

THURSDAY

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Vail Daily

Bringing Communities Together



Edith Mendoza
Edwards Elementary
Sunny
High 50; low 31
See Weather, PAGE B36

Conference center plan in

■ Though the exact location of the voter-approved, \$42 million Vail conference center has yet to be determined, a first report by the project's oversight committee makes a variety of recommendations and projects that Vail will be a popular meeting venue for business executives and meeting planners. **PAGE A3**



Legends ski today

American Ski Classic schedule

TODAY

10 a.m. — Legends Giant Slalom Race at Golden Peak

Friday

9 a.m. — Ford Cup Race at Golden Peak

1:30 p.m. — Future Legends Race at Golden Peak

Saturday

9 a.m. — Ford Cup Race at Golden Peak
2 p.m. — Ford Cup Finals at Golden Peak



A RHYME FOR A REASON



Vail Daily/Bret Hartman
Janell Turnbull pauses to hold back tears while reading a poem written by her daughter, Shayla, 8, Monday during a poetry reading event at the Eagle County Charter Academy in Edwards. See education photo page, A21.

LOCAL

■ Up against the wall

A former Avon art gallery owner faces theft and criminal impersonation charges. **PAGE A6**

■ Let there be lights

The town of Gypsum has reached a deal with property owners next to the town's new ball fields allowing for lights to illuminate nighttime games. **PAGE A9**

EDUCATION

■ Sowing the seeds of love

A parent garden for students at Brush Creek Elementary blossoms. **PAGE A20**

COMMENTARY

"A friend once told me, 'If you need an alarm to wake up, you're not getting enough sleep.'"

Butch Mazzuca

PAGE A13

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A&E



ART AT EVERY TURN

Plein air painter Don Sahli takes to the trails on skis to capture the beauty of Vail Mountain in his impressionistic paintings.

PAGE B1

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2004

Painter in residence

Don Sahli
 Vail Fine Art Gallery
 141 E. Meadow Drive,
 Crossroads

"I want to convey the drama that first captured my attention, the atmosphere and the soul of the place... to go past just the image to touch the viewer in a way that evokes emotion."

Don Sahli
 PLEIN AIR PAINTER

ITINERANT ARTIST

Don Sahli and his art sherpa take to the mountains

By **Stew Mosberg**
 SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

While skiing Vail's vast terrain it's not unusual to see a skier with a camera pointed toward the beautiful vistas, creating a snapshot memory to take home.

On the other hand, it might be a surprise to come upon a painter dressed in Carhardt overalls, fleece jacket and ski hat, setting up an easel on the side of the trail or applying paint to canvas, capturing shadows, spruce trees, and skiers making tracks in new fallen snow.

Friday through Saturday, skiers and snowboarders on Vail Mountain will have just such a chance. During that time, well-known plein air painter Don Sahli will be back in Vail working his magic on the trails in the mornings and later in the afternoon at Vail Fine Art Gallery, where, as artist in residence, he will continue to develop the day's painting.

Skiing around the mountain, Sahli might seem to be enjoying making turns like the rest of the down-hillers, which he no doubt



Special to the Daily

Stylistically speaking, Don Sahli was trained in Russian Impressionism, but this week his subject matter is pure Vail.

will be. But while doing so, he's also looking for a spot that intrigues him, one that makes a statement about light and shadow, and appears to be a challenge for his prodigious talents.

Once the spirit moves him, he will set the easel in the snow, lock a canvas in place, focus for a few minutes on the scene before him and then, moving his brush around the blank surface, begin sketching out the panorama.

Clark, a Vail resident and a student of his, to act as "art sherpa." The arrangement has been ideal for both of them.

When describing the difficulties he encounters while painting the outdoors in winter, Sahli talked about the special problems with temperature, falling snow and wind.

"Oil and water don't mix, so snow doesn't affect the work, but, freezing temperature affects paint, causing a sponge effect. My white got so thick it took muscle to load the brush and apply it to canvas ... (but) because of the thickness it took on a whole new dimension ... the brushwork was exciting. Wind is a problem too, because the canvas can become a sail."

To the untrained eye, snow appears basically white, perhaps with a few dark shadows. But to Sahli it is full of color: Purple, blue, green, all are reflected onto the ground cover by the natural surroundings. Schooled in Russian Impressionism, Sahli's uncanny eye easily finds a wide variety of color in the most mundane of objects. Watching him paint, and looking at his body of work on display at the gallery, is a lesson in how to see.

Sahli describes the feeling he wants to awaken in himself as well as others who view the result:

"I want to convey the drama that first captured my attention, the atmosphere and the soul of the place ... to go past just the image to touch the viewer in a way that evokes emotion."

Those familiar with the techniques of Russian artists Peter Kotov and Sergei Bongart, Sahli's teachers, will see the unique relationship of color, form and design that Sahli's work possesses. They are the direct result of truly seeing and finding what is in front of you.

Most people never have the chance to watch the creative process or talk to the artist about his or her work. Consider this an opportunity. Look for him on the mountain — he may start out near the Two Elks restaurant. Or go the gallery later in the day, and watch him transfer his outdoor sketches to a larger canvas and witness the creative process firsthand.

Sahli will be on the mountain from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. and at Vail Fine Art Gallery from 3-7 p.m.

Stew Mosberg is a writer and journalist working out of Blue River. He holds a bachelor of design degree from the University of Florida, College of Fine Arts and Architecture, is author of two books on design and is the recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.