Mining association president gives perspective on spill

By David Futey

On Nov. 5, Stuart Sanderson, president of the Colorado Mining Association, offered a perspective on the Gold King Mine spill into the Animas River and a summary on the status of mining in Colorado during a presentation at the Western Museum of Mining & Industry.

Sanderson said the Gold King Mine, located near Silverton, operated from the late 1800s through 1923 with gold and silver as the predominant minerals mined. As with mines from that era, there were no regulations regarding the responsibilities and recreation procedures after mine operations ceased. Over time mines as the Gold King discharged certain levels of heavy minerals and acidic water, due to water’s reaction with pyrite and oxygen, as hydraulically processes fill the mine tunnels and erode tailings.

Sanderson said the Environmental Protection Agency was assessing the mine’s status when excavation caused a breach to occur, spilling up to 3 million gallons of mine wastewater and tailings into Cement Creek, a tributary of the Animas.

Sanderson suggested that mining companies should be allowed to address situations as the Gold King because they have knowledge and expertise of mine operations and thus can address them. However, laws, regulations and “unlimited liabilities on persons conducting activities” on mine locations dissuade such action. He then highlighted the differences between how modern mining is conducted versus historically and noted mine reclamation projects that have been successfully completed or are ongoing by mining companies such as the Robinson Tailings at the Climax Molybdenum Mine near Leadville.

Related to Colorado mining, Sanderson noted that a common comment he hears is “I did not know there was mining in Colorado.” In fact, Colorado historically and present day offers a diverse rock and mineral production.

Coal, gold, aggregates, gypsum, sodium bicarbonate, malleable, and molybdenum are among the rocks and minerals mined that provide $3 billion in direct sales to Colorado and $9 billion in total value to the Colorado economy. Colorado is first nationally in molybdenum production, fourth in gold and 11th in coal.

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Western Museum of Mining & Industry, Nov. 5

By Janet Sellers

Art saves lives: The U.S. Army and the Monuments Men

For real art success in the making of it or enjoying it, forget inspiration and connect to success with, of all things, real, actual efforts. Practice, action, and introduction is what creates mastery. I have a studio motto that says, “Creativity follows mastery.” It’s an old craft motto from the middle ages era of the craft guilds. It emphasizes that we need to experience or art ourselves to get comfortable being in the art moment, we have creative inspiration, and to reliably get in the groove, we need to be taking action, most prosperously when on a regular basis.

This is true for most human activity, but arguably most important when we wish to generate a project from the get-go such as a drawing or painting, or hobbies and crafts. Even our passive use of art impacts us: When we go to see art, wherever that may be, it can have a life changing effect. Art is often a tracing of the path of human experience and meaning in life. Taking in some art by way of local venues, classes, or courses can make this come true for you.

Venerable collections on the arts spectrum from fine art to antique collectibles attests to the personal importance and meaning people attach to artifacts. Museums and galleries include contemporary and historically revered works because art is socially and culturally important to our quality of life and our sense of self and society.

In October, the four still-living “Monuments Men” (and 350 “civilians soldiers” of architects, curators, artists, historians) to save important artifacts and public art such as architecture, sculpture, bridges and buildings from Nazi seizure and desecration. A book and film with the same name came out in 2009 and 2014, respectively.

During the promotional interviews for the film, actor Bill Murray said that he had had an extraordinary experience in his life with a painting. He had desperately run out of the theater where he was performing in Chicago and got lost. He felt personally destroyed and apparently was thinking of ending his life when he wandered into the Chicago Art Institute and saw a painting that he feels saved his life. The painting is called The Song of a Lark. It shows a young woman working hard in the fields at sunrise and she takes a moment to listen to the song of a lark. He related that at that moment he had an epiphany that if that girl was trying so hard to make a life that he could continue to make a life as well, the painting inspired him to keep on trying and keep on living.

In this season of holiday rush, end of the year work schedules and stresses, with short days and long, dark nights, be sure to take in some art and handcrafts with a friend or loved one at a leisurely pace to refresh your spirit and help stay balanced. Who knows, it may save your day, or save your life, too, in some creative way.

Public art news

The El Paso County Commissioners have just approved installation of a sculpture at the Baptist Road and Old Denver Highway roundabout site. This is the first round-about to have art for the entire I-25 corridor, making it a significant installation and visible landmark for the intersection. Tri-Lakes Views (TLV) has been approved to commission the art and is currently seeking sponsorship for the proposed sculpture to be created by Revson-Marron artist, David Swanson. TLV, a 501(C)(3) organization, has been bringing art to the Tri-Lakes area since 2003 and currently holds an annual exhibit of public art, this year installing 13 sculptures throughout the area, with five permanent local pieces. For sponsorship details, contact TLV President Sky Hall at (719) 491-3638 or at skyhall@mac.com, or fundraising Chair Dr. Betty Konarski at (719) 481-2769 or bkonarski@earthlink.net.

Exhibits this month


Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) member show “Oh, my!” group of 20 artists, show runs through Jan. 2. Call for Artists: “Visions of Light” early entry ends Dec. 12. Jan. 16 – Entry deadline. Photographers of all levels are invited to submit their original fine art photography for consideration. The VOL Exhibition is a juried photographic exhibition of fine art. Details at www.trilakesarts.org. Shows at TLCA, 364 Highway 105, Palmer Lake.

Bella Art and Frame Gallery exhibit of their gallery of artists for December. Over a dozen artists each have a nook with their artwork for sale, as well as a gift shop with cards, jewelry, glassworks, and small works, 183 Washinton St., Monument.

Holiday Pop Up Shops—Kind of like a last-minute trunk show. Pop up shops are local, last minute trunk show type venues that just “pop up” out of seemingly nowhere and discovered by word of mouth. Some are holiday craft marts this time of year. You can google them for the Front Range and Tri-Lakes areas, or check out this Facebook page for a fashionably incomplete list: go to www.Facebook.com and look up Local-Pop-Up-Holiday-Shops.

Janet Sellers is a Colorado artist and art teacher. Her artworks and public art sculptures are in exhibitions in Colorado city and museum venues, and throughout the Tri-Lakes area. Sellers lives in Woodmoor. She can be reached at JanetSellers@OCN.me.