

# History of Chula Vista Art Guild

by Eldora V. Moses 1915 -2010

The Chula Vista Art Guild was founded in April 1945. And, was started by one of the great "California Impressionist" artists, Alfred R. Mitchell. At that time, some of the California Impressionists were just as famous as their European counterparts

Alfred Mitchell lived in San Diego and had many local art students. Since a number of his students lived in Chula Vista, he would come to town to teach and paint with them. During this time, a very large art show was sponsored in north San Diego. Many San Diego area artists entered the show, including Mitchell and the Chula Vista Impressionists. Surprisingly, none of the traditional or impressionistic paintings were accepted. Only abstract artwork was juried into the show.

Mitchell and his impressionist friends decided to have a show of their own and invited every artist they knew to submit their paintings. They found a gallery about a mile away from the abstract show. To everyone's great joy, thousands of people attended and loved the impressionist's show and ignored the juried abstract venue!

The first few years were wonderful. Mitchell knew many great artists, including Europeans visiting him and in-turn, visiting the Guild. They were generous with their time and talent and gave demonstrations to Guild members.

The organization became very active. The mayor, city council, and residents of Chula Vista supported the artists and artwork was displayed in several galleries sponsored by the community. Rohr Park, Memorial Park, and Downtown were three of the gallery locations. The Guild grew to over 100 members at its pinnacle.

## The Shows

When I joined the Chula Vista Art Guild in 1964, I found it was a very active group. All active members participated in 1-person shows that took place in the guild's gallery for a 2-week period. Each show had about 25 paintings and was open to the public on the afternoons of Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday from Noon to 4 p.m.

There were larger shows during the year such as a juried show in the spring, a Popular Award Show in the autumn, a children's show usually in the month of May, and an Associate Member Show during the summer.

The juried show had three judges: one judge from Chula Vista (sometimes the Mayor), one judge who was an artist, and one judge who was a citizen at large. Categories for the show were Landscape, Seascape, Portraits, and Still Life. Winners were awarded ribbons.

Members of the Guild met twice a month -the first Wednesday was a business meeting and the third Wednesday was a social with an art demonstration and a small snack such as coffee and cookies.

Paintings were shown in several banks in the area, restaurants, civic buildings, and the library. At the time, there were only two artists who painted in watercolor, all others painted with oil paints.

## Incorporation

In 1965 CVAG artists became interested in the Guild becoming a non-profit corporation. On December 8, 1965, Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of California and Chula Vista Art Guild , Incorporated was born.

As set forth in the documents, the primary purpose of the Guild is to operate an art society devoted to the service of culture and artistic pursuits and is authorized to conduct business in a manner that will accomplish that purpose.

The first directors appear to have developed a sound foundation for CVAG. Today, so many years later, the Guild continues the tradition of showing artwork at local venues, hosting visiting artist demonstrations, and providing art programs to the community.

