

VAL Artist of the Month for July

Gordon Beale



My entry into the arts came rather late in life.

After retirement from the industrial world, came the move to Florida with trips to Arizona to visit my mother a couple of times a year. This offered the opportunity to explore Arizona with its ghost towns and mining communities. The experience stirred the recollection and fascination of old cowboy stories and movies from my youth.

The thought occurred to write a book about saloons -- after all, saloons and churches were the first public buildings in the west. Knowing nothing about writing, I solicited the help of a friend who had some writing experience and retired not far from Mom. My friend is a real sport and organized day trips to places of interest. On my visits we would search out unique saloons to chat with bartenders, patrons and owners as well as visit museums and libraries. We heard many stories, some probably embellished or legend, but all were very interesting.

We took photos of the places visited to compliment the book. The photos were a good idea but the quality of work, people

waving, pickup trucks and motorcycles didn't blend into the cowboy stuff, plus time was limited.

So an art endeavor became an option. I took classes on "Pen and Ink" from Paul Klein at The Villages Lifelong Learning Center. Armed with the fundamentals and techniques taught by Paul, it worked. The drawings, though far from professional, did bear a resemblance to the subject and were used in the book.

I found out this drawing thing was fun and that's how it all started. I have since joined the VAA and VAL, participated in their art shows and have received much encouragement and assistance from members of both organizations.

My medium has remained exclusively pen and ink and the subject is usually a structure with an interesting story.

One of my favorite drawings is shown in this photo.



Eds. Note: Gordon Beale's art will be on display at the Spanish Springs Citizens Bank during the month of July.