

HISTORY OF EPAA - PART IV



I was President of the El Paso Art Association in 1976. In 1975, preceding me as President was Sally Avery, my colleague and art friend. It was indeed a pleasure and learning experience for me to serve as EPAA Vice President (1 yr), President (1 yr) and Yearbook Chairman (3 yrs) in the early 1970's. Later, I also served on the EPAA Board of Directors for 3 years appointed by Catherine Kistenmacher and then Don Beene in the early 2000's.

It is also admirable that the dedication of the EPAA for furthering the progress of many Southwest artists who strive their new ways of painting our beautiful mountains, flowers (cacti and poppies) and the bountiful Southwest plus other aspects of the art scene and its culture.

Another accomplishment and goal of the EPAA has been giving scholarships to many high school students in our area who excel in art. The EPAA has many projects: such as Soldier Art Workshops held at Ft Bliss and evolved in the last two years. I have observed these art sessions and they are most successful. Monthly art exhibitions are also currently being held by artists showcasing their artwork.

I again consider it a true honor and pleasure to have been in a position where I may possibly be of some help in furthering the art of El Paso in which I and so many others are so deeply interested and cherish.

I currently serve as a board member of the Huthsteiner Fine Arts Trust Committee where I served for five years. I have acquired funding for furthering the goals of the El Paso Art Association.

Some history for the El Paso Art Association in 1976. We had monthly meeting with artists demonstrating their talent. Some were:

Bud Riggs – Watercolor
 Florence Hay - Oils
 Mignon Olive – Pastels
 William Kollikur – Acrylics
 Ray Lopez Aleman – Drawing

EPAA meetings in 1976 were held at the then El Paso Museum of Art, now the International Museum of Art, 1211 Montana in the auditorium on the first Sunday afternoon of the month.

EPAA had 4 shows a year. They were:

Minature Show – Spring (Bassett Center)
 Summer Art Show – (Bassett Center)
 Annual Museum Show – The El Paso Museum of Art (now The International Museum of Art)

This was our prestigious art show of the year

Fall Art Show – (Bassett Center)

*We had exhibit chairmen (2 artists in charge)

Next, the EPAA in 1976 had Continuous Exhibits and Chairmen throughout El Paso. They were to name a few Providence Hospital, Executive Center, Sun Tower Hospital (now Las Palmas), Western Hills Methodist Church, Sheraton Inn, La Posta Motor Lodge (on Mesa Street), Conte Law Office (on Trawood), Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Law Offices, and various restaurants; one in particular was La Hacienda.

Another event in the summer, we also met at some members' homes. Those being:

Mr. & Mrs. Sanford Cox
 Mr. & Mrs. Ira Braly
 Mr. & Mrs. Bob Ritter
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Shepack

There were covered dish dinners for members and patrons of art to enjoy. Everyone attended brought a dish. I remember one in particular was on the lawn of the artists host with luminaries, mariachis, and 6 ft tables with cloths. Serving was buffet style. It was always a great art gathering occasion. About 60 people attended.

An El Paso Art Association newsletter was published and mailed monthly as is still done today. We also published and gave each member a EPAA Yearbook annually. It told of upcoming exhibits and news. A telephone committee was established to remind the artists of their annual membership dues.

In 1976, we had approximately 325 members. I have most of the Yearbooks. I have been a member since 1973. That's 43 years. What a privilege to be a member of The El Paso Art Association.

–Nanci Fearnow-Bissell, Past President and Member of EPAA