

Palmer Lake Historical Society

Take a walk through history

By Marlene Brown

In lieu of the regular meeting in July, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) took a walk through historical Monument. Led by Jim Sawatzki, past president of PLHS and filmmaker and owner of Palmer Divide Productions. His research is rich, showing that Monument is still standing strong. Many of the little houses you see in town were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Pioneers began settling in the Monument area, and there were business owners, cowboys, and ranchers living in and near the town. There were two hotels near the Rio Grande Railroad train station.

Incorporated in 1879, the town was first called Henry's Station, after Henry "Dutch" Limbach, Monument's first town mayor. The train station and hotels were near where Limbach Park is today. The town's name was later changed to Monument, after the rock formation to the west located in Monument Preserve, near Mount Herman.

Monument Lake was one of the first "ice harvest" towns, because it was on the railroad line. They sent ice blocks by train to the East that were used for cold storage of the meat from the cattle that had been raised in the West. The lake is now stocked with fish yearly and used for recreational fishing and boating.

Members of PLHS walked along the streets of Monument looking at the homes that were built by the pioneers. The Higby General Store was located

where Covered Treasures Bookstore is now at Washington and Second Streets. "Big Red," a Lewis-Palmer School District 38 building, was built in the 1920s. It had all 12 grades in the same building attended by children from the town to the outlying ranchlands.

Walking with Sawatzki around Monument, you learn that many other buildings you see every day are originals, such as The Bistro on Second Street, which was the original post office. Though there have been additions to the building, the original structure is still under the walls of the restaurant.

Take the time someday to walk around the streets and imagine the life of the pioneers who lived there.

The historical walk on July 15 in Greenland Open Space was called off due to weather conditions. The August meeting has been canceled. Board members will be volunteering and conducting tours at the Reynolds Ranch Homestead House at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry Aug. 12 from 10 a.m.-3 pm for Family Day (wwmi.org) and will be open to the public. PLHS normally meets the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Palmer Lake Town Hall.

The mission of the PLHS is to preserve, protect, promote, and provide access to historical data, artifacts, and other items of significance relating to the Palmer Divide area and make resources available to



Above: Jim Sawatzki, past president of Palmer Lake Historical Society, leads a historical walk through Monument on a sunny Sunday morning. Photo by Steve Pate.

the public primarily through the Lucretia Vaile Museum and annual programming. For more information about membership and volunteer opportunities, go to palmerdividehistory.org

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High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Will Vogl: father, firefighter, and farmer

By Janet Sellers

"The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself"—Franklin D. Roosevelt (U.S. president 1933-45) in a letter to state governors in 1937.

I recently visited Will Vogl's Black Forest farm where he shared his "living soil" restoration projects: hugelkultur (moist mound culture farming) and pastureland reclamation using age-old farming methods. The rich, moisture-filled soil thrives with or without rain or irrigation.

Vogl explained, "It depends on the source, but a 1% increase in soil organic matter (SOM) in the top 12 inches of soil will increase the soil's natural water storage capacity by 20 to 30,000 gallons per acre. Here on our land, we have increased our SOM by around 2% in places of our pasture we have treated with compost, essentially allowing our land to hold an additional 50,000 gallons of water per acre over what it could before.

Vogl shared some of his information resources with me such as the USDA Forest Service as well as the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service information at this link: www.nrcs.usda.gov/.

We know from history that our own country had famine and other disasters when we didn't steward our land as nature intended. As far back as 1937, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote a letter urging state governors to implement soil conservation laws in reference to the horrific drought that caused the dust bowl and famine. There are ways to tend the land using natural nutrients and moisture abilities for what the soil—our Earth's skin—needs to be resilient.

In his writings on the imperative for regenerative agriculture, Dr. Christopher J. Rhodes at Resilience.org explains how we got these erroneous notions. Throughout history, civilizations have thrived or declined based on the quality of their soils—a crucial factor for us to feed ourselves and our animals.

Manmade ecological disaster

The English gentleman farmer Jethro Tull (1674-1741) conceived and promoted his erroneous belief that land must be heavily plowed to control weeds. Extended use of such aggressive and poor farming strategies overtaxed unprotected U.S. farmlands and weakened the soil. This, and a decade of drought,



created massive dust storms in places like the prairie region in the 1930s. "Suitcase farmers" of the 1910s and 1920s land boom had torn up the region's native sod for quick profits, then abandoned it. Thousands of years of native grass evolution were destroyed, and the ground was naked and exposed.

President Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps of 1933-42 enrolled more than 3 million men and planted 3 billion trees to protect 21 million acres from soil erosion, aiding in the establishment of eight



hundred state parks. Even the ancient Greeks believed plants got all their nutrients from the soil. Many centuries later, erroneous beliefs based on mere logic and not on land experience have caused civilizations to destroy themselves via their soil practices.

Janet Sellers is an avid "lazy gardener," letting Mother Nature lead the way for pleasant natural landscapes. Reach her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Fine art and the making of worlds



By Janet Sellers

"Sciencediscover,designinvents.Wherscienceworksto uncover an objective world, design brings forth multiple worlds simultaneously..."—Andrea Mignolo, The Design of Things.

I recently attended an artists' roundtable discussion with the brilliant James Bradburne, general director of Milan, Italy's Pinacoteca di Brera. He brought up many points about art, saying he believes "museums are a verb and not a destination." He enthusiastically encouraged us artists to "keep on making art. Our world needs you now more than ever." He emphasized that courageous, creative thinkers are needed now to invent, speak out, and bring to others important, creative thinking by manifesting ideas into reality.

When we discover how handmade fine art ignites the fires of imagination within ourselves, it's a profound and transformative experience. Engaging with art can unlock a wellspring of creative potential, leading us to express ourselves in unique and inventive ways. Besides such important cultural support for us to thrive in our communities, our business world depends on innovation to flourish.

Handmade fine art is especially evocative because it shows a human touch, allowing people to connect with their innermost feelings. This emotional resonance can lead to a deeper understanding of oneself and others, fostering empathy and compassion. Studies show that when art is available in hospitals, care centers, therapeutic practices and public

places, it supports healing, improves memory, and stimulates interest in hope for improvement. It's fun to look and ponder for oneself the meaning we personally find as well as what the artist might have had in mind. This sense of wonder can extend beyond art and permeate various aspects of our lives.

Taking in our local fine art can inspire our sense of wonder and awe. Reminding us to appreciate creative beauty right where we live, Tri-Lakes has self-guided sculpture tour maps and a monthly Art Hop to get us out into our community generating pleasant connections. These affirm our sense of place. Upcoming, our art-filled local Hummingbird Festival is Aug. 4 and 5 at Happy Landing Ranch (Rollercoaster Road just north of Hodgen). Our next Art Hop is Aug. 17 in downtown Monument—see you there!

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker, sharing her works locally and across the country. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Right: July Art Hop in Monument. On July 20, Jefferson Studios showcased Abbey Hutcheon (top photo - back to the camera) and Daryl Muncey (middle photo - center of frame). At El Santo Vaquero (bottom photo), Christian Kurz chats with guests after the Spiritual Archetypes class, one of their many free classes and events for the community. Photos by Janet Sellers.