

Area artist featured in museum exhibit

The Prairie Museum of Art and History is displaying the drawings, paintings, and prints of Hoxie artist Diane Pratt in the Garvey Educational Room.

Pratt grew up in western Kansas, though she was born in Olympia, Wash. In 1999, she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Fort Hays State University, where she learned artistic techniques and the use of color while broadening her ideas.

However, she credits her father, Zane Frazey, a self-taught artist, with passing on his talent and early love of art and nature to her. Pratt says her father taught her to look at things closely and to be patient.

"My inspiration usually comes from songs or poems," she said. "When I listen to a song or poem, usually a certain line will catch my ear. I try to create something that represents how the words made me feel or how I pictured them in my head."

Pratt works in pen and ink, watercolor, acrylic and colored pencil, alone or in combination. The use of solvents, such as alcohol and salt, and different manipulative techniques in her watercolor work helps her achieve unique effects.

She works on a variety of surfaces, including paper, canvas, and gourds, but she adds that her gourds are different.

"They are just fun splashes of color," she said.

Her favorite artists include Miguel Martinez, Henri Rousseau, Diego Rivera, Van Gogh and Gauguin, and evidence of their influence is apparent in Pratt's art. She loves drawing women's faces with halos or animals, like poison-arrow frogs, because they are so bright and colorful.

Pratt has taught outreach classes for Colby Community College, and has exhibited her work in towns throughout the state. Her work can be viewed at the museum through October, weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends 1 to 5 p.m.

Crickets' chirping serves weather watchers

MANHATTAN – You are outdoors without your thermometer and wonder "what's the temperature?" If you listen to the crickets, there is an easy formula to calculate it, according to Mary Knapp.

"Count the chirps in 15 seconds and add 40," said Knapp, who as the state climatologist for Kansas, is a weather watcher herself. "The result is the temperature in Fahrenheit."

Knapp, who is in charge of the Kansas Weather Data Library, said that a Swedish chemist, Savante Arrhenius described a similar equation in 1897 to explain chemical reaction rates and their response to temperature. Crickets' chirp rate is controlled by metabolic reactions and is faster when it is warm and slower when it is cool.

"But is it accurate?" Knapp said. "Studies have shown that it is accurate to within a degree or two. "You just need to be careful in counting the chirps, and be able

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High Plains Art Club

When the members of High Plains Art Club met on Tuesday, Sept. 8, Margaret Denneler, club vice president, presented a program about Anna Mary Robertson Moses, better known as Grandma Moses.

Denneler said Moses was born on Sept. 7, 1860, in Greenwich, N.Y., and even though she did not start painting until she was 70, she did 3,600 paintings before her death on Dec. 13, 1961, in Hoosick Falls, N.Y., at the age of 101.

Moses did some drawing when she was a child, but never had any formal art training. She left home at age 12 to earn her own living caring for the sick in their homes. She married at 26 and she and her husband lived on a dairy farm.

Finally, at 70, after her husband had died and her children took over the farm, she had time to do artwork for the first time since her childhood. At first she did embroidery pictures, but soon turned to painting because of arthritis in her hands. Her paintings depict the simple rural life of her area around Hoosick Falls.

Soon, Moses started showing her paintings in the window of a drugstore, where an

art collector, Louis Calder, saw them in 1938. He liked them and bought some. This led to an art dealer, Otto Kallir, exhibiting some of her work in his Galerie Saint-Etienne in New York, and this started a chain reaction of her work being shown all over the world.

Many of Moses' paintings were used on Hallmark cards. Moses was honored by President Harry Truman with the Women's National Press Club Trophy Award in 1949 and appeared on Edward R. Murrow's program in 1951. Moses also wrote and published her autobiography, "Grandma Moses: My Life's History."

Moses sold her first paintings at the drug store in the 1930s for \$2 and \$3 each, but in November 2006, her painting, "Sugaring Off (1943)," was sold for \$1.2 million.

After the program, club president Marlene Carpenter, called the business meeting to order. The Kansas Arts Commission is taing nominations for Outstanding Artist awards. The club voted to nominate Carpenter for her many sunflower paintings.

Secretary Marj Brown and Carpenter agreed to represent the club at the Thomas County

Community Foundation meeting on Monday, Oct. 5.

Carpenter announced that plans for the upcoming watercolor workshop had been finalized. Anna Seeber Shaw of Oberlin will teach the session from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 30 and 31, in the fellowship hall of the Colby United Methodist Church. Anyone who wants to attend can contact Brown, at 462-3515 or at mjbrown285@yahoo.com for information about fees and what to bring.

There was a discussion of plans for the Christmas luncheon this year. All agreed to hold it at Montana Mike's. It was decided that names would be drawn for gifts, to be art works of any type chosen by the giver. New books were passed out by the secretary and the meeting adjourned.

After lunch together, the members visited the art show at the museum and returned to the church to work on their projects.

The next meeting will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 13, at the Methodist church. Maxine Nelson will give the program and Brown will be hostess. All area artists are invited.

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