

BELOIT ART CENTER PROMOTING 'PLEIN AIR'

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Ryan Silvola/Beloit Daily News Artist John Hines touches up a Plein Air painting he recently finished of Riverside Park. Hines has organized a Plein Air group that meets on Saturdays at different locations throughout the Stateline Area.

BELOIT - Plein Air painting is coming back to Beloit after about a three year absence.

The Beloit Art Center Plein Air group started this spring, and organizer John Hines hopes to inspire others to join the outdoor painting craze with a non-competitive approach.

"(Plein air) has been described as the new golf," Hines said.

The Friends of RiverFront last hosted their Edge of the Rock Plein Air event in 2015, and Hines wanted to provide artists with another outlet.

Hines said for almost every Saturday in May and June, the group has set a location and time to gather and paint what they see. The "Plein Air" genre's only restriction is that it must depict a scene that is outdoors.

Artists commonly paint landscapes, Hines said, but Plein Air can describe any painting showing an outdoor scene.

Hines said all who are interested are welcome. So far about 13 local artists have expressed interest, including some local high school students.

The group collects no fees and provides no materials.

"You can get some equipment and it'll last you forever. It'll even cost less than golf," Hines joked.

Hines picked up painting two years ago after retiring as a pilot. He attempts to treat painting like a full time job and even has a studio in the Beloit Art Center. Hines has mostly painted portraits until recently he fell in love with Plein Air.

He describes this style of painting as "sketchy," because it's done so quickly and therefore cannot be as detailed.

"If you paint outdoors it's kind of rough," Hines said.

Though painting the outdoors can take artists all over the world, Hines believes there's a lot of beauty to be captured with his brush in Beloit.

A good example of Plein Air painting is currently on display at the Beloit Art Center. The center's May show, "Travel Tales," highlights Chicago-based artist Nancie King Mertz's work. King Mertz has traveled to over 20 countries to paint in the Plein Air style.

The group meets to paint for about two to four hours. This Saturday, the group will join the Wisconsin Plein Air Painters Association (WIPAPA) at the Northwind Perennial Farm in Burlington, Wisconsin.

The group then will be back in the Stateline Area at Nature at the Confluence in South Beloit at 8 a.m. on June 2 for paintings of nature trails, railroads, water, bridges and more.

The group currently has locations planned through the end of June, but Hines plans on scheduling locations through the end of October. For more information, email Hines at jhines6777@Yahoo.com or visit beloitartcenter.com.

