

High Plains Art Club learns of Rockwell

"The Life of Artist-Illustrator Norman Rockwell" was the theme of the program presented at High Plains Art Club at their meeting on May 9, at Southwind Plaza in Colby. Program chairman was art club member, Ruth Hughes.

Hughes informed the group Rockwell's admirers were in awe of his uncanny ability to portray character mood, composition and lighting in his work. She said his real popularity though, derives from the science of familiarity each American recognizes in his illustrations that resulted from a set of external circumstances that existed at just the right time in Rockwell's life.

"At that time," Hughes said, "newspapers were the main vehicle of mass communication and the people of the 20th century held a special interest in their forbears of the 19th century."

Also, that was the advent of certain new technologies, notably the technique of photoengraving and its derivatives, the use of halftone screen and the development of four-color processing. In combination these circumstances gave illustrators such as Rockwell access to a larger, more receptive audience than ever before."

Rockwell was born in New York City on Feb. 3, 1894.

Norman started drawing as a

child while his father read Dickens to him. In 1903 Norman's family moved to Mamaroneck, N.Y., a rural community to which Norman was well suited and, which he also reflected in much of his early works."

Hughes said, "At the age of 14, in 1907, Norman began the study of art at the Chase School of Fine Art and Applied Art in New York. He earned some of his tuition for his classes by teaching sketching to a friend of his, actress Ethel Barrymore and had a commission to design Christmas cards for Mrs. Arnold Constable.

"At the age of 15," Hughes continued, "he left high school to become a fulltime student at the National Academy School in New York. Several months later he transferred to the Art Student's League, the most liberal art school in the country."

At 22, Rockwell submitted three of his works to *Saturday Evening Post*. Hughes said, "Two were oils, one of a boy pushing a baby carriage and being teased by his baseball friends, the other of a children's backyard circus. The third," she said, "was of an elderly man playing baseball with his children."

Rockwell then traveled to Paris to study. After working there for a while he realized his attempts to

master Modern Art were unsuccessful. Hughes said the end of World War II inspired some of Rockwell's most popular covers — illustrations of the returning military troops. He then joined the faculty of the newly established Famous Artist's School in Westport, Conn.

Rockwell hired his neighbors to pose for him in order to construct the scenes he wanted and then he took a photograph and painted from that.

Today, many, well-known artist paint from photographs they have taken. "Many art critics felt, at that time, that one was not really an artist if they painted from photographs like Rockwell did and, therefore, gave him poor reviews for that reason," Hughes said.

"Perhaps this was the reason," Hughes said, "that Rockwell became discouraged about his work. He also had many personal problems about that time."

"Finally, after 47 years, *The Saturday Evening Post* editors decided they no longer wanted Rockwell as their cover artist. After that it wasn't long until the Post went under and stopped publishing," Hughes added.

Norman Rockwell died in his home in Stockbridge in 1978.

Art club hostess for the month,

Rosie VanDyke, served refreshments. During the business portion of the art club meeting it was determined the club could not afford the cost of making calendars of their artwork to sell. It was unanimously voted to forget the calendar project. Vice President Margaret Denner, suggested that a collection be taken each meeting to help increase their funds. All agreed.

President Marlene Carpenter, announced that the Goodland Grind and Gallery will soon be open and that she signed the club up to have a show there at a future time. If paintings are sold, the shop receives 20 percent. Carpenter will also have her own one-person show there. Each show will be exhibited for one month.

Carpenter also announced that the Sherman County Economic Development Committee was to meet June 13 and that she would like to make arrangements for the art club members to attend their artist's roundtable in order to get ideas for possibly starting something similar for Thomas County. Other club members were enthusiastic about this idea.

Secretary Marj Brown announced a Bob Ross workshop to be held in Logan in June. Treasurer Bev Kern displayed literature about several artist's magazines contests.

Kansas on Times Square

TOPEKA (AP) — A new commercial conceived as part the Kansas "as big as you think" campaign will hit a big screen in the Big Apple this week, where officials hope it will promote tourism and burnish the Sunflower State's image.

The 30-second advertisement is designed to capture the attention of 1.5 million or so New York residents and visitors who wander through Times Square each day. The ads will appear amid coverage of soccer's World

Cup, on a screen controlled by CBS.

The commercial features several scenic northeast Kansas vistas and is designed to showcase the state's wide open spaces, while suggesting that Kansas also is a wired, sophisticated place.

It's the latest step in a campaign from January 2005 by the Department of Commerce, hoping to build Kansans' pride in their home state, then get outsiders feeling good about the state.

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