

Palmer Lake Historical Society

Refurbished sign a historical legacy for Palmer Lake

By Patricia Atkins

Dan Elders has lived in Palmer Lake for over 50 years and calls it his hometown. He knows the area, its history and the neighborhoods very well as the owner of *The Angry Squirrel*, trimming trees, shrubs and overgrown areas throughout the region. That is how he laid eyes on the Palmer Lake sign and made it his mission to save it.

Elders recounted a job he was working on down in the Glen. He had climbed a tree to begin his work and looked from a 50-foot perch to make sure the area was clear for falling limbs. There in a wood pile he immediately recognized the sign from historical photos of the Denver & Rio Grande Station dating back to the late 1800s. It was partially covered, warped, severely cracked, and missing the P. He was given permission to rescue it from the pile and his mission began.

Elders began with attempts to straighten the sign by watering and weighting it down. Knowing that was not the final answer to this first step, he mounted a piece of plywood to the back of the sign. He then found a piece of barnwood to match, with the thickness and grain of the aged wood on the original sign, making it a board length of 10 feet and allowing room for the missing P. The P was stenciled in using the R to match the size and font. From

there it went to local artist Buzz Bloom for the painting of the trim and the addition of the missing letter.

Elders contacted Rodger Voelker, a docent at the Palmer Lake Museum and member of the Palmer Lake Historical Society board, to request the sign be mounted on the Vaile Museum/Library building. After discussion it was decided the sign should be stored in Voelker's workshop until the place to mount the sign could be decided upon. Finally, a decision to mount the sign above the Palmer Lake Town Hall's front door was made and the timing was perfect as repairs were being completed to the Town Hall.

Now the residents of Palmer Lake can enjoy this piece of history, a legacy left by Elders to his hometown.

The Town Hall was built in 1914 and is now included in the Colorado State Register of Historic Places.

Patricia Atkins is secretary of the Palmer Lake Historical Society.

Right: Dan Elders stands below the historic railroad sign on March 15. Elders fully restored the sign he found in disrepair and ensured the sign found a new home above the main entrance doors inside the recently renovated Palmer Lake Town Hall. *Photo by Gary Atkins.*



High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Nature harvest: Seeds are miracles in tiny packages

By Janet Sellers

September in our region can include surprises of sunny days, rainy days, snowy days, and more! Sometimes a combination of all of these. Mother Nature does a fine job of preparing her soil for the following year by dropping leaves, sticks and natural things, and creating spaces for her tiny helpers, bird food sources, and pollinators to overwinter. We can support our local wildlife system, too, we just need to know what to do.

Lazy gardeners, rejoice—lazy is actually efficient via inaction. No digging protects the natural soil food web, too. Leaving some leaf piles as mulch and keeping some favorite herbs in containers means you can just overwinter them indoors. Fall yard cleanup is important, and there are ways to support next year's wildlife with this year's lazy wisdom of leaving things in place where possible.

Our favorite food crops aren't native to our area. We have endless edible foraging plant life that is native, but most of us don't know about it. We plant what we know,

often the nutrient-packed cold crop greens (kale, lettuce, chard, peas, and spinach) and turnips, beets, and radishes. WebMD reports that radishes are "super healthy" because they are rich in antioxidants and minerals like calcium and potassium. Together, these nutrients help lower high blood pressure and reduce your risks for heart disease. The radish is also a good source of natural nitrates that improve blood flow.

My 3- to 4-foot-tall radish, kale and bok choy plants will give us hundreds of seeds for next year. All we did was plant, wait, and weed out the invasive spearmint. We let the plants do their thing, using the same strategy with the strawberry plants but staked the tomatoes upward for space. Hopefully, the strawberries will take over that raised bed next year.

We can still get crops in September and even plant some fast-growing seeds when we make preparations such as having frost cloth and hoops or other important protections such as mulch, particularly mulch with pine needles. In the community garden, we know that if they

don't get going this fall due to weather, they'll overwinter and thrive next spring.

Local student volunteer helpers needed

Student volunteer opportunities include local naturalist talks during the volunteer time. Students are encouraged to volunteer at the Monument Community Garden and Fox Run Regional Park. Our high schools' key clubs and National Honor Society members are volunteering regularly in community service. Garden tasks include weeding, harvesting, and soil preparation. The Friends of Fox Run Regional Park offers nature-related tasks that help the forest ecosystem.

Janet Sellers is a writer, speaker, avid nature lover, and lazy gardener, learning from Mother Nature and local gardeners alike. Send your handy tips to janetsellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Art, mindfulness, and focus



By Janet Sellers

Contemplative art is poetry for the eyes. The dictionary meaning of contemplate is from Latin *contemplatus*, past participle of *contemplari* "to gaze attentively, observe" from the prefix *com-* "together" plus *templum* "temple." The original meaning of the Latin *contemplari* was "to mark out a space for observing auguries or omens," and the temple was a holy space reserved for this purpose. We need these contemplative places.

We are bombarded by visuals in a predatory vein in big-scale ads on television, computer screens, and phones. Contemplative, mindful art puts us in the mindset of musing and wondering. It is the opposite of billboards, signs, and advertisements. Art to view or to make, especially works made by hand, is restorative for us humans. Art is important to have around us, indoors and outdoors, especially as art in public places. We can identify with a comforting sense of place around familiar landmarks of nature and art. Also, art in public places has an optimal effect on locals and visitors' attitudes.

Recently, the town of Palmer Lake installed some artworks for a rotating exhibition at the Town Hall. It is a tribute to the local art and artists as well as offering a creative touchstone moment at the Town Hall for visitors and staff. The up-and-coming Palmer Lake Arts District has plans to install outdoor sculpture rotation exhibits around town, too.

One artist being showcased now is Jim Sawatzki, a Colorado artist who is a painter, printmaker, and documentary movie producer. His films have been viewed on PBS affiliates and seen nationally on A&E and the History Channel. He was nominated for an Emmy in 2000. His 34-by-24-inch mixed media work, *Cowboy Shirt Cutout, 2021*, is currently on view.

Artist Mike Koloski's painting is also in the exhibit, titled *Frogwater, 2007*. The medium is oil on board. Koloski's paintings have appeared in galleries as well as

individual and group shows throughout Alaska, Washington, and Oregon.

September Art Hop is the last of the season

Our Art Hop is a joyful compilation of contemplative opportunities. I give mindful forest walks and mindful art-filled walks in the forest to help people connect to nature and to the nature of art as planned, convivial events. All summer in town, we've had monthly arts events bursting with creative works in our galleries: paintings, outdoor public art, live music, and pop-up art shows at some spots. Our last Art Hop of the season will be on Sept. 15. Kind of sad to end the outdoor walk about town and artful chances to meet new friends, but our downtown has a fall/winter calendar, too. Stay tuned!

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



Above: Locals now can see the new rotating exhibit at Palmer Lake Town Hall. The artwork is the premiere exhibit, featuring paintings by Artist Mike Koloski and a mixed-media cowboy shirt by Jim Sawatzki. More public art spaces are in the planning stages, including sculptures on pedestals around the town, starting with the local library grounds. *Photo courtesy of Jina Brenneman.*

Left: Artists around town shared their works at the Art Hop on Aug. 18. (L to R) Joseph Campbell, painter, was the featured artist at Bella Art & Frame gallery for August. Victoria White, 15, and a student at Monument Academy, entertained for her first-ever gig with original songs at Bliss Studios. *Photos by Janet Sellers.*