

Memories and art of Sue Rupp will go on

By Susan Richards
The Surveyor

In a sad case of irony, I put Sue Rupp's name on my "to do" list a few weeks ago, as I had planned to write a profile about the former Berthoud artist. The next day I was stunned and heart-broken to see her obituary come across the Surveyor desk. Susan A. Rupp, only



Sue Rupp

49, died in a tragic accident over the Fourth of July weekend, leaving behind a family, a boyfriend, several animals and countless friends. "I'm having a real hard time with it," admitted Gena Feldman, owner of Indigo Sky Trading Co. and one of Sue's first friends when she came to Berthoud in 1984. Gena's husband Dick recalled meeting the talented artist when she showed up at his NAPA store in a '57 Rambler station wagon and approached him looking for sign-painting work. There are still signs around town that were created by Rupp,

Indigo Sky's being one of them.

Over the next few years Rupp opened her own studio and shop where she sold primitives, gifts and a line of art she created called the "Hare Line."

She loved animals, and her self-taught illustrations reflect that. Her skill at rendering rabbits, dogs and other critters was simple, clean and flawless. Besides rabbits she drew dogs, cats, horses and more. And infusing her work is a very evident love of the English language. I confess to being a nut for wordplay, puns and the like, so as soon as I admire one of Sue's prints my eye goes straight to the title, which promises to be just as amusing as the picture itself. Using the words hare and lab provided her a seemingly endless supply of double entendres, such as "Wind-Blown Hare" and "Hare with Volume," — an obviously loud young rabbit — and "Computer Lab with a Mouse" — you guessed it, a Labrador and a small rodent are looking intently at a computer monitor.

"She'd jump up in the middle of the night and write them down," said Feldman about the endless ideas Sue had for subjects. She recalled wistfully some of the creative projects Sue planned to do "some day."

In recent years Rupp had stopped printing new editions due to the prohibi-

tive costs, but given her prolific imagination and numbered editions, Rupp's cute creatures can no doubt be found all over the country. According to Feldman, Sue also made jewelry, worked for Disney at one time, and was working with a woman in California to illustrate a children's book. Her "day job," if you will, was working with the animals at Centennial Livestock in Ft. Collins. No matter what she did, she did it with verve.

Another interesting irony surrounding Sue Rupp's life was not lost on her friends and family. She was born on January 1 — New Year's Day, and passed on July 4. Both are celebratory holidays and, by all accounts, this was one woman who knew how to celebrate life to the fullest.

It's our instinctive hope to spend our time on earth making every minute count, but how often do we really? Artists often dream of leaving a tangible legacy, be it in paint, words or music, for future generations to treasure. I irrationally feel cheated that I didn't get to meet Sue and learn more about her firsthand. Her legacy, however, will go on in her children, Sara and Daniel, and grandchildren, Brooke and Jacob, as well as a menagerie of rabbits and dogs on paper.

While her absence will be painfully



Photos courtesy of Gena Feldman

This print is the last in its edition and offers a poignant message following the artist's passing.

felt by those who loved her, what a gift Sue Rupp bequeathed her village of family, friends and admirers — art that celebrated humor and affection, and memories of a woman that embodied the same.

First Annual Fort Collins Irish Festival: A fun-filled event for the entire family

Northern Colorado is the place to be this summer — with a festival taking place almost every weekend, there's no excuse for boredom.

In an attempt to put together a fundraiser for his nonprofit, GUARD Colorado, Longmont resident John Schreck decided on putting together a



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one-day fundraiser featuring Irish music. Schreck is owner of Colorado Table Cloth and has extensive experience with event organizing. Before he could say "blimey" the relatively small, one-day event had turned into a three-day Irish extravaganza.

"We went from the main stage idea to a secondary pub stage to a third stage, which is now filling up with dancers and cultural music and education classes," said Schreck, a half-German, half-Irishman whose enthusiasm

for the event is highly contagious. From the enormously popular Kansas City band, The Elders, to the reigning queen of the Irish fiddle, Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul, the festival is full of outstanding musicians.

Eileen Ivers has been called "...the Jimmy Hendrix of the violin." Her band is spiked with members from Ireland as well as Puerto Rico and South Africa, and Ivers says having this cultural assortment provides a sound that is accessible to people who associate Irish music with only the "diddle dee stuff." In the 1990s Ivers toured with Riverdance, and she and her electric blue violin became a highlight of the show. She has also worked on several movie soundtracks, including the Academy Award nominated "Gang of New York" (2002). Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul kick off the festival this Friday evening, August 1, at the Lincoln Center in Fort Collins. Tickets are available at www.letix.com.

The Elders often tour Colorado during the summer; for multiple years

they've drawn a crowd of 3,000 at the Foote Lagoon in Loveland. Though the group calls their style "Arse-kickin' music from the heartland," front man Ian Byrne, from County Wicklow, Ireland, gives the band an authentic Irish flare. The Elders will play the festival's main stage both Saturday and Sunday nights at 8 p.m. "Those who don't come will miss The Elders event of the year. We are doing a live, full production light show both nights," said Schreck.

Other bands to play the festival include the Glengarry Bhoys, Canned Haggis, The Indulgents, Cool Ceili, Colcannon, The Fuchsia Band and Juice O'the Barley. To mark the start to each festival day, Michael Collins Pipes and Drums will march from Old Town Square to Civic Park. "I'm treating this seriously as a community event," said Schreck, who has arranged for music to be playing all weekend at the Old Town Square main stage.

The festival will be 100% Irish; a culture always associated with having a good time. Along with continual musical acts there will be vendors specializing in Irish wares, tasty food, and of course, Guinness. The Guinness Gig-Rig will be in attendance with all 37 taps flowing. Baileys and Irish whiskey will also be available, as well as wine. Fortunately, Shamrock Taxi is the festival's official transporter sponsor. On both days two of Shamrock's airport vans will run a route from downtown to the festival, and taxis will also be available for transport to other areas of Fort Collins.

If you have interest in rugby, stop by Fort Collins City Park prior to the beginning of the festival on Saturday. The Denver Gaels will be traveling to the



Photos courtesy of Fort Collins Irish Festival Irish fiddler, Eileen Ivers has been called "the Jimmy Hendrix of the violin."

park to demonstrate their skills. Both men and women's rugby and hurling will be exhibited, and transportation between City Park and Civic Park will be available.

"This is a true family festival," said Schreck. We've got the standard stuff for kids — the bouncy castle and games. But we've also created an arts and crafts tent where the kids can do drawings for contests and get temporary tattoos. We have two face painters who have promised to keep their themes Irish."

The festival will also feature a leprechaun, Michael Patrick. He will be available for good fun and pictures, but he's not likely to reveal where he stashes his pot of gold, though it can't hurt to ask. "We also have a local Irish lad named Fenton who just moved here from Ireland last year. He will be running a cultural/history tent, and he will be doing three children's story workshops," said Schreck.

"We want everyone to leave this event say, 'I can hardly wait for 364 days to pass. Where do I line up for round two?'" said Schreck.

The festival will be held at Fort Collins Civic Park at the corner of La-

Porte Avenue and Mason Street. Festival hours are Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. More information is available at www.fortcollinsirishfestival.com. Tickets are \$10 and a Shamrock 2-day pass is \$15. Net proceeds from the event are going to Save the Poudre, Coloradoans against Resource Destruction and Windsor Tornado Relief. For more information about GUARD Colorado, please visit www.guardcolorado.org.



Michael Collins Pipes and Drums will kick off each day of the festival.

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