

LOCAL NEWS

CHANDLER ARTIST

FROM PAGE 1

Chandler artist’s art has been featured on official Venezuelan stamps

her. Little did they know that years later, Venezuela would also become a country that would suffer hardship under President Hugo Chavez, and that the country would be in the world spotlight today for its continued tumultuous political climate long after Chavez’s death.

According to Monteiga, her father also sent her to Venezuela hoping that she would forget about her then-boyfriend, Jose Fernandez, of whom her father did not approve. Her father’s plan did not work and Jose eventually followed Monteiga to Venezuela where the two were married in 1962 and had two children, Marcia and Alejandro.

Although Monteiga had an interest in art from a young age, it was during her adult years she received much of her formal education. She studied in Caracas, Venezuela under famous artists such as J.A. Aranz and Dr. Pedro Centeno Vallenilla, working within many different mediums, such as oil paint, wood, bronze, stone, cement and stained glass.

Art has been a part of Monteiga’s life for 45 years and it is one of the most important things to her.

“It is something that has filled my life even though I have never been able to devote as much time as I wanted,” she said.

In Venezuela, Monteiga is most notably known for her oil paintings of the indigenous

tribes of the country. She extensively researched each tribe in order to accurately portray their culture in her work and she was the first artist to ever paint them in Venezuela.

“I felt I had to paint them because I felt like I was one of them,” she said. “I painted the entire collection of 47 Chiefs of Venezuela, and it is the only one that exists.”

Because it was the only such collection in existence, the government classified Monteiga’s art as a national treasure. So when she and her family decided they had to leave in 2010 due to economic and political crisis, she faced great opposition from the government who would not allow her to take her art with her.

“The government would not allow anything of value to leave the country and that included all of her art work,” said Carrera-Fernandez, Monteiga’s daughter. “They would not allow Venezuelan bolivar [the country’s currency] to be exchanged for American dollars and shipped out, which is what we needed for my parents to leave.”

Not willing to part with her life’s work, Monteiga had to devise a plan to smuggle her own art out of Venezuela. Piece-by-piece she removed each painting from its frame, gently rolled them up and sent them one-by-one as “gifts” to family members over the

years.

“There are two things in my life: art and family,” Monteiga said. “I could not leave the family for art, and I could not leave the art either because it fills me a lot and everything I saw and felt I wanted to capture in the canvases.”

Monteiga and her family had to leave behind much of what they had in order to come to the United States. Her husband Jose stayed behind for four years to try to sell his business, but in the end he had to let it go for a very cheap price so he could join the rest of the family. To this day, the Monteiga-Fernandez family have yet to recover all of their family’s financial assets from the country.

Originally, Monteiga’s son was attending college in California in 1982 while the rest of the family was back in Venezuela. Monteiga’s daughter, Marcia, first came to stay with her brother in 2004. It was then that Marcia met her husband, Jose Carrera, who had a sister who lived in Chandler. Marcia had concerns about living in a fast-paced, crime-ridden California environment, so she told her husband that she wanted to move to Chandler where he had family. In 2010, Monteiga was able to join her daughter in Chandler. After living in a house in town for some time,



Artist Primi Monteiga sits in her study, where awards hang on the walls along with some of her original paintings, in a chair she brought to the United States from her home in Venezuela. To see more of the artist’s work, go to our Facebook or Instagram sites. S. Martinez

they were able to move to the acreage that they call home today.

For Monteiga, leaving Venezuela so many years ago was a difficult choice.

“For me it was very sad to leave Venezuela because I had lived many years there and I left all my friends,” she said. “It was very sad for me to leave everything, it was very hard. I came to a strange country, my children were here, and thank you God, now I feel happy. I love living in this rural area of Minnesota because people are very kind and special like family. They treat everyone very well. One is calm, one

breathes pure air. I feel at home. I feel very good.”

Even at the age of 78, Monteiga continues to create art in her rural studio, with some of her work appearing locally, like the painting of a fish she did for Lonnie Clark, the president of the State Bank of Chandler, and the stained glass art that can be found in Saint Mary’s Church in Worthington.

Her artistic accomplishments go beyond painting and sculpture. In the past, the Venezuelan government commissioned her five times to have her work printed as stamps for the country. A lim-

ited number of stamps were printed, and only 120 collector’s books were produced. At the present time, Monteiga is working to have a book of her work published.

Monteiga would like for all of her neighbors to know that they are welcome to pay her a visit.

“I want my neighbors to know that they are welcome to come and meet me and see my art,” she said. “I want to share it with them. I would be pleased to meet you and share with you my work and the joy that it brings me.”

VETERANS

FROM PAGE 1

People can donate items or gift cards to help veterans in need

to the purpose of helping veterans in need or homeless veterans,” she said.

Under the new program, people can drop-off gift cards for gas or food at Schuch’s office at 811 Fifth St. SE. No cash will be accepted. Schuch will keep the gift cards in a secure location and will track how much is coming in and going out.

Veterans in need can contact her at her office or by calling 507-825-1183 and explain their need. The individuals will have to show proof that they are a veteran and of their need. She said recipients

will sign a document indicating that they will use the gift cards for the intended purpose of food or gas. They must be from Pipestone County or have previously been a client of her office. Their names will be kept confidential.

Schuch said the program is not intended for veterans to use on an ongoing basis, and it’s not just for homeless veterans.

It is intended to meet the needs of veterans while she tries to find other resources to help them, or for veterans who have gainful employment but have found them-

selves in a tough spot due to a car repair or something unexpected. Some programs available through her office are based on income, she said, and might not be available to help with unexpected circumstances.

“If you make too much money they might not help you because on paper it looks good,” she said. “I don’t necessarily believe that everything is as cut and dry as they see it on paper.”

There are other organizations to help veterans in need, but having the gift cards available at her office will enable

her to provide that help more quickly.

Schuch said other types of donations could be accepted to meet specific needs. Late last year, for example, someone donated walkers, a wheelchair and some other medical equipment. She’s stored the items in the hall near her office until she finds a veteran who can use them. If people have something they no longer need and want to donate it, they should contact her first due to limited space.



Someone donated these walkers and other medical equipment to the Pipestone County Veterans Service Office (VSO) so they could be used by a veteran. People who want to donate to help local veterans can also give gift cards for needs such as food or gas to the VSO through a new program. K. Kuphal

What is REAL ID?

Passed by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act establishes minimum security standards for state-issued driver’s licenses and ID cards. The Act refers to federal anti-terrorism laws and regulations that control access to federally regulated commercial aircraft, including domestic flights, and federal facilities requiring identification to enter, such as military bases or nuclear power facilities.

The Act prohibits federal agencies like the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) from accepting cards for official purposes from states that do not meet minimum security standards.

Minnesota was deemed fully compliant with the law in November 2018 by the Department of Homeland Security.

-Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety

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REAL ID

FROM PAGE 1

There are now three types of Minnesota licenses: standard, enhanced and Real ID

visit an office. This currently accounts for about 60 percent of applications, she said.

If a person has applied for one of the new cards -- an enhanced license or card, or a REAL ID license or card -- the wait is longer due to the review that must be done on those new applications by the Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services division (DPS-DVS) headquarters.

“This can take between several weeks to several months,” Leonard said by email.

While Leonard did not answer whether the department was experiencing a backlog of applications, she did say the DVS is processing standard and REAL ID applications dated Nov. 6, 2018 and enhanced driver’s licenses dated Oct. 23, 2018.

“Applicants walk out of a driver’s license office with an application receipt that is valid for 120 days,” Leonard said. “This was extended (from 60 days) in September, prior to the new computer system launch on Oct. 1, 2018,

to ensure that any increased workload at DVS, influx of customers or other unforeseen circumstances do not inconvenience Minnesotans or driver’s license agents.”

The application receipt serves as a temporary license regardless of which license someone has applied for and is valid for driving privileges and identification -- when used with the expired or voided receipt -- until the new license arrives.

“If someone’s receipt is about to expire, we ask them to visit their local driver’s license office to extend the expiration date,” Leonard said.

Reisch said people have been stopping by or calling on a regular basis inquiring about delayed receipt of their driver’s licenses.

“People say they applied all the way back to June or July,” Reisch said.

He said he’s been able to resolve issues for people waiting for a license and encouraged those who need assistance to contact his office at 507-825-1130.

Scholastic Book Fair helps local classrooms

The Scholastic Book Fair will be at Hill School Tuesday, Feb. 12, 3:30 -8 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 13, 3:30-5:30 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 14, 3:30-8 p.m.

Parents, grandparents and others who want to help keep children reading are invited to attend. There will be a large selection of books available to buy. This year we are also promoting shopping online at our fair at <http://www.scholastic.com/bf/dol-sonhillelementaryschool1>.

The school receives credit for each book bought. After the Book Fair is over each classroom purchases books to increase their classroom libraries with the credits our school receives from the sales. It is a great fundraiser for literacy in our schools, so plan on attending or shopping online.

COLD WEATHER

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The coldest temperature ever recorded in Pipestone was 44 degrees below zero on Christmas Eve 1983

doesn’t currently have that data set of historic highs and lows, Gillispie said.

The cold shock came when air from the arctic polar vortex rode the jet stream into the United States last week for several days. The polar vortex is a large area of low pressure and cold air that surrounds the Earth’s north and south poles in a counter-clockwise flow that helps keep the colder air close to the poles, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. “The polar vortex itself is always at the [north] pole, it’s just the dip in the jet stream that allows it to dip down,” Gillispie said. “It’s not like this thing up at the pole that drops down. The polar vortex itself is still up at the pole but the air around that dips farther south.”

When that dip does occur, cows at least have 1-to-2-inch fur coats and a normal body temperature of 102 degrees that enables them to endure the cold as long as they’re kept dry, out of the wind and are given enough calories in their diet, said Ian Cunningham, a local producer who keeps beef cattle just south of Pipestone. “For our cow herd, we just

made sure they had fresh bedding and extra energy in their ration and were where they were able to get protection,” Cunningham said.

The Cunningham operation has an open shed for the younger cattle, but it’s more optimal given the size of their barn to have the cattle outside given the steam and ammonia generated when the cattle are crowded together.

“It’s been how we do it, and it’s been successful,” Cunningham said. “Other people do it other ways.”

He said he was thankful the extreme cold was short-lived, and that on his farm they don’t have any newborns yet, which are about a month away.

“That’s a whole layer of concern,” Cunningham said. “They don’t have a long coat and they’re wet when they’re born and if they get hypothermic, it’s a difficult situation.”

Though keeping livestock safe during extreme weather requires attention and some extra care, the challenges for producers are similar to those experienced by all others.

“Our main challenge is getting the equipment to run when it’s so darn cold,” Cunningham said.

Auction Calendar

FRIDAY, February 8, 10 a.m., Holland, Minn. JD & Cynthia Bobb, owners. Land, 2 parcels, Pipestone County, 40 acres cropland & 123.70 acres cropland, pasture. Chuck Sut-

ton Auction Service. **SUNDAY, February 17, 11 a.m.,** Pipestone, Minn. Estate of Lawrence DeWitte, Pipestone & Others, owners. Livermont Auction Service.