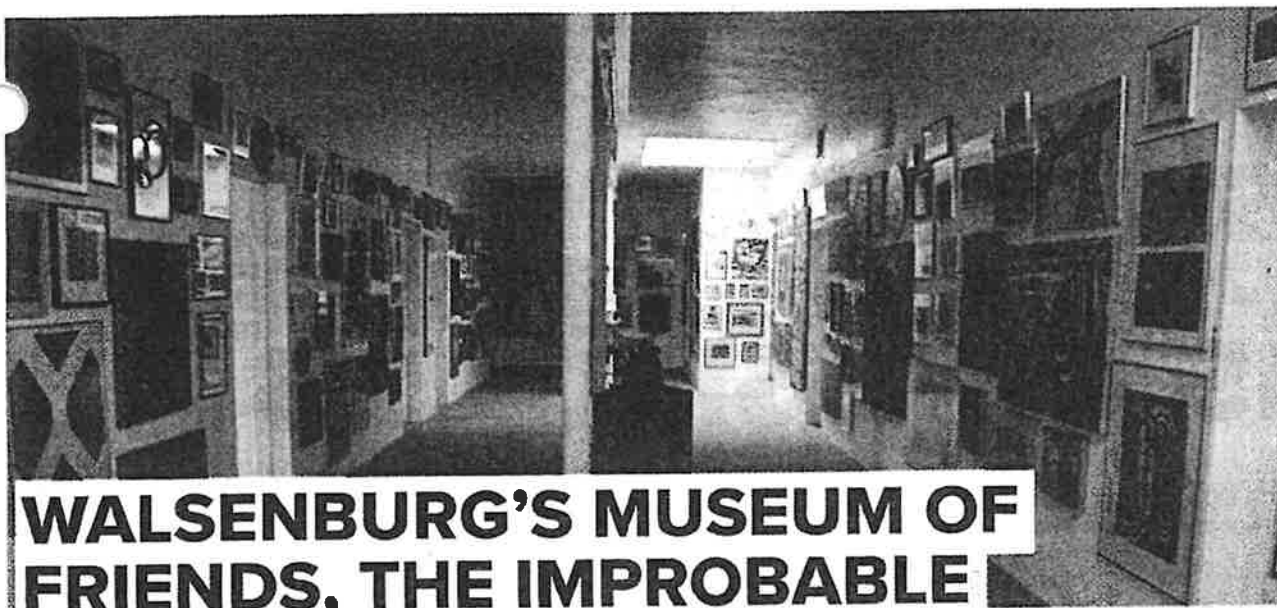




WALSENBURG'S MUSEUM OF FRIENDS, THE IMPROBABLE GALLERY TURNS 10

IN A TRUE SPIRIT OF THE REMNANTS OF THE 1960S HUEFANO COUNTY HIPPIE INFLUENCE, THE MUSEUM OF FRIENDS IS AN OASIS OF FRIENDSHIP CENTERED AROUND ART. THE MUSEUM OF FRIENDS IS CURRENTLY EXHIBITING THE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHN WARK, AND THE ILLUSTRATIONS AND ARTWORK OF BOBBY VALENTINE THROUGH OCTOBER. (PHOTO MARIA BERGER)

When the hippie communes popped up around Southern Colorado in the late 1960s, so did a spirit of interconnectivity best on display at the classy MoF.

By Tasha Brandstatter

The small, working-class town of Walsenburg, Colorado, seems an unlikely location for a top-notch contemporary art museum crammed with works by over 600 important and influential artists. But the charming Museum of Friends is just such a place, a hidden gem on Walsenburg's main drag that's a must-visit for anyone with an interest in the arts.

Many of the best museums in the world—the British Museum, the Borghese Gallery, the Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian, and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, just to name a few—started out as personal collections, and the Museum of Friends is no different. Co-founders Brendt Berger and Maria Cocchiarelli-Berger call their museum the Museum of Friends because it consists of pieces given to them or the museum by fellow artists. Berger and Cocchiarelli have lived all over the country, from Maine to Hawaii, and their collection reflects the diversity of their friends, acquaintances, and experiences, accumulated over the course of 50-odd years working in the arts.

Many of the artists represented at the Museum of Friends were active in the numerous “hippie” communes that popped up all over Southern Colorado in the 1960s and ‘70s. That’s no coincidence: Berger visited Drop City, the first rural commune in the US, in the 1960s and participated briefly in its offshoot, Libre, near Gardner. Sketches, photos, and paintings of the communes’ signature geodesic domes

are scattered throughout the second-floor gallery. The fact that so many pieces in the Museum document the artistic styles and movements coming out of these communes makes the Museum of Friends the first and only museum of the countercultural movement in the U.S.

But you don’t have to be into counterculture to enjoy a visit to the Museum of Friends! There’s truly something for everyone, from luminous watercolors to vintage posters, color field paintings to collages, lithographic prints and drawings, artifacts from the South Pacific and Asia, found art sculptures, and even an art library. The collection includes Guggenheim Fellows, National Medal of Arts recipients, reality TV stars (Peregrine Honig from Bravo’s *Work of Art: Search for the Next Great Artist*), naturalists, abstractionists, expressionists, surrealists, and artists who don’t fall into any –ism at all. You might recognize pieces by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Christo, Denver native Dennis Oppenheim, Linda Fleming, and NYT cartoonist Richard Mock. But there’s an even greater chance you’ll fall in love with an artist whose work you’ve never seen before.

That’s because the Museum of Friends’ focus isn’t on big names or price points, but interconnection. Every piece in the collection has a story attached to it, and Berger and Cocchiarelli are more than happy to share those memories with visitors on guided tours. It’s those links and personal relationships that make the Museum of Friends special, underscoring the true power of art: its ability to form connections between people and create a sense of community.

“Art is so heavily focused on monetary value today,” Berger told us. “That’s why you see the

same artists over and over in exhibitions, no matter where you go in the world. We wanted to bypass that and take money out of the equation. Everything here is given or traded by people who put their lives on the line to create art. It’s about what art really is, a passion and a labor of love.”

The Museum’s philosophy of openness and fostering community extends to its entrance fee—donation only—and its outreach programs, like the colorful painted planters you can see along Walsenburg’s Main and 6th Streets. The Museum also exhibits local artists. Currently on view are Pueblo painter Bobby Valentine and aerial photographer John Wark, as well as Cocchiarelli herself, who’s showing a collection of “mini” paintings along with mini collages by Matt Gonzalez and mini abstract watercolors by Harry Tsuchidana.

While Walsenburg may seem an improbable place for a contemporary art museum, after almost a decade the Museum of Friends is going strong. Berger and Cocchiarelli will celebrate the Museum’s tenth anniversary on October 19th, and have secured grants to renovate the 100-year-old historic building for structural integrity and easier access to the second floor.

Art can mean many things to many people, but it’s the personal stories and connections that bring a photo or drawing or canvas to life. That’s exactly what makes the Museum of Friends such a positive experience: the sense of learning, community, and friendship that infuses the whole museum and makes it a must-see for art lovers of every stripe.

Bobby Valentine: *Magical Paintings* and John Wark: *Aerial Photographs* will be on view at the Museum of Friends’ ground floor through October 28, 2017. Minis will be up on the second floor through September 30th. For more information, visit www.museumoffriends.org.

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Arts Scene

Museum of Friends kicks off fundraiser to restore historic building

by Renee Rinehart

Museum of Friends in Walsenburg is kicking off a fundraising campaign to support a grant to renovate the 100-year-old historic building at Sixth St. and Main St. in conjunction with the tenth anniversary of the museum.

A celebration of the tenth anniversary is set for Saturday, Oct. 28 at 2 p.m. music, tours and refreshments.

Museum of Friends co-founders Brendt Berger and Maria Cocchiarelli said matching dollars of \$45,000 are being raised to support a State Historic Fund grant of \$199,667 to renovate the building.

Plans are set to hold a "Save the Roof and Dick" Gala Benefit on Saturday, December 2, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. with Go Ask Alys' Catering, live music and a huge art sale of local and national artists.

The renovation plans include four phases and will cost approximately \$1.5 million.

"The primary goal is to complete the physical repair and rehabilitation needs of the structure to ensure its long-term preservation as a historic resource while re-purposing it to jump start economic revitalization in an economically distressed downtown through collaborative efforts of the arts and historic preservation," Cocchiarelli said.

The first phase primarily addresses items in poor condition requiring immediate attention. Projects include rehabilitation of masonry foundation walls, installation of an elevator, and rehabilitation of the transom area above the storefront, and restoration to the original glass storefronts and stairways. "This

would bring the building back to its original intent as designed by prominent architect Francis O. Cooper," said Berger.

Phase two includes the remainder of critical work including foundation water-proofing, rehabilitation of the roof drainage system and rehabilitation of skylights.

The third phase includes mechanical, electrical and plumbing work, replacement of non-historic windows and doors, rehabilitation of concrete floors in the basement and rehabilitation of exterior masonry. "This will allow for additional studios and workshop areas including dark room, print-etching and silk screen, music and video sound proof areas, and paper making," Cocchiarelli said. "These improvements will fundamentally change how the entrepreneurial projects of the Made in Walsenburg shop will continue to promote local talent while creating a positive revenue stream," she added.

The final phase includes rehabilitation of interior finishes and reallocation of spaces for galleries, studios, classroom, gift shop, and coffee shop areas.

Since 2007, Museum of Friends has offered quality art exhibitions, a permanent collection, a School-Tour Program, Adult Classes, College Mentorship Program, Friday Art Laboratory program and numerous public talks, films and events. The museum is the first "Counter Culture" Museum in all of the United States as listed in Art in America's Guide to Museums and Galleries in 2016 and 2017.



(photo by David Rinehart)

The Museum of Friends in Walsenburg is marking its tenth anniversary this Saturday with a reception. The museum is starting a "Save the Roof and Dick" building capital improvement campaign.

Mission Statement:

MOF's primary goals are to foster the open inquiry necessary for a cultural education and its ideals through exhibitions, public educational programs, sharing an extensive reference library and permanent collection and advancing job creation.

To Contribute:

To contribute to the "Save the Roof and Dick" building capital improvement campaign please visit www.museumoffriends.org for the donor or sponsor form. To become a member please fill out the membership form.

Please call 719-738-2858 or mail your contribution to P.O. Box 506, Walsenburg, CO 81089.

History

The Roof of the Dick building

by Nancy Christofferson

WALSENBURG — The Dick family name is a common one in Huerfano County history, but who in the world was the Roof in the Roof and Dick building?

Fred Osborne Roof is relatively unknown today despite being a county resident for at least 22 years and an active businessman and investor for 32. According to his obituary, he came to the area in 1888 as the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad depot agent in old Cucharas east of Walsenburg. By the following year he was living in Walsenburg and in March 1889 he was the "genial" district court clerk when the one-week old *Walsenburg World* newspaper congratulated him for being its first paid subscriber. He may have been appointed to his county position, but in November that year he was elected county clerk and recorder. Unfortunately, he was also holding the office of town clerk, and Walsenburg officials were loath to let him resign, so they didn't. He had to wear hats for a spell until his duties as county clerk overshadowed his responsibilities to the town.

Fred was involved, apparently from the beginning, with the development of Tourist City that year. This was a subdivision of Walsenburg, and had been purchased by a group headed by Dr. T.F. Martin, who was president of the organization. Fred was secretary. Tourist City is in the northeast part of the city, and later became an addition to the town, but in 1889 was vacant land just hitting the market for housing.

On August 4, 1892, Fred married a school teacher of Walsenburg, Inez Townsend, who hailed from Johnson County, Kansas. In 1893 he ran for reelection for county clerk against Louis Sporleder and won another term. He bought a home on Capitol Hill that year and he and his wife started their family. In April 1894 he ran for town trustee and perhaps because his only opponent was a woman, he won. The same week, he became a father when his daughter Stella was born. Inez was an organizer that year of the Republican ladies league and became its president.

His term as county clerk ended with

1896 and by July he was cashier of the new Walsen's Banking Company.

In 1899 he built a warehouse, said to be the largest in Huerfano County at the time, for the storage of wool or grain crops. It was located beside the tracks and was officially opened with a public dance on Christmas night.

In 1901 Fred resigned from the bank, and it was immediately reorganized as Walsen and Son, Bankers. Fred G., son of town father Fred Walsen, was cashier.

Fred said he'd quit to spend his time attending to his real estate and sheep interests, and to his new office, once again, of district court clerk.

That October, as president of the Western Oil and Refining Company, he stated the company's oil well south of town was "now producing gas and oil is expected soon". [For collectors of trivia, Sam T. Taylor once said the first oil lease in Huerfano County was in 1879. The first well to be drilled was at Seventh and Russell streets in 1885].

Roof joined Walter Hauser, county commissioner and former surveyor, and continued the hunt for oil. In late 1901 they managed to cause an explosion that resulted in \$5,000 worth of damages. Ooops!

In 1903 Fred went back into banking, and by December was president of the brand new First National Bank in Walsenburg. One of the other five directors was George Dick. Ernst Ruth was made cashier and a G.D. Dawson was teller.

As president, Fred was responsible for signing the old-fashioned bank notes received.

In December Fred, with James B. Dick, George Dick, J.B. Farr and J.N. Matthews, incorporated the Walsenburg Investment Company.

Also, in 1903, Fred was chosen to escort Colorado Governor McDonald around the coal lands near Maitland mine. It seems the coal operators had offered to buy a vacant school section there at \$40 per acre, but Fred convinced the governor and his legislators to retain ownership and merely lease the land, a more profitable situation for the state.

1904 saw the incorporation of the



Western Agency Company by Fred Roof, James B. Dick, J.J. Pritchard, William Dick and Max Klein, "for everything that can be bought and sold".

The Walsenburg Foundry and Machine Shops was incorporated for \$50,000 in capital funds in 1905. The goal was to build a foundry on Fourth Street west of the "electric light plant". Fred, of course, was one of the incorporators, with six others. Contractor J.B. Gittings built the 60-square foot building and the first order for mine pit cars was received when it was completed in February '06. A furnace capable of melting two tons at a time was used to make mine cars, wheels, castings and switches. Added to this was a new lathe to cut and thread pipe. A railroad switch was built to the foundry by the Colorado and Southern and by the end of the first year of operation, the foundry had a payroll of more than \$1,000 a month. This was despite a destructive fire that only encouraged the owners to add even more new equipment. The business was sold by its originators in 1908.

In late '05, Fred joined George, William and James B. Dick in the purchase of the Black Diamond mine near Rugby and leased Dr. C.M. McGuire's coal mine, Consolidated, to start the new Cucharas Coal Company. This was defunct by 1916 as the Dick family interests absorbed it and many other coal properties.

All this time, Fred's main job was being a bank president at FNB. In 1907 he must have liked his job so much he decided to double it with the incorporation of the Walsenburg Savings Bank. Fellow organizers of Fred were F.E. Cowing, Antonio Bertolero, W.N. Wycoff, William Krier and Charles Brunelli. This endeavor was not as profitable for Fred as the foundry because in 1909 Guaranty State Bank was established in direct competition.

In 1908 Fred and George Dick advertised for bids to build two modern, two story brick store buildings at Sixth and Main. At the same time, he was a director of the Walsenburg Mercantile Company that had been started in 1903 by members of the Sporleder family. In 1910 they built another one.

The mercantile business apparently began the Huerfano Trading Company about 1910. The two corporations had the same officers, including William and James B. Dick and Charles Hayden. The business was operating company stores in numerous mining camps — nine of them at the peak of success, plus the department stores it opened in Walsenburg and Alamosa.

The trading company was conveniently located at Sixth and Main in the Roof and Dick building.

An interesting sideline popped up for Fred in 1910 — he became president of the Minnequa Bank in Pueblo. Yes, he was still president of FNB in Walsenburg. Fred seemed a most sober fellow, never included in the social news. But in May 1910 the new Walsenburg Auto Club was organized, and Fred was elected vice president. At least this gives us a clue as to how he attended to business in Pueblo and Walsenburg at the same time, and possibly any spare time he had.

His dual presidencies paid off in 1912 when he was elected president of the State Banking Association.

The Roof family had moved to Pueblo in 1910. In early December 1920, he resigned as president of FNB in Walsenburg and was replaced by his old friend James B. Dick.

Fred O. Roof died in February 1936 in Denver, where he'd relocated after leaving Pueblo. He is buried in the Walsenburg Masonic Cemetery along with his wife Inez and daughters Stella, Freda and Inez Virginia.

Buy your tickets and sponsorships for the Save the Roof and Dick Building GALA soon!

WALSENBURG — Save the Roof and Dick Building GALA Benefit will be held Saturday, December 2, 7 to 10 pm at the Museum of Friends. Each ticket will raise the matching funds and awareness for the need to keep this Fine Art Museum in the Walsenburg community. Online ticket sales are available at: <http://www.downtowncoloradoinc.org/event-2718853> and will end Tuesday, November 28. After that date, you will have to pay at the door. All sponsorships must be secured by Saturday, November 25 to have your company's name and logo represented in the program guide and advertising.

World Journal November 16, 2017

Save the Roof and Dick Building GALA Benefit

December 2 from 7 to 10 pm at the MOF

courtesy
Brendt Berger

WALSENBURG — Join us for a fun night with artists, creative thinkers and supporters of small business from around the state! Come Support the Museum of Friends to Save the Roof and Dick Building in the heart of downtown Walsenburg.

Museum Of Friends is an on-going labor of love that began when opened in 2006. Unlike most museums, MOF is egalitarian and inclusive, which speaks volumes about the diversity of MOF's permanent collection and exhibition planning. Recently History Colorado awarded MOF a State Historic Fund Grant to begin their restoration efforts. The grant money requires a 25% match or \$66,000.

This gala event will include an art sale with over 86 artists from all parts of the U.S., including local artists who have donated their work to help realize

MOF's plans to make the Roof and Dick Building ADA accessible, and become a destination for regional and national art exhibitions and programs.

Alys' Restaurant will provide a hot and cold smorgasbord with deserts and fresh brewed coffee from High Altitude Coffee Roasters. A \$25 ticket includes your first glass of beer or wine, and a cash bar. Jeromie Dorrance, live DJ from Denver, will provide lively tunes for dancing. Kevin Corditz, illustrator will provide live caricatures to mark this a memorable event. Each ticket will raise the matching funds and awareness for the need to keep this fine art museum in the Walsenburg community. Online ticket sales are available at www.downtowncoloradoinc.org/event-2718853 and will end Nov. 28. After Nov. 28, you will have to pay at the door.

Earlier that day DCI will also be holding a Downtown Institute for Business: Small Business Thriving in an Amazon World along with a Discover Walsenburg Opportunity Tour beforehand please go their website for more information and to register. Sponsorship opportunities are still available to help with the Save the Roof and Dick Gala Fundraiser on December 2. All sponsorships must be secured by November 25 to have your company's name and logo represented in the program guide and advertising.

Current sponsors include: Alys' Restaurant, High Altitude Coffee Roasters, San Isabel Electric, Downtown Colorado Inc., Walsenburg Downtown Revitalization GID, and poster designed by Reba Lee Savageau. Please visit www.museumof-friends.org for more information, or call 719-738-2858.