

# American artists displayed at exhibit

Especially during an election year, looking at important moments in American history seems like a good way to reflect on where we've been and where we are going as a country.



**Ann Miner**

• Around the Museum

In the exhibit Picturing America, we are given the opportunity to look at our history as depicted by many of our country's foremost artists. While it's interesting enough simply to look at the images, the experience is deepened by taking advantage of the information in a notebook near the entrance exhibit.

For instance, the description accompanying George Caleb Bingham's 1852 painting "The County Election" draws attention to several details that record electoral practices of the time and render the artist's opinion on them.

"In this crowded composition, Bingham suggests the inclusiveness of a democracy with representatives of every age and social stratum — except, of course, African Americans ... and women," the description reads.

However, the painting also shows more dubious practices that were a part of the process at that time: "Because there were no restrictions on electioneering, the well-dressed gentleman behind the voter — evidently one of the candidates — is free to hand his card to citizens just before they cast their vote."

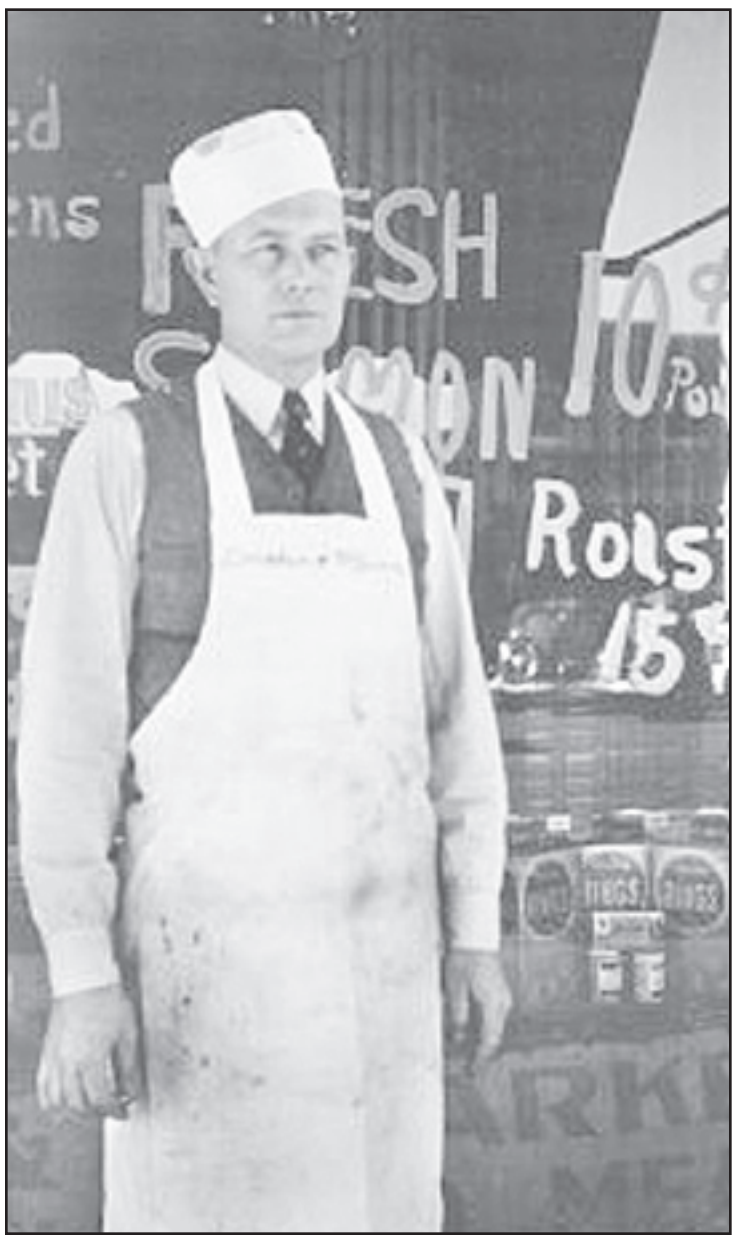
The material goes on to point out that the artist has painted himself into this work and that he was a candidate in the election it

illustrates. To fully appreciate the depth of these works as portrayals of moments in American history, we encourage you to take the time to delve into the notebook. The exhibit will be up through September, and as always there is no charge to see it. Thanks to Trish Starbuck and Judy Parker for making the exhibit available to us.

Plans are coming together for our upcoming *Food for Thought* talk series beginning in November. Since we are updating our agricultural exhibit as well as having a companion "Way We Worked" exhibit next year, our speakers will focus on these topics. Look for more information in next month's column.

Our 2013 museum calendar will be focusing on these themes, depicting some of our thousands of historic photographs of agricultural and other types of work.

We are also working with the Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and area photographers on a project to create a photographic record of present-day businesses. Just as the 1937 Colby business photos taken by Farmers and Merchants Bank as part of their 50th anniversary have become treasured icons, this snapshot of the business community in 2012 will be of like value to future generations.



This 1937 Colby business photo showed Lester McGinnis in front of the Donelan and McGinnis Market.

For \$20, Michelle Morris or Laura Norris will photograph the owner and/or employees at each place of business. These photographs will become part of the "Way We Worked" exhibit at the museum, as well as the subject of a special insert in the *Colby Free Press*.

Each business will receive a professional 8 x 10 copy of their

photograph. Photos will be taken between Saturday, Sept. 15, and Wednesday, Oct. 31, and application fees from businesses that wish to be included in this special archive and exhibit must be received at the Chamber by Friday, Sept. 7.

*Ann Miner is the Education Director at the Prairie Museum of Art and History.*

# Friday scrimmages a big hit in Rexford

The kids are getting into the routine of school and hopefully enjoying the experience of learning.



**Gwen Griffiths**

• Rexford Correspondent

It seems like quite a crowd showed up to take part in the Golden Plains soap scrimmages on Friday afternoon and evening. The volleyball and football teams each had a chance to play; the event was followed by a barbecue.

Taylor and Tylor Todd have earned a big congratulations. They both rode in the American Quarter Horse Association Youth World Competition in Oklahoma City. Taylor placed third in the cutting event, and both girls placed in the top 10 in the boxing category. In boxing, the girls had to ride a reining pattern and then work a calf.

Free produce is still available at the Stepper building on Mondays and Thursdays. There's usually a

good variety of vegetables, and it's all free.

Don't forget the open house and dedication coming up for the historic Philip Houston House from 4 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 12. The dedication ceremony will be held at 4:30 p.m. There will be tours and old-fashioned snacks. The entire community is invited.

I hope you have some fun plans for Labor Day this weekend. And if you have celebrations or news that you'd like to see in the paper, just e-mail [griffithsgang@gmail.com](mailto:griffithsgang@gmail.com) or call 687-2076.

Have a great week!

# Ranchers need to take stock

While it seems simple, for many beef producers, the secret to success and profit lies in knowing their operation's objective and mapping out a plan to get there.

At the 2012 K-State Beef Conference in Manhattan, Chip Ramsay, general manager of the Rex Ranch in western Nebraska, advised stockmen to inventory their resources and consider the end goals of their operation before making decisions.

"Seldom do beef producers have the opportunity to create something from nothing," he said. "Most of us inherit something, and we have to take inventory to determine what we have, because that makes a difference in where we want to head."

Ramsay has taken his own advice in managing Rex Ranch, letting the inventory and business objectives shape decisions related to grazing management, feeding, culling, breeding, calving and more.

One of the ranch's main goals is to lower the cost of production while producing a calf that performs well for both the feedyard and the packer. The ranch manager said he tries to select replacement heifers from cows that produce desirable weaning weights and pregnancy rates, have low labor

needs and make efficient use of the range. Bulls are selected from cows that thrive in their environment and exhibit excellent post-weaning performance.

Ramsay also advised stockmen to do research on their options and seek advice from experts as they plan and explore management options.

He emphasized the importance of working from a ranch plan. Producers should write down their breeding objectives, inventory and research findings. They should also keep record of their inputs and outcomes, as these become the basis for building or modifying the plan in successive years.

"It's tough to write things down, especially in our industry, because our biggest strength is our flexibility," Ramsay said. "We don't know what's going to be thrown at us each day. We've made our living because we are able to adapt."

While it is difficult at times for stockmen to identify and nail down a direction they want to go, he said, it's essential to moving forward. Just because a goal or direction is written down does not mean it can't be changed, he added. It's crucial to re-evaluate and adapt along the way.

# Young mountain lion tries to sneak into Nevada casino

By Martin Griffith

Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — An underage mountain lion was caught Friday after trying to slip into a casino in downtown Reno ahead of the breakfast rush.

Nevada Department of Wildlife spokesman Chris Healy says the

young male cat's behavior was "almost the equivalent of being a stupid teenager."

Healy says coming-of-age cougars often end up where they shouldn't after being chased out of a territory by adults.

"It fits the classic definition of a dispersal-age male looking for a place to be," Healy said.

Still, he acknowledged, this wasn't exactly a typical case.

"I've been here 27 1/2 years and this one is new to me," Healy said. "We've seen mountain lions on the fringes of Reno before, but not in downtown Reno."

Guests at Harrah's reported seeing the 100-pound cat trying to walk into the casino around dawn

Friday morning. When the animal couldn't negotiate the revolving door, it hid under an outdoor stage in a nearby plaza.

State wildlife officials tranquilized the roughly 2-year-old cat and no injuries were reported.

"It would have been a different story for the cat had it succeeded in getting inside," Healy said.

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