

Compost tea for garden soil health

The best compost tea I've used is alpaca bean steeped in water for a few days and applied to the garden soil. If you're short on alpacas and their beans, put some banana peels in a jug of water for a few days and use that as a nutritive tea. Caveat:

Indoors, fermenting fruit can attract fruit flies which are hard to get rid of, so I do this outdoors.

Janet Sellers is an avid and proud lazy gardener, seeking Mother Nature's wisdom year-round for landscaping and food gardening. Send your garden-wise tips to JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Art on local summer evenings: Monument Art Hop



By Janet Sellers

Monument Art Hop, our summer monthly celebration of art, music, stories, and more, is one of our cultural heritage events that we've been creating together in Tri-Lakes for nearly a quarter of a century. The events generate art, music, and social connectedness in the community.

We celebrate our artists and visitors through art sculptures and murals in public places, galleries of visual art, live music, books, and food. We see friends and even whole families walking along the streets, going into shops and places they might normally drive past. People take in the fun of walking around and engaging in the event.

At Bella Art and Frame Gallery, I spoke with featured artist Gary Gore, who talked about his paintings and his philosophy of the much-admired "loose stroke" oil painting technique. He feels that the loose stroke frees both artist and viewer to complete the imagery and inspiring viewers' and art collectors' imaginations in a truly personal way.



Above: At the May 19 Art Hop, Bella Art and Frame Gallery hosted Gary Gores, who shows his exhibit *The Mountains Are Calling*. Gore was the featured artist for May. Seen here, he welcomes visitors of all ages including young artist Ella Clark, visiting her first Art Hop event with her family. Ella enjoys art and nature, and recently received top honors at the Colorado state awards ceremony for the Federal Junior Duck stamp design contest among middle school youth artists. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

In contemporary art history, the loose stroke painting has been a source of pride and accomplishment for artists. Art visionaries such as JSM Turner, John Singer Sargeant, Claude Monet, and Vincent Van Gogh embraced the now much-loved technique as a hallmark of their aesthetic mastery. These artists brought in a new awareness to painting. Loose

brushstroke mastery means that the artist can convey visually in a form of suggestion, offering the viewer a creative response to finish the idea personally and intuitively in a creative rapport.

Loose brushstrokes also subtly imply bolder decision-making as well as a powerful sense of structure often referred to as painterly. This communicates the ease

of the flow of thinking, and usually the brushstrokes are apparent. Its quick, intuitive, and solid structure is pleasing and relaxing to see and offers a sense of tactile visual experience that isn't in other kinds of painting.

Art in public places and the events connected to the art and conviviality exist to create an enjoyment of a sense of place. It's fun now, and eventually becomes an historic event. Such events bring a community together, beautify the area, and increase the love of the place. By doing this, the value for visitors increases and the locals, shops, and towns thrive. Art and such events do much more than hold space, they create enjoyment in the present

and something to look forward to in the future months.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, speaker, and educator. She exhibits her artworks in cities and museums in Colorado and other places around the world. She can be reached at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

Bullock orioles eating oranges



Above: We were visited by male and female Bullock orioles at our home in Monument on May 4. At first, they feasted on the nuts and seeds in the feeders on our deck. Research by my wife, Tia M. Mayer, found they also like to eat oranges. So, she filled up a feeder with sliced oranges and the orioles spent the entire day pecking at the juicy fruit. By nightfall, all the pulp was gone. We put out more oranges the next day, but by then, our fair-weather friends had flown the coop. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld*

Paul Overstreet at TLCA, May 7

Right: Songwriter Paul Overstreet, a two-time Grammy Award winner, performed a number of his hits May 7 at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA). Overstreet's first hit was *Same Ole Me* performed by George Jones and The Oak Ridge Boys in 1982, reaching No. 5 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles chart. Since then, Overstreet's songs have been performed by country music legends such as Kenny Chesney, Allison Krauss, Randy Travis, The Judds, and Tanya Tucker. Overstreet's acoustic sets this evening included his songs *Forever and Ever*, *Seein' My Father in Me* and a tribute to mothers for Mother's Day with *When Mama Prayed*. Overstreet said "music was in our house growing up" as family members played guitar and piano and were involved in the church choir. He said he "sets an appointment to make the time" to write songs, with that creative focus leading to awards throughout his career. *Photo by David Futey.*

