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Oregon Man Reunites Painting With People of Arnold

In 1995, a large piece of artwork at a community garage sale in Toledo, Oregon, caught Tom Frazier's attention.

Frazier, now 73, who is a marine carpenter by trade in Newport, Oregon, assumed the painting was of Newport due to the resemblance of the landscape. Handwriting on the back of the painting had faded with time.

"It was dated 1931. I thought maybe it hung in a tavern or a fraternal organization because it had the patina of heavy cigar and cigarette smoke and because of the subject matter," said Frazier. "There was just something about it - it was a cross between folk art and fine art. The texture and light in the background was exquisitely done. I just really appreciated the skill of the painter."

Frazier paid a buck for the painting and hung it in a little room off of his wood shop where he would kick back and enjoy it for the next 20 years.

At the time, Frazier had never heard of a place called Arnold, Nebraska, but that same piece of artwork would draw him here in the spring of 2015 to return the painting to what he eventually discovered was its original home.

His journey of discovery started when he learned of plans of the then mayor of Toledo to build a historical museum to renovate a dilapidated part of the small city. Frazier donated the painting thinking that it had some historical significance to the area.

One week later, a curator of the museum called to tell him



Oregon resident Tom Frazier holds a painting that he reunited with the people of Arnold this spring. The painting, found by Frazier at an Oregon garage sale, was dedicated to "The Good People of Arnold" back in 1931.

that the painting wasn't of historical significance to that area, but it was to Arnold, Nebraska.

"I always knew something was written on the back of the painting, but I didn't really pay much attention because I could-

n't make it out," he said. "The curator had a magnifying glass and I was told that the back read, 'Dedicated to the Good People of Arnold, Nebraska.'"

Ballmer had signed the back with the exact date of the 9th

Day of March, 1931. There was also a Notary seal by Ben H. Mitts and names of several men, including Lloyd D. Ander son and G. Bonnie.

From that moment on, Frazier said he always wanted to return it to the people of Arnold.

"Anytime I would meet someone from Nebraska, I would ask them if they had ever heard of Arnold. No one had," he said.

In the meantime, Frazier was curious about the artist, Author Ballmer. Next to Frazier's shop is a photo studio, and he asked the woman who ran it if she could find out anything about Ballmer. Through research, she found that Ballmer had lived in Cozad, Nebraska. Frazier called the library there, and was surprised when the librarian said they had three paintings by Ballmer on display there. She, in turn, gave him the number of Ballmer's daughter, whom he called.

"The daughter and the grandson were surprised that the painting went back to 1931. Most of his paintings were done in the 1970's. He died in the late 70's or early 80's," said Frazier.

On a cross-country trip to Ohio in April of this year, Frazier was getting closer to his goal of returning the painting to Arnold, when he stopped in Cozad to view Ballmer's paintings on display there.

"I liked (this one) more because it was more impressionistic, except for the geese. His later paintings were more realism."

Frazier traveled on to Arnold

and located the village office, where he met village clerk Patty Lamberty, presented her the painting and told her the story.

"I was really delighted that Patty was so delighted. I didn't know what to expect. I thought maybe the town wouldn't be interested and someone would just set it in a corner," he said.

The clerk told Frazier about the Finch Memorial Library being accepted as a Historical Landmark, and that the painting would be displayed there.

"I thought, 'well gee, this seems like excellent timing,'" said Frazier.

Frazier said both how the painting ended up at a garage sale in Oregon and the artist's connection to Arnold are a mystery, and he hopes that someone will have an answer.

"I looked forward to coming to Arnold for so long," said Frazier. "My cross-country trip was great. Everything was so green. Nebraska spoiled me. I had the best hamburger I've had in my life at Sidney. I found out that the cattle are raised 10 miles up the road. The burgers are fresh ground and flamed broiled. I also discovered that Nebraska is not flat. I got off the interstate anytime I could, and it is just beautiful. Our original building material (in Oregon) is wood. I enjoyed looking at the brick and stonework and how important the masons were. It is very different architecture. For a town of 600 people, you've got a really good thing going. It's a busy town. I am happy that the painting is reunited with Arnold. I would like to come back some day."

Reading Program, "Page to Stage" Starts Today

Theater Actors from "Tarzan" will present June 18



Crane River Theater actors will present "Tarzan!" as part of the summer reading program, "Page to Stage," June 18 at the Arnold Community Center. (Courtesy photo)

and her Master's degree from the University of Exeter (England) in Drama and Theater Arts. She is also working on her doctorate this coming fall specializing in Shakespeare and

Fantastical Creatures in England. Kristen is the sister of Mrs. Jamie Neth, third grade teacher here at Arnold.

On June 18, Jan Custer will work with the groups on mak-

ing theatrical cuts from the chosen novels for Arnold's Page to Stage productions on July 23. Jan Custer is a NSAA certified judge for theater and speech. Jan is a retired Broken Bow teach and long-time coach of the speech team as well as a former one act director. Jan is a well-respected judge across the state and has served as a judge for many conference, district and state competitions. One of her specialties is cutting scripts to save time without losing characterization, message and adhering to author intent.

After the script cuts with Jan Custer, participants will go to the community center to welcome Crane River Theater's feature actors from Tarzan the Musical as they read, perform and interact with kids sharing the classic story. The main characters are Tarzan, Jane, Terk, Kala, Kerchak and the apes.

Eyerí Cabrera-Loos will be Tarzan in "Tarzan!" He was born and raised in Chicago, Eyerí is thrilled to be making his Crane River Theater debut.

He is currently a sophomore studying Music Theatre at Baldwin Wallace University. His current credits include Gator in "Memphis" (Regional Premier), Robert in "Company," Daniel in "Once on this Island," Sky Masterson in "Guys and Dolls," Don in "A Chorus Line," and Dance Captain/Featured Dancer in "Saturday Night Fever" (Re-

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Survey Input Sought From South Loup Residents for Watershed Project

As part of the preparation to develop a management plan for the South Loup River Basin, a survey has been sent out to landowners in the watershed who own more than two parcels of ground within the basin's drainage. The Lower Loup Natural Resources District, along with the Central Platte, Twin Platte and Upper Loup NRDs, are developing the plan to deal with water quality and quantity issues in the basin.

The data taken from the surveys will be an integral part of the project, according to Tyler Naprstek, Water Modeling Coordinator for the Lower Loup NRD. He said having resident and landowner input during the planning process is essential for achieving a better understanding of the practices that are working and the ones that are most desirable for the area.

Naprstek said that no personal information will be requested of those who take the survey. He said the data gathered through this online survey will be used in the development of the basin management plan and will be discussed with the stakeholders involved in the process. He said that those who are unable to access the internet can receive a paper version which can be mailed out with a postage-paid return envelope. Those with questions about this planning process are asked to Naprstek at the Lower Loup NRD, 308-728-3221.



Nineteen Locations Offer Bargains on Saturday

Amber Downing and Connie Nansel (second and third from left) man their garage sale location on Saturday during the City-Wide Garage Sale. Bargain hunters from Arnold and several surrounding communities followed the map to 19 locations for the Chamber-sponsored event held yearly in June. Locations reported a pretty steady flow of customers and good sales throughout the day. After the sales were over, most locations dropped off their unsold items at the Good Will truck parked at the city park. (Janet Larreau photo)