

It's safe to say that July is Ann James Massey Month in El Paso. The El Paso artist, now living in Paris, is back in town for a retrospective of her works at the Chamizal National Memorial (for details, see Page 20). She also has these events planned:



Massey

Workshops

— Massey will give two lecture workshops on her drawing technique and a lecture/demonstration on her painting technique, all at the Chamizal National Memorial. All three July programs are at the Chamizal National Memorial:

- "Featur-ing Por-traits," 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat-urday, July 13. Cost: \$59 in ad-vance, \$69 at the door.
- "Under-standing Drawing and Overcoming Common Mistakes," 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, July 14. Cost: \$39 in advance, \$49 at the door. Both drawing classes: \$85.
- "Painting with Tradition," 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, July 20. Cost: \$59 in advance, \$69 at the door.

Registration, information: Wings & Wyler Galleries, 6633 N. Mesa No. 102, El Paso TX 79912; 581-8588.

National Society of Arts & Letters

El Paso chapter — Massey will be the featured speaker at the new series of monthly luncheon meetings, open to the public. The July meeting is at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, July 11, at Luby's, 3601 N. Mesa. The meetings will be at the same place and time on the second Thursday of the month. For more information, call 542-1005 or 779-1200.

GALLERY TALK

By Ann James Massey

Editor's note: Ann James Massey is a native El Pasoan whose mastery of artistic realism, especially in her superbly detailed pencil drawings, has earned her many awards throughout the country. In 1994, she moved to Paris, France, where she has studied and taught, and has continued to draw and paint. A retrospective of her works opens July 4 at the Los Paisanos Gallery at the Chamizal National Memorial.

We invited Ann to share her thoughts about what it's like to be an El Pasoan in Paris.

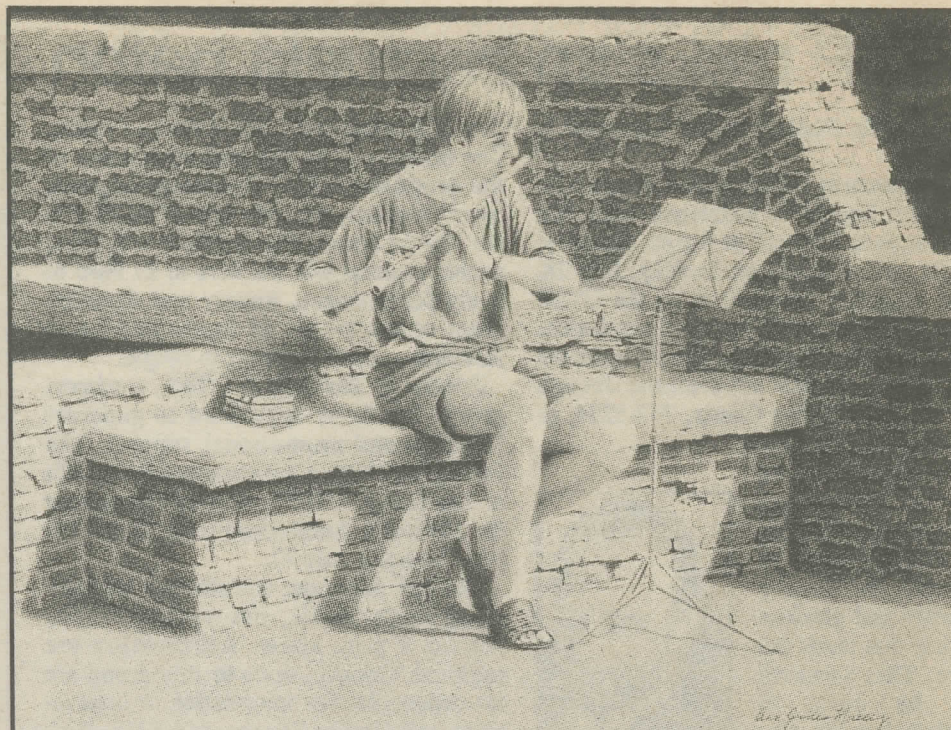
It's a tale of two cities, El Paso on the Rio Grande and Paris on the Seine. Not quite the Dickens story, but to be an artist from the Southwest now residing in Paris is certainly akin to living in a fairy tale.

Of course, everyone expects an artist to love Paris. They think of the impressionists and the art tradition; the monuments and the churches; Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein; the sidewalk cafes and walking along the Seine; the Louvre and Musée d'Orsay; and the romance and glamour. However, that's just the veneer that every tourist revels in.

The true heart of Paris lies in each Parisian's comprehension of the quality of life. Beauty, art, history and cultural awareness rank right up there with bread and wine.

There are the gas station pumps crowned with large pots of flowers.

There was my taxi driver who helped me carry my art and equipment into the building where I was to participate in a temporary exhibition. Returning the next day with his wife, they purchased one of my prints.



"The Flautist," ©1995 by Ann James Massey, is a 9 1/2-by-12-inch wax pencil drawing.

We discussed at length their opinions of recent museum exhibits, and I felt far richer for the conversation than for the francs I received.

There are the soft strains of classical music that greet me more often than rock music from behind the closed doors as I climb the polished wooden steps to my apartment.

There are the people who pick up their fresh flowers to grace their table each day, though they may eat alone.

There is the sheer joy of discovering so many individuals with intimate knowledge of literature, art and music, and who freely express their opinions. It's not the education of a university, but rather of a world that is permeated with the arts, culture and history. You breathe it; you can't help but

absorb it.

And the amazing thing is that the same aesthetic atmosphere can exist anywhere in the world, just as it does in most of Europe. It's not money, class or ancestry that has created this prevailing appreciation. It's exposure, and the earlier the better. It's public sculpture and murals; it's libraries and using them; it's museums and galleries and monthly visits; it's concerts and plays.

El Paso has the arts, the facilities, the culture, the history and the ability to change our outlook through our children by exposing them to more than malls, television and rock music. We complain about the general attitude in El Paso, but it can't be transformed overnight. Make the arts a part of a child's life and he, too, will want to keep breathing that fresh air the rest of his life.