

Cakes to paints

Library's artist of the month finds joy in new medium

By **Erick Peterson**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Barbara Swan, artist and Hermiston resident, had a 30-year career as a cake decorator. Toward the end of that career, however, she happened upon painting. This hobby became a new creative

outlet when her hands pained her too much to continue with cake decoration.

This month, she is the featured artist of the month at the Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave. A collection of her paintings is on display through October.

Swan retired as a cake decorator in 2019 and gave herself more fully to painting. By watching Bob Ross DVDs gifted to her by family members, and by studying under oil painter Ginger



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Barbara Swan poses Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021, in front of a mural she painted on her property in Hermiston.

Blodgett and other instructors, she improved her craft. She said her brother, Steven Brunette, also was influential — he is also an artist and could offer suggestions.

From other artists, she has learned such techniques as painting or writing with the opposite hand to “trigger brain func-

tions, getting left and right firing against each other,” she said.

“To learn from other artists was eye-opening for me,” she said.

She realized how little she knew, but she also rekindled a love for painting.

Many of her paintings display in private residences, and she

has also gained recognition from local businesses. She has some watercolors on exhibit at Sno Road Winery in Echo, and some others in nearby business offices.

SWAN'S INFLUENCES

Picasso and Monet are historical greats and Swan's favorites, as they were “cutting edge of their times,” she said. She also likes the Impressionists. Having studied art history, she has other people she likes. Mary Shulman, Nicolas Wilton and Nellie Gill are contemporary favorites.

As an artist, she tries to share her experience and show the things she has seen.

“I love nature, flowers, butterflies, bugs, all that stuff. They have their own beauty, but painting is different than photographs,” Swan said. “I try to get others to see what I see.”

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