

Director has nourished gallery for past decade

Although he began his career as a mechanic, Jeff Brooks now oversees the Lincoln Gallery in Loveland

By KENNETH JESSEN
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Jeff Brooks knows the hardships of growing up in eastern Colorado. His home was near Sheridan Lake in Kiowa County, not far from the Kansas line. His family endured the dust bowl of 1963, years of sustained drought and winter blizzards. Brooks had artistic talent, but there weren't any art teachers in the area or even art classes at his school. He started his working career as a mechanic but maintained an interest in art.

Brooks suffered a debilitating back injury while on a job in Greeley. This forced him to give up his career as a mechanic. While recovering, he thought about what he could do with his talent. With a twinkle in his eye, he tells of watching popular television personality and

painter Bob Ross. Ross had a certain heavy-handed style and frequently used brushes better suited to painting the side of a barn rather than a canvas. Nevertheless, Brooks learned that surprisingly realistic scenes could be created quickly.

This led Brooks to begin taking classes from area artists, developing his skills as he progressed. After joining the Thompson Valley Art League, he worked his way up, defining a job as director of the Lincoln Gallery in downtown Loveland. The organization purchased the building at 429 N. Lincoln Ave. in 1991, and now it needed someone to keep the store open during regular business hours. The job also came with less-glamorous work such as shoveling snow, building maintenance and plenty of paperwork.

Classes are held in the gallery,



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Jeff Brooks is the director of the Lincoln Gallery in downtown Loveland. Under his direction, the gallery has grown in its variety of works by local artists. Some of Brooks' paintings can be seen in the background.

and visitors have the opportunity to watch paintings progress to their final stages. Over the past dozen years as director, Brooks has watched many artists mature and grow. He has also improved the gallery in terms of its range of works, and it now carries not only paintings but fine art photography, a variety of ceramics, note cards and prints.

In addition to its daytime hours, the gallery is open once a month on summer evenings for Friday's "Night on the Town." For those looking for something special, the Lincoln

Gallery has become a place to shop.

Sales certainly enter the picture, but the largest source of income for the Thompson Valley Art League is the yearly arts and crafts show. This coming year, it will be held Aug. 9-10 in North Lake Park at the same time as Sculpture in the Park and the Loveland Sculpture Invitational.

Coordinating this event keeps Brooks busy with many vendors coming in from around the United States. Hosting shows at Barnes & Noble is another of his activities.