

Art Adventure | Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski



Cedar Lake artist's story

See page 3 for Mary Oleksy's voyage through art using oil painting as a primary medium.



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Artist Mary O hails from Cedar Lake

Cedar Lake's revitalization continues to delight its residents.

During this "Lake Renaissance," outstanding Cedar Lake citizens are being recognized and rediscovered everyday — artist "Mary O" is the latest in a rising tide of local talent.

Mary Oleksy, or "Mary O" as she's known in the art world, has been a summer resident of Cedar Lake since she can remember, and a permanent resident since "two weeks before Christmas of 1961."

She is thrilled to see the positive changes taking place in her home town, and looks forward to many more.

"I love Cedar Lake and always have. This town is just beginning to realize its potential once again!"

eventually attend the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois in Chicago. She also worked in the dean's office at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where her passion for art was rekindled.

"The school back then was small and intimate. The dean was passionate about the art students, the art exhibits, and the Art Institute of Chicago was very inspiring. I would eventually leave as I got married and had children," she said.

Oleksy continued to work and raise a family; she retired about four years ago, leaving some time for pursuing her love of art.

Currently, Oleksy's medium is oil on canvas. The subjects vary from moments of natural inspiration and beauty to dance, music, and life. Oleksy is currently painting a portrait of a jazz bass player which captures the cool style of the musician.

"I am drawn to any subjects who are living their passions through art. They can range from dancers, to singers, to even the messages a photographer portrays through their lens. Their passions inspire me.

Oleksy was recently showcased at a local Cedar Lake restaurant, At Pier 74 Pizza Grill, owner and head chef, Ryan Spencer conceived the idea of the art exhibition. He's been hosting shows at his restaurant with various artists since June.

When I asked Oleksy about the show, she stated: I was fortunate to be the "Artist of the Month" at Pier 74, an outstanding local restaurant. This program gives exposure to local talent and brings an ever-changing theme to the restaurant's walls. I was thrilled (and humbled) to see my works displayed for all to see. This display was also highlighted in an area newspaper. The local public library has offered to showcase my works as well. There is also talk of a Public Art Festival in Cedar Lake next Labor Day. I feel that would be a great boon to the Town."

As with most artists, I asked Oleksy why she paints.

"As with most hobbies or art, painting allows me to express myself. I have been able to show love for friends and family by giving gifts of art. I can take their passions and paint the images that reflect and inspire them. And to me, my reward comes in the faces and reactions of the recipients."

For further information on her work, or to



Photos provided to the Star
Mary Oleksy has always appreciated art and recently took up oil painting after retirement. Based on works shown here, her talent is timeless. Shown on page 2 are "Ducks," painted in oil on canvas; also a picture of the artist with owner/chef of Pier 74 in Cedar Lake, which featured her work as shown in the picture. On this page, from top, another oil titled, "Ballerina." At left, inspired from "Carmen," another oil painting featuring a Spanish lady. Below, the majesty of a cantering horse is another of Oleksy's subjects. She prefers natural images and uses such techniques in her portraits as well.



commission Mary O for a project, please contact her at agency77@gmail.com.



The award-winning painter's talent sprang from a humble beginning, and began in an unusual manner. Her career in art began as a gift from her daughter Michelle in the form of painting classes. The classes are offered by Wes Berrier and take place at the Hobart Arts League.

Six years and many brushes later, Oleksy's work has been seen around the region in exhibits and fairs, as well as commissioned works in private collections.

Her interest in art began in Chicago, while attending grade school when her parents and teachers encouraged the youngster with artistic ability. The City of Chicago's incredible architectural landscape impacted Oleksy, who would

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