

Art Adventure I Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski

Art, chamber of commerce, education



Recently the St. John Chamber of Commerce collaborated with Lake Central High School students in St. John on an innovative poster campaign

which combined art, education and commerce. The inspiration for the project came from Dean Shilling of Schilling Brothers.

"I was walking along the shops in Holland, Michigan when I noticed that most of the shops had a poster in their business or storefront which stated 'Buy Local.' I thought this was a great idea. In today's Internet and big box store age, it is easy to forget about the benefit of buying local. Many people assume that the internet or national retailers are less expensive. Very frequently they are not. Most local businesses are competitive and actually sell for a lower price, but this can get lost in the onslaught of advertising coming from the national companies," Shilling said.



Photos provided to the Star

Students at Lake Central High School in St. John recently designed posters urging area shoppers to "Buy Local." Posters, pictured at left, above and at right, were judged by a group of local business professionals and educators. Judges included Mark Hill, Dean Schilling, Dr. Chabot, Superintendent of Lake Central School Corporation, Nick Georgiou, of G & K Development, and Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski of The Steeple Gallery. At right, is the first-place poster, designed by Chris Perez and Jen Gamboza.

Members."

One unique element of this campaign was having Lake Central High School students create posters as part of a contest. A group of local business professionals and educators selected the winner, and judges on the panel included Mark Hill, Dean Schilling, Dr. Chabot, Superintendent of Lake Central School Corporation, Nick Georgiou, of G & K Development, and me, Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski of The Steeple Gallery.

With the leadership of two Lake Central High School teachers, Sarah Verpooten (teaches Digital Photo, Quiver, and Introduction to journalism) as well as Maureen Yaeger (teaches Visual Communications and Graphic Design & Art) there were numerous creative submissions from the students. Working on teams, approximately 45 students participated in the three-week project.

"The students loved the idea that they were doing something in the real world, something that had actual implications," said Verpooten.

"The students in my class participate in numerous assignments that would be the type of project a graphic designer would be involved in. I normally have them participate in at least one contest type of assignment per semester so they can see how to design with a specific purpose, particular audience, with specific requirements," said Yaeger.

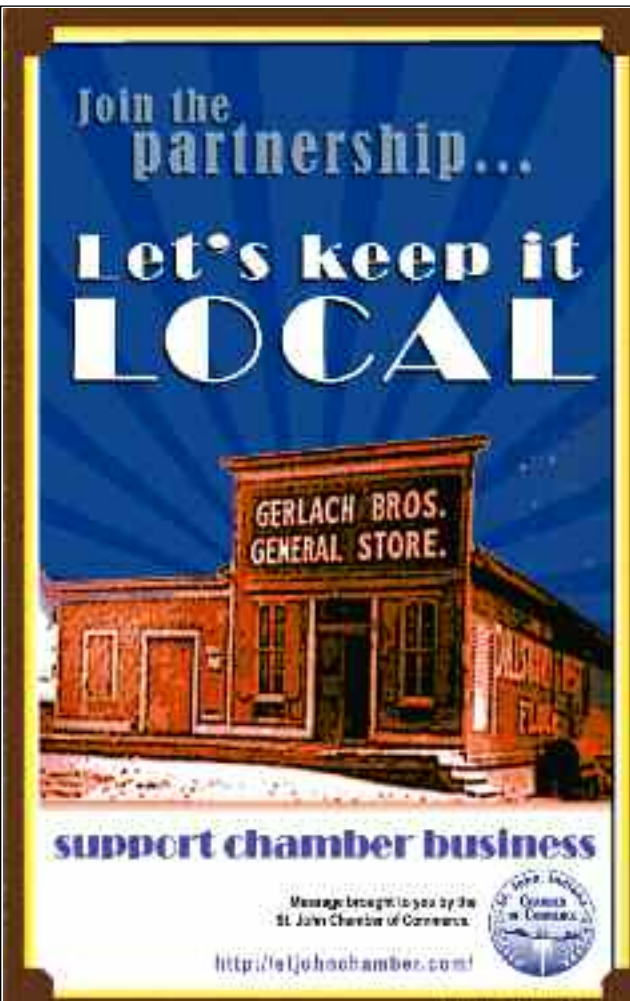
"It's a good experience because often an artist believes what they like and what they create is all that they need. I think it is important the students understand that sometimes a client has specific needs, wants and desires. The client's vision may not be the same as the artist's vision. Often the

idea has to be modified, revised or totally redone because it is not what the client wants. At the same time, I also tell the students that if they really believe their idea is the best, then they need to 'sell it' to the client," Yaeger said.

"I think the chamber poster was a great thing for the students. It allowed them to see how this entire works in real life. Initially the chamber gave very general specifications, but when the posters were turned in, many students got them back and were asked to make changes before the judges voted on them.

"Ultimately, I think it is also a great way for the business community to use the resources available to them and recognize the talents that young people can bring to the table. If we can begin to tap in to their talents and young, fresh, inquisitive minds, we might be amazed what can be accomplished together."

Architect, and poster judge Nick Georgiou says, "I was impressed with the quality and creativity of the high school students that participated in the competition. There was a far-reaching range of styles and designs that were presented. Their interpretation of the requirements, that the chamber provided, was carried off quite well with the finalists in the competition. When we sat to judge the finalists, we had a difficult time narrowing it down to a single winner. Since there were four or five that really stood out, we decided to incorporate the top five posters into a marketing campaign for the chamber. We will be highlighting a poster each quarter for the upcoming year and ask all of our business/merchant members, who have store fronts, to display the posters in their windows and in their businesses.



By rotating the winning posters, we have effectively created a very dynamic "Buy Local" campaign that should attract attention and business for our members.

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R& B Fine Printing of St. John will print the complete series of five 11-inch by 17-inch posters.

Chris Perez's team created the "Buy, Build, Employ" poster submitted multiple concepts and I was impressed with his effort and enthusiasm. "This wasn't a conventional project, and that's what I appreciated about it," Perez said.

"We had the opportunity to truly create something that could possibly have real implications in the real world."



At top, each group from Lake Central High School, poses with their posters designed to keep shoppers, "Buying Local." Immediately above, Mark Hill, president of the St. John Chamber of Commerce, congratulates Chris Perez (center) and Jen Gamboa (right) designers of the winning poster, pictured on page 2 at lower right. The remaining two posters below and at left were chosen as the five finalists in the poster contest.

Photos provided to the Star

Promote Local Business

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sljohnchamber.com

poster by Arwa Castrejon and Stephanie McAvoy

"It was exciting creating everything from scratch. The project gave everyone involved a chance to try their hand at being creative. The poster my partner and I created and won with, was nicknamed 'America' around the school, was all original. We went out in the cold one day and my partner took photographs of the St. John water tower, and we photo-shopped everything and based the actual design from an old 'Animal Farm' cover we stumbled across.

"We played around a lot with different versions of our idea. I ended up creating two very different versions of posters. There was the 'America' poster and then the other design was nick named 'Russia.' I had seen some old posters in a poster books which were provided to us for inspiration; they were sort of grainy and had no color except for this powerful red," he said. "I took that idea and fused it with some of my other favorite Russian art movements. The result was a 'propagandist-type style,' art which I absolutely loved. "The end result made by his "tweaking" was one of the most popular picks.

2010 Chamber president Margot Babineaux, is excited to continue this enthusiasm throughout the upcoming year.

"Our 2010 board of directors realize the importance of incorporating this kind of community involvement in our mission to facilitate economic growth of our members within the community."

BUY LOCAL

Support and Build OUR COMMUNITY

Dr. Chabot, Superintendent of Lake Central School Corp., said "We appreciate the St. John Chamber of Commerce involving the Lake Central High School students in the recent poster contest.

"I believe our students produced a series of posters that our community can use to communicate the pride and support of local vendors. Best wishes as we invest in quality educational partnerships," Chabot said.

Currently all five posters are on display at the Steeple Gallery, 11107 Thiel St. in St. John.

We encourage students, parents, educators, business owners, patrons and anybody interested in this story to come out and view them personally.

Stay tuned for an possible reception at the gallery for the student's posters. On a personal level, this is certainly one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences I've had at the chamber. Call (219) 365-9572 or e-mail samowner@sbcglobal.net

Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski owns the Steeple Gallery, in St. John; and can be reached at www.thesteeplgallery.com.

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