

'The Artist at Home and Abroad'

The American Swedish Institute exhibits the work of Dewey Albinson, Great-uncle of local Artist Sketch Gustafson

By Paul J. Seeling

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MINNEAPOLIS – It was a pic-

turesque spring evening last Friday, a perfect night to head west across the river to Minneapolis to look at some beautiful landscape paintings and hear the story of the artistic journey of Swedish American artist Ernest Dewey Albinson (1898-

1971). The American Swedish Institute (ASI) celebrated the opening of the exhibit of A Minnesota Artist's Quest at Home and Abroad: Dewey Albinson, with a reception followed by a presentation by three family members, one of whom was Dewey's nephew Ray Gustafson Sr. Ray, Senior, is our Spring Valley's Ray 'Sketch'



Ray Gustafson Sr. with cousin Leone Stein, along with Shannon and Sketch Gustafson at the exhibit of A Minnesota Artist's Quest at Home and Abroad: Dewey Albinson, at the American Swedish Institute last Friday evening. Photo by Paul J. Seeling

Gustafson's father.

The presentation by Sketch's dad, Dewey's daughter Leone Stein and son Tawn Albinson, each shared memories of the artist's

family life and professional life as a painter of Minnesota landscapes and scenes inspired by travels in

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~~through the plant. You may even get to make a music request!~~

eled abroad to study in Paris, taking painting trips to Italy and Spain. He studied under Cubists André Lhote

Mexico in 1950.

It was there that Dewey Albinson began a series of ambitious paintings depicting the adventures of the literary Don Quixote as well as continuing to paint landscapes.

The family recalled that the artist was a colorful six foot, four inch tall dandy figure who enjoyed fine clothes, but could rarely afford them.

They spoke of his passionate opinions about communism (he was against it), art, the environment (and especially those who would dare to build Highway 65 for access to Lake Superior) and religion. He despised organized religion, but nonetheless painted numerous scenes in which a church is the focus of attention.

Dewey Albinson described himself as a "conditioned hermit," he loved the wilderness, while he also relished the company of other people. But above all he was an artist who simply had to be a painter. He included a palette or easel in many of his paintings as a symbol of his profession.

He died in Mexico in 1971. His ashes were placed in the St. Croix River at Taylors Falls.

The occasion of the reception and presentation was an opportunity for the Albinsons and Gustafsons to reunite with family and friends as they paid homage to their creative relative.

"It is wonderful to see his work being displayed again and available to the public. It is very inspiring as an artist," said Spring Valley cartoon artist Sketch Gustafson who is Dewey Albinson's great nephew.

The exhibit of A Minnesota Artist's Quest at Home and Abroad: Dewey Albinson, includes nearly 50 of Albinson's works from the private collection of 14 family members, many of which have never been shown before publicly. The exhibit will be on display at ASI until May 31. The ASI is open to the public and located at 2600 Park Avenue in Minneapolis, Minnesota, if you would like more information you may call (612) 871-4907.

~~...Animal Consignment cont. from Page 1~~

~~Bazille. The inspiration for the sale was another fund raising idea to provide money for the purchase of new pens for the sheep, hogs, and goats displayed in the Drewske Building in Ellsworth.~~

~~If you would like to donate to the Pierce County "Adopt-a-Pen" fundraiser, you may send your donation to Pierce County Livestock Fundraiser Committee, Treasurer Roy Timm, N8228 230th St. Spring~~



Sketch Gustafson and his sister Debbie Rutledge enjoyed the opportunity to get together and view the collection of paintings by their great uncle Dewey Albinson. Photo by Paul J. Seeling

...Dewey Albinson places cont. from Page 1

France, Spain, Italy, Quebec, and Mexico.

It was interesting to learn about the son of immigrants who met in America after their separate journeys from Sweden. They settled in the Minneapolis area in the 1890's and thrived. Dewey Albinson was the second of five children, four of them boys.

Dewey was a golf caddie who at age fifteen had an encounter with two women golfers-one of them was an artist and she gave him brushes and a box of paints. This would determine the course of his life. That was in 1913, and that year he took his first trip to Taylors Falls, Minnesota, an area that inspired some of his best work for almost two decades.

In 1915 through 1919, Albinson attended the Minneapolis School of Fine Art, the forerunner of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and then spent a year studying at the art Students League. His first to Grand Portage area by Lake Superior was in 1922, during which time he painted the Witch Tree for the first time, creating three or four oils and several sketches of it on subsequent visits. One of his Witch Tree paintings would become one of his most famous.

In the early 1920's the artist trav-

eled and Roger Bissière. Cubism and Cézanne remained the main influences of his work.

Shortly after his return he eloped with Evelyn Antoinette Ahlen and they would have two daughters.

In 1929 he returned to Italy with his wife and two young daughters for two years.

By the mid-1930's, Albinson had already achieved recognized success with shows in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and the Twin Cities. During the Depression, Albinson made a living by various means, including a commission to paint scenes of northern Minnesota for a railroad company, work on a Public Arts Project, and serving as State Director of WPA art centers.

Albinson who was always searching for new landscapes to paint moved his family to Quebec, Canada in 1939.

They returned to Minneapolis after a reenergizing year for the artist, but his marriage had become stressed and separated and then divorced. Albinson would become estranged from his daughters, not seeing one ever again and the other not for twenty-six years.

At age 46 Albinson met the lovely twenty-four year old Myra Cerutti, an artist also and they married. Shortly after the birth of their son Tawn the family moved to Jalisco,