

Art Adventure | Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski



Portrait of an artist

For those who are learning to paint, or who simply appreciate and collect art, the diversity of Jeffrey Krafft makes him someone you should know.

Jeffrey holds undergraduate degrees in architectural design and construction technology, and a graduate degree in art education and instruction. But, it was during his studies in construction that he managed an art gallery. This temporary position changed his direction in life, and he soon decided to live the life of a professional artist and instructor.

"My time at the gallery really taught me a lot about the "business" of art, and how it really can be a successful career choice. This is one of the most common points Jeffrey likes to make

when dealing with students of all ages. Having the additional training in education gave him a unique perspective, besides simply learning to paint. Although most of Jeffrey's teaching has been to adults, his time spent teaching young people in the school system gave him the insight as to why the art programs are treated differently than other "core" subjects.

"First of all, art is a discipline like any other subject, and to be successful, you must also treat it like any other business" - Krafft says. "Of course wanting to express yourself is part being an artist, but to make a living at it, you have to be realistic, be skillful at it, and produce something people want. You don't see restaurant owners just cooking what they personally like to eat!"

Jeffrey observed this necessity when managing

the gallery, and he decided to pursue the business of fine art publishing. Today, he does sell original paintings upon occasion, but he mainly concentrates on selling high quality, low volume limited editions - for several reasons. "First of all, like any other business, volume of sales is critical if you expect to survive - no matter how you sell." When asked about the "sanctity" of selling reproductions, Krafft says, "The critics of selling art reproductions simply don't get it. They forget that many of the great masters understood the need for selling in volume by becoming print-makers themselves - these critics may want to re-take their art history class?" - jokes Krafft t. "And, to only sell original works, that are often very expensive to buy, is to discrimi-

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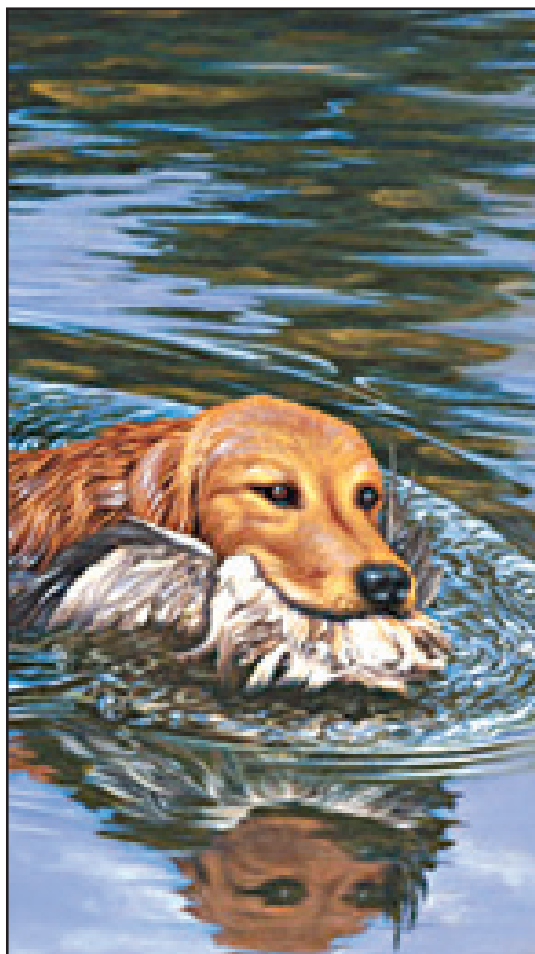
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Artist

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nate against those who may not have the \$5000 for a painting they would enjoy as much as any other. If an artist's true objective is to communicate and share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences with others through painting, why sell to only a wealthy few?"

Jeffry has also been a professional musician since age 16, then later got into producing music. Today, he takes advantage of his other passion by writing special music and literature to accompany his more elaborate paintings.

"My favorite artists, including Michelangelo, are the genre painters; and they were actually great storytellers.

So, since so many people ask me what a painting is about, I find this a unique way to explain it. I also get so much from hearing music myself, I like the idea of including all of our senses when trying to tell a story, or express an experience using paint," said Krafft.

Jeffry also strongly encourages people to learn what they can outside expensive formal institutions. He recently had a local "how-to" painting show on Comcast Cable, and due to its success, is now producing a new behind-the-scenes show for the Florida-based "Visual Arts Network" and Chicagoland Comcast.

For now the shows are nonprofit and he is currently looking for funds and/or sponsors to support such assets to the community. "This show is like no other since it covers all aspects of painting as a professional."

The show also travels to areas of interest, interviews artists and those working in the visual arts world, and also includes unique lectures and demos by Krafft and other guest artists.

"Our goal is to have the most informative, helpful, and entertaining painting show on television. I'm doing all I can to produce the show I wish I could have watched when I was learning to paint — even though I will never stop learning something new."

Jeffry will also be part of a diverse group artist show held at The Steeple Gallery in St. John at the end of June.

A select few of Kraft's paintings are currently on display at The Steeple Gallery.

More information about Krafft or his television show, is at www.jeffrykrafft.com; and on the upcoming group artist show, visit www.thesteeplegallery.com.



Photos provided to the Star
Artist and musician, Jeffrey Krafft has created beautiful and popular works of art, many of which are oil on canvas as is "Breath of Light," at left. The painting depicts a woman frolicking in a forest in a natural state. Below, "Wetlands" brings the viewer into the serene wooded area, complete with a gentle stream. On the facing page, at top right is a photo of Krafft used on his Web site; at lower left, a portrait of a faithful golden retriever is captured doing its job in another oil on canvas; and at lower right, a pensive young woman with a book, is the focus of his painting, "Inspiration."



C.P. city employees drop pounds to aid juvenile diabetes

Mayor David Uran, in conjunction with the Mayor's Office of Special Events, the Crown Point Community Foundation and Niemeyer's Decorative Stone & Dirt are proud to announce that Crown Point will begin a new pilot 12-week weight loss program, Getting Healthy in Crown Point. The pilot voluntary 12-week challenge is designed for all city employees, city council representatives and board and commission members to become healthier.

The weight loss challenge began April 28 and will continue to July 11. The program will demonstrate the importance of becoming healthy while also being a worthwhile cause — as \$1 per pound lost of the winning team or up to \$1,000 will be donated to the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation-Indiana State Chapter, via the Northern Branch.

The new initiative kicked off at the first official weigh-in ceremony at Niemeyer's Decorative Stone & Dirt, 810 N. Indiana, on April 28, where teams of city employees, boards and commission members and city council representatives were weighed-in by collective teams on the truck bed scale that operates in 20-lb. increments.

"I am proud the city is taking such a positive role in

become healthier and assisting such a worthy cause," Uran said. "The program will increase exposure to healthy living and the benefits are significant savings in health care costs, considering the amount of money saved through prevention of future obesity-related medical costs."

An informational letter was sent to all employees, boards and commission members and city council representatives and the response was overwhelming to the new initiative.

"We have about 68 participants signed-up for the pilot weight loss program," said Jennifer Bzdil, director of special events.

After the initial weigh-in, each team will be required to select a team captain, if not already identified, who will motivate the team with weight-loss tips, healthy menu option information, and at least one outdoor activity for the team to have a group workout during the challenge.

As the program continues, each team will be required to weigh-in every two weeks — a total of six times — throughout the initiative. As not all team members are on the same schedules, weigh-ins will be conducted at two different times. If a team member is unable to meet scheduled weigh-ins at Niemeyer's due to emergency situations, being

out of town or extenuating circumstances, they are required to weigh-in at the Mayor's Office of Special Events or mayor's office during businesses hours either the day after or day of weigh-in, or that participant's poundage loss will not be counted.

At the final weigh-in ceremony, tentatively set for July 11, a representative from the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation-Indiana State Chapter, via the Northern Branch, will be present to accept the donation check along with the winning team, Crown Point Community Foundation and celebrity guest.

"The Crown Point Community Foundation is pleased to partner with the City of Crown Point as they begin 'Getting Healthy in Crown Point,' said Pat Huber, executive director of the Crown Point Community Foundation.

"This program promotes physical fitness and the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle.

"The foundation is hopeful the program will be extended to the fall of the year, so that more organizations and community members can benefit from this program.

Good luck to all the teams," Huber said.