkled around doorways, windows, gardens, and trees will deter ants and more.

This year, I've made faux wasp nests from paper-stuffed brown paper lunch bags. Friends swear by these, and wasps can't tell if it is real or not but stay away. Wasps hate the scent of cut cucumber—that's a good picnic food idea.

Safe greens are also pretty at home

Avoid big-agra salad contamination by growing greens at home or office in a sunny window, alternating seedlings for lengthening harvests and taking just a leaf or two from each plant 2 inches above soil level for meals all year from greens within reach. I have kale, chard, lettuce, zombie scallions, and more at the window now.

Leggy tomato cure

Leggy and wobbly tomato seedlings and purchased babies need this: cover stem very gently with soil with just 3-4 leaves peeking out (gently wind long stems). Toma-

atoes grow roots from soil-covered stems, an added boost promoting bigger plants and bigger yields.

Kid-friendly eggshells as mini-pots

Put a finger hole into moist soil in an eggshell, plop in three overnight-soaked seeds, and pencil the seed name on the shell. Keep moist in a sunny windowsill and transplant eggshell in a larger pot or outdoor garden bed after a second set of leaves appears (crack open the shell bottom for roots to grow). The little cotyledons—seed leaves—supply nutrients to the baby plant until true leaves appear and feed the baby plant via the greening of photosynthesis.

Janet Sellers is a writer, artist, and ethnoecologist posing as a lazy gardener, letting nature create in the gardens.

She gives talks and garden workshops for successful HANG gardening in our forest ecology. Details: janetsellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Art in nature: power boost for kids, health

By Janet Sellers

"Amateurs look for inspiration; the rest of us just get up and go to work."—Chuck Close

Summer is coming; let's get outdoors in nature and make something! Art outdoors is fun and rejuvenating, not to mention a healing experience for the stresses of life. We are currently short on mastodons (formerly a local threat in Colorado), but we have freeways, deadlines, electronics, and health stresses these days. Our health is our life, and both nature and art help our quality of life not only in mind and heart, but in our body as well. Making art actually creates changes in our physical bodies and brains. Making art improves our quality of life and kids' scholarly abilities, and it's just plain fun.

Business Insider magazine reports that "viewing paintings triggered responses in brain regions associated with visual understanding and object recognition, as might be expected, but viewing artwork also was connected to activity associated with emotions, inner thoughts, and learning." Making art benefits the whole body, and study results reported in the Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine showed improvements of CD4+ lymphocyte counts in patients, impacting the cells inside the patient's body and improving their immune system.

When we make art, we don't take on the constant and weakening outside bombardments of electronics, freeways, and TV, and instead create something that emanates out of ourselves and into the world. This is especially true of painting and making things outdoors in nature, where we are supported by our local forests, wildlife, the songs of birds, wind, and water while we do our art activity.

The physical as well as mental benefits of making art and sharing it is satisfying, and the rewards are long term. To make art work for us, we cannot be passive bystanders but must do something, be moved, and take action via picking up pencil and paper, grabbing the camera or phone camera, splashing some watercolor, or setting the sidewalk alive with some chalk.

May art events

Art Hop on Thursday, May 17, 5-8 p.m. in Historic Mon-

ument—look for maps at shops all over town. Most have artists just for the evening, so buy it then or the art may be gone.

Bella Art and Frame Gallery—*Moonlight and Magic* by Teri Rowan, May 1-25, reception May 17, 5-8 p.m. 183 Washington St., Monument.

Bliss Studio and Gallery, owner Jodie Bliss, guest artists, 243 Washington St., Monument.

Gallery 132, local artisan co-op, 251 Front St., Monument

Santa Fe Trail Jewelry, art jewelry, paintings, mixed media—many artists, 106 Second St. at Washington, Monument.

Local Holiday Pop up Shops Facebook page—stay tuned for sneak-peek events, local art. <https://www.facebook.com/Local-Pop-Up-Holiday-Shops-945542212140944/>

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Palmer Lake Art Group show: Color Splash June 9 opening reception, show June 6-30; Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, 304 Highway 105 Palmer Lake.

Join us! As usual for Art Hop Thursdays and lots of weekend evenings, artists will be around town and at the forests and lakes painting outdoors—plein air—in watercolors and oils this year. Stop and say hello, enjoy the local scene, and see what's on the easel for the day!

Janet Sellers is a local artist, writer and art teacher, with public art sculptures and paintings in Colorado and the West. janetsellers@ocn.me.



Snapshots of Our Community

Pine Forest show supports local nonprofits



Left: The 42nd Annual Pine Forest Spring Show and Sale, sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Women's Club, drew about 1,450 people at Lewis-Palmer High School on April 7 and 8. This year's event, featuring antiques, garden supplies, a bakery, and an art section, included 99 booths and four food trucks. The bakery was supplied by 76 bakers from the membership of the group. About 2,139 pounds of food were donated. The Pine Forest event is one of two fundraisers sponsored by the Women's Club. Proceeds benefit local nonprofits, including but not limited to District 38 schools, fire and police districts, and Tri-Lakes Cares. The Tri-Lakes Women's Club was selected by the Tri-Lakes Chamber as the 2017 Non-Profit of the Year. **Pictured:** Rose Fortune, left, and Cindi Monahan are co-vice presidents of Charitable Events for the Tri-Lakes Women's Club. *Photo and caption by Harriet Halbig.*