



Chaparral Sketch

March 2026

Volume XVII, Issue 03



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Presidents Palette

As we look ahead to future programming, we'd like to reflect on how many of our past group excursions have come together. Over the years, destinations have often been shaped by wherever the "trip coordinator" was personally interested in going. Thankfully, that led to many wonderful adventures — museum visits, photography trips to blooming desert locations, national parks near and far (sometimes up to three hours away), and even dolphin and whale sightings. They were enjoyable and sometimes well attended, but typically only the photographers were excited.

Those trips were fun and memorable, yet relying primarily on one person's preferences isn't always the

best way to ensure we're offering opportunities that truly interest all of our members. As we plan ahead, we'd love to see more shared input so that our excursions and activities reflect a broader range of creative interests.

One recent suggestion is a return visit to Moorten Botanical Garden. So I think for March, we are set. But we need more input from you for further programming. Chaparral Artists has worked to support you by providing welcoming venues to exhibit your work with minimal effort on your part. Most of our exhibits are free to enter, and this newsletter reaches hundreds of readers — often expanding as the year progresses. Your writing, stories, and poetry are welcome both here and on our website.

Now, we want to hear from you.

- What excites you?
- Where would you like us to visit?
- What demonstrations should we host this year?
- What hands-on creative activities would you enjoy exploring together?

At a Glance Reminders

General Meeting

Joshua Tree Community Center

Rock Art & Hunt group visitors

Monday, March 9 (1pm)

Judged Exhibit - Creative Photography

Rainbow Stew

Thursday, March 12 (4:30-6pm) *Intake Day 1*

Friday, March 13 (12:30-2:30pm) *Intake Day 2*

Saturday, March 21 (4-6pm) Reception

Outing - Moorten Botanical Garden

Jack in the Box, Yucca Valley Carpool Meetup

Monday, March 16 (9am)

We need your voice to continue shaping Chaparral Artists in ways that truly serve our members. Your ideas matter. Your creativity matters. Let's build this year — together.

General Meetings

The February meeting was held on the 9th at the Joshua Tree Community Center, with fourteen (14) members in attendance. We moved briskly through updates, shared member announcements, and distributed Chaparral Artists schedules to any that needed them. Our show-n-tell portion was unusually weighted because Nancy McHenry brought the finished clay creations from the 2-day introduction Clay workshop she hosted. We oohed and ahed and shared our surprise and excitement with the results filled with color changes after the firing process.



February Meeting Activity – drawing in action above, some results below!



Our creative activity focused on continuous-line drawing and it was a joyful success! The idea is to never lift pen from paper, eyes remaining fixed on subjects, and participants created spontaneous, loose, and delightfully quirky results. Some drew faces across the table, others sketched nearby cups or even their own hands. I feel like the most unique pieces came from those who fully committed to the process—no peeking, just pure observation. It was expressive, freeing, and so much fun!

Our NEXT meeting is on March 9 at the Joshua Tree Community Center in Joshua Tree. Join us at the Joshua Tree Community Center for our next gathering.

Remember to renew your membership for 2026 if you haven't already done so, pick up your year's schedules and calendars, grab a copy of the newsletter, and bring at least one piece you are working on or recently finished to share with everyone. The creations will be hung on the wall or secured to the metal white board using magnets, so in-process paper works CAN be shared. The creations will remain on the wall until the end of the meeting. Please, everyone bring something to share!

AND, we welcome visitors from the **“Rock Hunt Morongo Basin”** group - a friendly, community-driven group where members share hidden painted rocks for others to find, post their discoveries, and spread moments of creativity and joy throughout the desert. A fun way to connect locally through art and surprise. It will be amazing to connect with them, learn more about their goals, and maybe even start a little something together!

Board Meetings

Our Board meetings are held on the same day as our general meetings to keep things simple. The

March 9 meeting will be at 11:30 AM, also at the Joshua Tree Community Center. Remember that members are invited to join these meetings!

Group Outings

We haven't received many suggestions for 2026 outings yet, which makes it difficult to plan a group trip that reflects the interests of our membership. Your voice truly matters, and we need your ideas to help shape our calendar!

Where would you like Chaparral Artists to go? Is there a museum, festival, garden, gallery, workshop, or creative destination you've been hoping we'd organize as a group experience? Please share your ideas by email or give us a call so we can begin building consensus.

Moorten Botanical Garden

Some expressed interest in revisiting the Moorten Botanical Garden in Palm Springs, a small, privately owned garden, originally established in 1938 as an arboretum. It showcases more than 3,000 varieties of desert plants from around the world, including rare cacti and succulents, and features a compact nature trail perfect for relaxed exploration and quirky photography.

Seasonal hours are currently 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (closed Wednesdays). Admission is \$7, parking can be slightly challenging, and leashed, well-behaved dogs are welcome. The weather should still be relatively pleasant in March, though warmth is expected, so plan accordingly.

Proposed date: **Monday, March 16**, departing Yucca Valley at 9:00 a.m. to arrive near opening time. If you are interested please make sure to contact us by email or telephone. We need to know if you plan on going so that we look for you at the meetup location(s).

As further examples of the kinds of opportunities happening locally & semi-locally in March, and to feed your imaginations AND prepare for following months, please read on:

Compound Yucca Valley (Fri–Sun, 12–5pm) A contemporary desert arts venue featuring gallery exhibitions, live music, workshops, and creative community events in an intimate indoor–outdoor setting.

The Highway Sanctuary (3rd Saturdays, 12-5pm) a nonprofit creative venue and sculpture garden up Old Woman Springs Road. It functions as an artist residency and community arts space focused on reuse-based sculpture, workshops, and public events.

Palm Springs VillageFest (Thu, 6-10pm) Weekly street fair featuring art, food, music, and vendors on Palm Canyon Drive.

Palm Springs Vintage Market (March 1, 2026) Vintage & collectible market with art and antiques.

Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival – Runs through March 1, 2026, with carnival rides, exhibits, entertainment, and local culture.

If you've taken part in—or already experienced—any memorable outings, we'd also love to hear about those. Your recommendations may be featured in an upcoming newsletter to inspire others.

The rest of this year—and into next—is open to suggestions. Let's plan something wonderful together!

Gallery Displays

Previous Exhibit - Monochrome

In February, Chaparral Artists presented "Monochrome," a themed exhibit celebrating artwork dedicated to a single color. The show inspired remarkable creativity and experimentation from our

members, highlighting just how powerful a limited palette can be.

While photographers are long familiar with monochrome through the timeless beauty of black-and-white and sepia imagery—echoing the earliest days of photographic history—artists working in other mediums often embrace bold, varied color. This exhibit offered a refreshing shift in perspective. By narrowing the palette, members explored texture-rich compositions, striking contrasts, and the subtle depth that can emerge from restraint. Pen and ink artists, whose work often naturally aligns with a single-color approach, fit seamlessly into the theme.

The result was a visually compelling collection of works.

Our primary exhibits continue to be hosted at Rainbow Stew, where “Monochrome” features twenty-seven (27) entries from ten (10) creators. The exhibit is on display from February 14 through March 11, 2026, and stands as an impressive showcase of our members’ talent and versatility.

Next Exhibit - “Creative Photography”

This March, we invite members to submit **up to five photographs**—and encourage you to invite your friends to participate as well! This is one of our **open-to-the-public exhibits**, where a guest judge reviews the works, offers helpful feedback, and awards prizes in each category. A small entry fee applies to each submission, which goes entirely toward ribbons, prizes, and the judge’s stipend.

Artwork intake will take place at Rainbow Stew on Thursday, March 12, from 4:30 to 6:00 pm, and Friday, March 13, from 12:30 to 2:00 pm.

The reception will be held on Saturday, March 21, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, coinciding with the Third Saturday Old Town Artwalk!

We’re happy to align with this community initiative, helping make an afternoon or evening of

exploring Yucca Valley’s galleries. Just as Joshua Tree showcases openings on the 2nd Saturday and 29 Palms on the 1st Saturday, we’re proud to spotlight the Old Town galleries on the 3rd Saturday.

Everyone is welcome! We especially encourage exhibit participants and their friends to join us—this is a celebration of you and your amazing work. Come see the art, connect with fellow artists, and enjoy a lively, gallery-filled evening by swinging by Rainbow Stew on your adventures through Old Town Yucca & Pioneertown.

Information about upcoming shows can be found on the Chaparral Artists website. Navigate to Publications, then Exhibits, and locate the show paperwork you’re interested in. Be sure to check back regularly for updates. If you notice any missing information, please contact an officer to let us know.

Artists of the Month

We feature Chaparral members at both the Desert Hills Presbyterian Church in Yucca Valley AND AquaFit in Yucca Valley. We do not control when these venues open, so calling in advance to a visit is recommended.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to secure Featured Artists — and that should concern all of us. Chaparral Artists does the organizing, coordinating, and installing. All that is required from the artist is to show up with ready-to-hang work. That’s it. These opportunities are designed to celebrate you — to place your creativity in front of the public in friendly spaces where it can be seen, appreciated, and remembered.

Sharing your work publicly offers a quiet but powerful sense of pride. There is something deeply affirming about watching someone pause, smile, or lean in closer to study how you created a piece. These

moments matter — not just for the viewer, but for the artist.

In February, participation was sparse. Thankfully, two artists stepped forward.

Nancy Miehle graciously shared a marvelous collection of stained glass, currently on display through the first week of March at Desert Hills Presbyterian Church. Her glasswork is luminous — rich color, striking shapes, and fun detail. If you're fortunate enough to see the pieces illuminated by sunlight, the effect is impressive.

Meilani MacDonald presented an engaging and heartfelt collection at the Aquafit Activity Center. Working across multiple mediums and styles, her pieces are expressive, experimental, and full of warmth and creative courage.

We extend sincere appreciation to Nancy and Meilani for stepping up and representing Chaparral Artists.

If you have ever considered featuring your work, now is the time. These opportunities only continue if artists are willing to participate. Let's not allow them to fade away.

Be sure to visit these displays while you still can, and consider being the next artist to step forward for APRIL, MAY, or JUNE! If YOU are interested in sharing your work at these locations, contact Raini Armstrong to select an available month.

Creative Opportunities

Workshops and Paint-outs

Mil-Tree Writers Group meets Monday evenings, online via Zoom, 7-9pm. This writing group welcomes individuals of all writing levels and fosters a relaxed and friendly environment. The primary expectation is that members are open to providing feedback on their peers' writing, but all are encouraged to share their own written work as well. Interested in joining? Contact info@mil-tree.org and ask questions OR sign up.

Juniper Clay offers 'Clayground' for all interested in the very tactile medium of clay. Clayground is a monthly event hosted by Juniper Clay Shop on the first Sunday of each month. Created as a welcoming introduction to ceramic arts, the event provides each participant with 2 pounds of clay to play with. If you're happy with what you have created, they will fire and glaze it for you (service included in the workshop price). You must sign up in advance as spots fill fast, visit their website for details <https://juniperclayshop.com/> For only \$26.94 per person, you get 2 pounds of clay and up to 4 hours of fun. No refunds will be issued for Clayground events! Hours are from 1pm to 5pm with a last call at 4pm. Don't forget to wear your messy clothes or bring an apron!

Open Arts & Crafts Workshops are offered at the Yucca Valley Community Center on Thursday mornings, 10-12:30pm. Participants bring their own materials, pay a fee of \$3, and are able to work on whatever they are interested in.

Watercolor Workshops are offered at the Yucca Valley Community Center most Thursday afternoons, 1-3pm. Participants bring their own materials, pay a fee of \$5, and can work on their own watercolor projects or follow along with the instructor. February and March 2026 are dedicated to Animal Portraits!

Watercolor Workshops are offered at the AquaFit in Yucca Valley most Friday mornings, 9-11am. Participants bring their own materials, pay a fee of \$10, and can work on their own watercolor projects or follow along with the instructor. February and March 2026 are dedicated to Animal Portraits!

Visit instagram @watercolor.yv or Facebook by searching for watercolor.yv or contact Raini directly to confirm workshop days, as she often travels!!

Plein Air meetups, organized by Krista Wargo, happen in the desert almost every month. Scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Friday, they will be listed on the Chaparral calendar online. Participants bring their own art supplies, prepare for weather changes, and bring enough food and water for painting outdoors. Locations chosen by Krista have basic amenities like restrooms, but you need to bring everything else you need.

Contact Krista directly if you plan to attend, so she knows to expect you.

Chaparral Collage

Our February Invitation Is Still LIVE!

Our February call to CREATE new works inspired by the music of Brent Lewis is still open. We hope you've been listening, feeling inspired, and are already busy creating. Let rhythm, mood, and movement continue to guide your process — we can't wait to see what *sound* has sparked on your canvas and/or your dimensional pieces! The original call for art can be found within the February Chaparral Sketch. Contact us via email for more information.

Discover the Art of Everyday Moments

Photography has always been a medium of exploration and expression, but in recent years it has undergone a remarkable transformation. Gone are the days when capturing a compelling image meant lugging heavy cameras across long distances, waiting weeks for the perfect light or weather, and planning every shot down to the smallest detail. Today, cameras live in our pockets, ready to capture fleeting moments and the quiet beauty of everyday life.

This shift has also changed what draws us to photograph. We're increasingly captivated by intimate, often overlooked moments—tiny scenes that tell big stories. A fleeting glance, a shadow falling across a sidewalk, the curve of a flower petal—these are the images that were nearly impossible to capture just a decade ago. And the tools themselves have evolved: from high-quality phone cameras to compact, dedicated devices, photography now allows both spontaneity and precision.

For our upcoming judged photography show at Rainbow Stew, we invite you to explore this intersection of reality and creativity. Print your small discoveries, your whimsical perspectives, your

emotional captures. Consider how clarity, composition, and reference points enhance your work—sometimes a tiny Joshua tree can convey scale against massive boulders, or a bird in flight can add drama to a towering cityscape. Other times, the subject can dissolve into pure color and shape, letting imagination take center stage.

We encourage members to push their creative boundaries and embrace the magic of what can now be captured. Submissions for the show will be accepted during intake on March 12 and 13 at Rainbow Stew, and we look forward to celebrating the images that speak most vividly to our hearts. Let's find where reality meets creativity and share those moments with our community!

Wondrous Waste Intake SOON

Don't miss the opportunity to finish those creative pieces for Hi-Desert Nature Museum's 20th Annual Recycled Art Exhibition, "Wondrous Waste."

This Morongo Basin showcase invites artists to explore recycling, repurposing, and reimagining through inventive works made from discarded and forgotten materials. It's a chance to stretch your creativity—rethinking form, color, texture, and composition while transforming the overlooked into something meaningful and beautiful.

Entries from Morongo Basin artists will be accepted March 11–14, 2026, and the exhibition will run March 21 through May 9, 2026.

If you've been collecting materials with the intention of "someday," this is your moment. Gather those saved scraps, reclaimed objects, and forgotten finds—then turn inspiration into action.

Start (or finish!) your pieces now and be ready for intake in just a couple of weeks.

Dog Day at the Zoo

by Raini Armstrong

I have been juggling work, art, and so many projects — and I am thankful for that — but it certainly gets busy with all the events and activities I want to attend. It typically means that I miss more than I experience. One opportunity recently popped up quite suddenly, thanks to a Facebook notification, and I'm so grateful I saw it in time.

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens announced a one-day-only trial event called Dog Day at the Zoo. It was scheduled for Friday, February 20, with limited spots available by advance registration. I discovered it on Wednesday — just in time to sign up before it filled. After my watercolor workshop that morning, I hurried home to pick up my big boy, Mato, and off we went.

If you've ever had a dog, you know how limited pet-friendly events can be. For obvious reasons, most places — especially zoos — don't allow dogs. I was surprised and hopeful when I saw this opportunity. Still, like many dog owners, I carried that quiet worry: What if my dog misbehaves? I met plenty of owners who shared the same concern. Everyone seemed committed to positively representing responsible pet ownership.

The atmosphere was delightful. Visitors were genuinely surprised — and amused — to see dogs strolling the zoo pathways. Mato received so much love and attention. What surprised me most was how nearly oblivious he was to many of the zoo animals; he seemed more overwhelmed by the new sights, scents, and affectionate greetings from people.

Of course, watching the zoo animals react to the dogs was fascinating to me. After all, this was a new experience for them, too. The prairie dogs were instantly alert and defensive whenever a dog approached. The mongoose were intensely curious, pressing as close to the glass as they dared. The bobcats stalked passing pups with focused intensity,

while the mountain lions demonstrated impressive strength and concentration — as if considering whether they could somehow melt right through the glass (thankfully, they could not!). The eagles kept a wary eye on the activity below, while the zebras seemed blissfully content, hardly noticing the change. The antelope certainly seemed curious, lifting their heads to observe this unusual parade of people and dogs.

Still, the majority of the zoo's residents remained calm. Their daily rhythms — resting, grazing, watching — seemed far more important than the novelty of dogs walking beside their human companions.

All in all, it was a joyful and unique experience. I sincerely hope The Living Desert offers an occasional Dog Day again, giving dog owners the chance to share a special outing with their four-legged friends. If they do, Mato and I will absolutely be there.

Ongoing Invitation to Share!

Share your artistic accomplishments, stories, poetry, snapshots, lessons learned, or creative advice. Short and simple is perfect. Your voice can inspire fellow artists, and it belongs in this newsletter.

We welcome brief write-ups on any creative form — painting, abstract art, sculpture, music, dance, writing, theatre, and more.

Worried about length or grammar? Don't be. We'll review, format, and make sure you're properly credited. Send submissions to our email or call Raini Armstrong at 760-383-3005 to arrange sharing by phone or in person.

Events Calendar

March 7

29 Palms Art Gallery Reception, 4-6pm
74055 Cottonwood Drive, Twentynine Palms

March 9

Chaparral Artists - General Meeting, 1-3pm

Joshua Tree Community Center, 6171 Sunburst St, Joshua Tree

March 11-14

Wondrous Waste Intake

Hi-Desert Nature Museum, 9:30am-5:30pm
57090 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley

March 12 & 13

Chaparral Artists - "Creative Photography"
Judged OPEN TO THE PUBLIC Exhibit

Drop-off Day 1

March 12 at 4:30-6pm

Drop-off Day 2

March 13 at 12:30-2pm

Rainbow Stew, 55509 Twentynine Palms Highway

March 16

Chaparral Artists Outing - Moorten Botanical Garden

Those interested in Carpooling, meet up at 9am! Jack in the Box, Yucca Valley

Jack in the Box, 57930 29 Palms Hwy, Yucca Valley

March 21

Highway Sanctuary Open House, 12-6pm
1101 Old Woman Springs Road, Yucca Valley

March 21

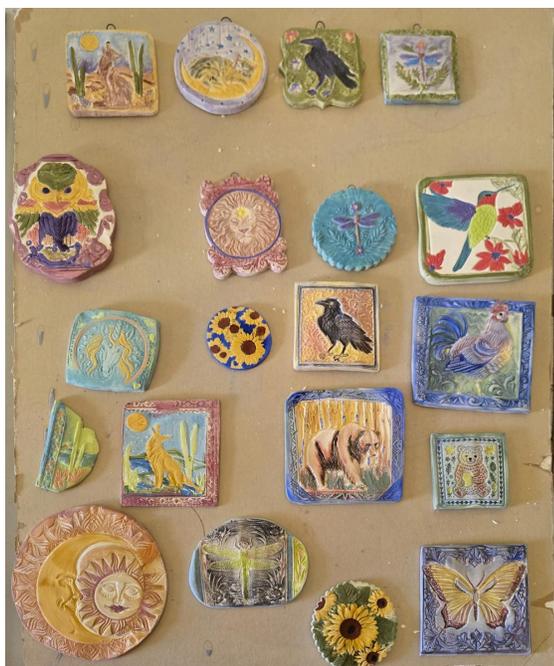
Chaparral Artists Reception

"Creative Photography" judged exhibit, 4-6pm

Rainbow Stew, 55509 Twentynine Palms Highway



2-day workshop – post glaze and firing



2-day workshop – painted clay prior to glazing and firing

Chaparral Artists, a non-profit organization, is one of the oldest artists groups in the Morongo Basin. Its mission is simple, to promote arts and culture in the Hi-Desert through accessible, affordable, friendly programs and demonstrations that inspire and educate.

Chaparral Artists

P.O. Box 2202 | Joshua Tree, CA 92252

- Email** ChaparralArtists@gmail.com
- Website** www.chaparralartists.com
- Facebook** facebook.com/ChaparralArtists
- Instagram** instagram.com/chaparralartists
- Bluesky** chaparralartists.bsky.social
- YouTube** youtube.com/@ChaparralArtists

Administrative Assembly 2026

President	Raini Armstrong
Vice President	Meilani MacDonald
Treasurer	Nancy Miehle
Membership	Myrtle Cassell
Secretary	Krista Wargo
Marketing Advertising	Rainbow Stew
Historian	Victoria Sebanz
Newsletter	Raini Armstrong
Shows Committee	Raini + available Board members
Sunshine	Julia Terpening
Communication (Email, Website, Socials)	Raini + Myrtle + Meilani
Publicity	All members needed to talk up Chaparral!
Hospitality	Volunteer NEEDED!