

Art Adventure I Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski



CROWN POINT
STAR



Custom framing resolutions

New Year's resolutions are here again!

Some people vow to lose weight or quit smoking, or "be a better person" or to donate or volunteer for a charitable cause.

But now more than ever, Americans are opting to make resolutions to stop frivolous purchases, and are choosing to only buy the necessities such as food, gas, and shelter.

With the uncertainty of the economy, families are spending more time at home. So the out-of-state family vacations and dining at restaurants are taking a back seat to "more family time." After all, the biggest gift anybody could have is spending more time with the ones who are near and dear.

Just yesterday I visited a trendy big box retailer which offered up to 75% off of their merchandise. Mountains of clothing beckoned consumers to buy the leftovers.

The empty aisles were a clear sign that consumers were not "buying it."

I would like to propose a new year's resolution to the readers of this column. I resolve to get your keepsakes, memorabilia, and cherished items custom framed in 2009!

Why spend money on meaningless mass-produced made in China products which merely have a decorative value?

You could invest money in an object which has emotional value and meaning to you and/or your family; it will bring joy and a soulful experience for as long as the piece remains in sight.

Tony Lipka, The Steeple Gallery framer, couldn't agree more. He's been associated with the gallery for the past three years.

Before the Steeple Gallery, Lipka spent years with The Great Frame Up, Deck the Walls, and Jordan Studios.

"Now, more than ever people are nesting at home," Lipka said.

Spending more time at home makes the homeowner want a "nice" home.

Why not invest in custom framing which is a meaningful expense for the entire family?"

I asked Lipka why should people go to a professional framer instead of buying a mass-produced frame from a big box retailer. "You wouldn't go to a doctor to get your car repaired," he said. "I offer a more personal service."

"I'm not a high-school kid working part time — I've been in the framing industry for nearly 20 years, and have won several awards within the industry with my framing designs."

When I prompted Lipka on the big box retailer's coupons he continued, "People are under the impression that the 50% off coupons on the custom framing are a big savings."

"But they really don't know the retailers inflate the price a thousand times and then offer the coupons to give the impression that the con-

sumer is saving tons of money.

"The consumers are really just paying for retail in the end. For the money, I would suggest, go to a professional who specializes in framing only."

Tony Lipka's aesthetic sense is very much like a fine artist. He has over 50 custom-framed original works of art with about half of those hanging in his dining room.

His bachelor's degree in architecture with a focus on structural engineering has played a major role in designing the custom framing creations.

I asked Lipka what was the biggest mistake people make in framing. "People mess up on the framing because they base it on price. They say I want the cheapest frame or only want to spend "X" amount of dollars.

"You should always frame based on what is best for the art work. If you frame to the artwork, the piece will look great wherever it's hung.

"I make the frame an extension of the art-



Photo provided

In the above pastel portrait commission by Mike Cheklichm, Tony Lipka provided custom framing to best enhance aspects of the artwork. In the next column, "The Bean framed by Lipka) is an oil painting by Steeple Gallery artist Jerry Points. At the bottom right, a painting by Peter Xaio- with 4 frames adorns a living room.

work. It actually becomes an extension of the art. (In the above photo) "Here is a superb example of framing. The black suede mat extends the pastel drawing. The antique silver frame and fillet are the perfect combination for the cool color palette."

Jesse Chavez of Whiting, commissioned Mike Chelich to create a pastel portrait of his children for his wife as a surprise Christmas gift. Chavez also asked for a specialized inscription "Our Love's Creation" to be placed within the framing as well.

Chavez said his wife loved the present and will cherish it always.

Art collector Greg Jezior recently had several



pieces of art custom framed by Lipka.

The oil painting (above) was executed in soft silver tones.

Tony chose an antique silver frame and stacked a maroon frame with a high gloss which reflects some of the color and patterns within the framing. The embossed design on the surface the frame has a structural grid-like motif which brings out the linear quality of the painting.

The final product has a masculine, refined, and classic feeling.

Jeziior explains, "I've had the privilege of seeing Tony's craftsmanship and creations first hand.

"He is truly an extraordinary artist in his own right. He's an artist for the art.

"The significance of framing art is invaluable... it is art. It is vital to the art that it embodies. Framing completes the vision. Quality framing will draw the viewer to the art," he said.

"Bad framing will distract one by pulling the eyes away from the art work. Anybody can draw and paint, but that doesn't make him or her an artist. Anybody can put a frame on a work of art but that doesn't make him a framer."

Tony, on the other hand transforms the art and frame together and then makes them come alive, Jezior said.

On a recent installation of a large oil painting Lipka framed, a very elated Cedar Lake client told Tony, "You've almost brought a tear to my eye with the beauty you brought to this painting. This is one time the framer outdid the artist."

That is really the best satisfaction for Lipka. (I know this happened because I was present when he installed the painting.)

Story continued, next page (3)



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Custom framing continued —



Photos provided

A selection of Lipka's framing projects range from movie posters to shoes.

I asked Lipka if he could foresee any trends in framing. He said, "Now that mass produced small scale frames have flooded the market. more people are choosing to spend their money on large scale framing jobs for significant pieces such as oil paintings.

The painting (page 2, lower right) has at least four frames in the painting. Contrasting hues make a statement for this oil painting. The ivory frames and the rust colored inset frame bring out the chiaroscuro in the painting. This



painting gives off an electric glow effect.

I also asked Lipka what was the most unusual thing he has framed in his career.



"It would have to be the umbilical cord." He further stated, the most meaningful thing he's ever framed was his grandparents hand-colored photographs.

He's also framed the original light saber used by Darth Vader in "Return of the Jedi," and pictured at far left, a guitar that once belonged to Ringo Starr of The Beatles.

He's also framed the original 1963 script of Cleopatra, as well as a pair of reproduction

above; dozens of jerseys of sports stars, as well as numerous diplomas, holes-in-one, mirrors, and newspaper articles and photos complete his framing expertise.

If you would like to view more samples in person, visit The Steeple Gallery, or schedule an appointment with Tony at the gallery. He will offer a free lecture on framing in the near future. Contact the gallery if you are interested or visit www.thesteeplegallery.com, or at samowner@sbcglobal.net.

Budget matters in C.P.

By KITTY CONLEY

Money budgeted but not spent in 2008 by the City of Crown Point came to a grand total of \$3.5 million in budget cuts. This will reduce the advertized 2008 Budget.

The total cut from city departments came to more than \$1.1 million, and from the Crown Point Redevelopment Fund came a total of over \$3.3 million. The grand total is \$3,534,494.50. All of this was approved by the council at their last meeting of 2008 on Dec.29.

That money cut from the budget is funds not used by the individual departments. It is now eliminated. "I want to thank everyone. The department heads used their money wisely," said, Mayor Dave Uran, D. They've saved the tax payers a tremendous amount of money." In addressing the department heads directly, Uran said, "You and the clerk/treasurer (Patty Olson) did a great job on your budgets and helped the taxpayers."

Before he made the motion to approve this reduction, councilman Bob Clemons R-2nd, asked some of the department heads if this hindered thier ability to do their job. Both Police Chief Pete Land and Fire Chief Greg DeLor said no.

Some new police and fire personnel had not been hired because the city's 2008 budget had not been approved by the State, until late in the year. That saved money, a lot of money, out of the police and fire department line items for salaries and wages. Those positions will be filled in 2009.

Clemons asked Jay Olson, public works director, about road salt supplies. "The availability of salt is about one third of what we have been able to get before, and we're paying three times more for it," he said. "December was such a bad month we have gone through one half of our allotment that was in the barn already."

The city usually buys 6,000 tons of road salt. According to Olson, the city was only able to purchase 2,100 tons of salt this winter.

Olson wanted everyone to know that it is not budget constraints that limited the city's supply of salt. "We would pay more if it was available, we may have to add sand slag to stretch it out." "In the upcoming water bill there is information on our salt supply," said Patty.

Clemons wanted to make shure that his constituents had all the information on the lack of salt throughout the area. Jay told the council that some communities did not get any salt at all this year.

Because of the increased cost of salt this winter the council also approved a \$29,000 transfer of funds from repairs and Maintenance Supplies to the Materials account to pay for the higher cost. — continued, page 5

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