



CROWN POINT
STAR

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Art Adventure | Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski

Cedar Lake native creates art through films



I first met Brian Kallies more than five years ago through Steeple Gallery artist Barbara Meeker.

Kallies was filming a documentary, "The Art of Steel," (one photo at far right) that featured three Northwest Indiana artists whose art incorporated steel either as a subject matter or as a medium. Meeker was one of the artists. Though Kallies visited Meeker's studio, the gallery was exhibiting all of her industrial paintings which depicted various industrial landscapes which continue to sprinkle the Northwest Indiana landscape.

We began our friendship when he filmed at the gallery.

The documentary would eventually earn Kallies a top honor award — The Phoenix — given by Columbia College for outstanding film and television video production. The award was instrumental in jump starting Kallies' career in television production.

It is my pleasure to share in Kallies' own words on his journey.

"I love television and movies, but never thought that a career in the entertainment industry was possible for a kid growing up in Cedar Lake, Indiana. In junior high school, my friend petitioned his parents to buy a video camera and we immediately began making our own movies. We made slapstick comedies, Friday the 13th rip-offs, parody commercials, and any other stupid amusements that came to our adolescent minds. When High School hit, I was more concerned with dating, my car and playing in a band. Making movies was kid's stuff and too far out of reach in my mind."

"I received an associates degree in psychology from Indiana University Northwest and then transferred to Columbia College to study music. After a year in the music program I dropped out to get a job downtown at an architectural consulting firm.

"During that time, I still played in bands around Chicago for fun and was asked to be part of the house band for a cable access comedy talk show in Hammond called the "Friday Night Club." The show was funny, juvenile, disgusting and cheap — I was hooked.

"I immediately enrolled in the free production classes at the Hammond Public Access station and was soon writing, shooting and editing for

the show. It sounds goofy, but it's true. Cable access changed my life. We spent hours working on a show that hardly anyone watched, but it didn't matter. I knew then that I wanted to pursue television and film as a career.



Photos provided to the Star

Film director, Brian Kallies provided this photo of himself working on "Gargalese," the story of an alien that takes over the body of a prostitute and transforms her into a "tickle monster." Above and right, artists Barbara Meeker and Louis Greer, who use steel in art.

"After working on the show for a year, I assembled a demo reel of my work and enrolled at Columbia College again, this time for television production. My demo got me out of a semester's worth of production classes. Thanks again Public Access. During my second semester of television courses, I obtained an internship at WTTW Channel 11 working on the documentary series, "Chicago Stories."

"At this time I produced, shot and edited my first documentary short subject, "Art of Steel."

It profiled three region artists

Barbara Meeker, Louis Greer, and Cynthia Fredrick) who were inspired by the industrial landscape of Northwest Indiana. Being



the son of a steel worker and having spent a very brief time working in the mill, I always looked at the factories with respect and was awed by their scale.

"A few months after beginning my internship at WTTW, I was offered a temporary position as a paid production assistant for "Chicago Stories." I sped up my graduation by finishing with enough credits to graduate, but not in my concentration. Who cared? I finally got a job in television. During that time I also produced a segment for the arts program, "Artbeat Chicago." After the production assistant position ended, I



entered the world of freelancing.

"With little experience and no reputation, I struggled to drum up business for months.

After I left WTTW I was offered a job at WYIN Channel 56 as production manager, based on my "Art of Steel" documentary. My experience at Channel 56 was invaluable. At that time, the station was undergoing a major overhaul. The amount of time and work that everyone put into making the station better was staggering.

"I produced, shot, directed, and edited series programs, commercials, nightly news, sports programs, and whatever else needed to be done. It was video boot camp.

"About two years later I was offered a position as an associate producer at WTTW to work on their pledge shows. There I helped produce, "Chicago by Boat: The New River Tour" and "Seven Wonders of Chicago."

See Cedar Lake artist, page 3

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Cedar Lake artist

Continued from page 2

Working on those programs taught me what it takes to produce award-winning television. It was humbling and inspiring.



Yes, Geoffrey Bear is really that smart and nice, and the show won a local Emmy.

At the beginning of 2005, I once again entered the freelance world. Since that time I've been producing and/or shooting and editing: independent films, television shows, commercials, industrial videos and documentary features. I love the work. What I once considered kid's stuff, now fills my days.

"But what does all of this have to do with art? To me, art is work. My days typically last no less than 10 hours. In many instances, it doesn't pay to look at the clock. I have heard of weekends, but they usually don't include me in their plans. This is true of anyone who pursues their passion.

"You don't become a self-sustaining artist overnight. It typically takes practice, hard work, sacrifice, faith, and the support of good friends and family. I wouldn't be able to do what I do now if it wasn't for my endlessly supportive family and the love of my life, Tasia. I believe artists are made, not born. Brian Kallies is at (773) 610-5819 or email at bhkallies@mac.com.

Do you personally know any artists? If so, contact Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski, owner of the Steeple Gallery at 11107 Thiel St., St. John, telephone (219) 365-1014 or at samowner@sbcglobal.net.



Photos provided to the Star

Kallies' love of filming has taken him to some exciting places. Clockwise from left are stills from a project he worked on in Fairbanks, Alaska in 2007. The film told the story of two friends who attempt to construct a working mechanical clock, made entirely of ice at the International Ice Alaska art competition. The clock is pictured above. Temperatures during the shoot ranged from -45 to -25 degrees for the entire event. Below is a still from Kallies' film, "An Evening with Emery Long," a story of a love triangle between two industrial carpet salesmen and an office receptionist.



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