

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

ANDREW STEELE

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Nothing like a parade

Monday brings to Crown Point's Main Street that quintessentially American and curiously popular spectacle, the 4th of July Parade. It's impossible to imagine the 4th without it, but almost as hard to fathom its magnetic hold on people, both as viewers and participants.

This year, of course, the parade is one of those quadrennial marches that mark the unofficial start to a municipal election campaign. The t-shirts and Tootsie Rolls are surely prepared for the parade of candidates who will take the opportunity to connect with hundreds of voters through displays of their sweaty vitality.

Alas, not many of those folks are facing competition this year. The mayor's race, the City Council at-large and the council fifth district races remain the only competitive ones.

That's not necessarily bad — to the extent that the incumbents are perceived to have done their jobs properly, they deserve to reap the reward of easy reelection. But competition in the political system has many of the positive qualities that competition in the marketplace has — a winnowing effect that, over the course of time, produces the outcomes that best serve the public.

So an attentive electorate, and an attentive cohort of citizens interested in serving in elected office, would find reason to challenge incumbents, just as attentive entrepreneurs locate and exploit competitive opportunities in the marketplace.

One of the ironies of a community growing as quickly as Crown Point in recent years is that its population seems to become less attentive even as it grows larger, and political activity tends to decline.

Another part of the problem is that all of this plays out on a partisan political basis that may make sense nationally but does not make sense on a local level. The two political parties are simply clubs and support groups locally. Does it really matter whether your mayor or councilman is a "D" or an "R"?

Of course not. And forcing people into these categories is likely one of the hindrances to getting people involved. It's not just a matter of people having to declare publicly their political leanings, it's making them participate in a structure managed by people who actually believe that these things do matter on a local level.

We'd be much better served if political parties stuck to national and state campaigning. Local politics would be better if they functioned similarly to school politics, where local issues and interests bring people together to solve problems.

In a way, it's a case of "The Emperor Has No Clothes" — party organizations parade themselves unashamedly through city and county campaigns, and voters seem not to see how silly they often makes themselves look, and how unnecessary they are.

WEEKLY PLANNER

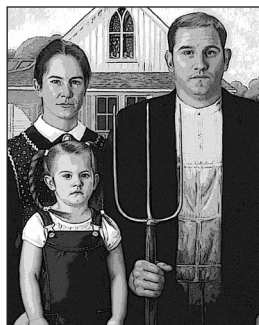
Outdoor concert: 6 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Trinity Lutheran Church, 250 S. Indiana Ave., Crown Points, no alcohol or glass bottles, 663-1578

Cedar Lake Summerfest: 5 to 11:30 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Saturday, 7 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, music, fireworks, games, cardboard boat race, parade, amusement rides and more, visit www.cedarlakesummerfest.com

Crown Point 4th of July Pa-

rade and Fireworks: parade, 2 p.m. Monday, Main Street; fireworks, dusk, Lake County Fairgrounds

Lowell Garden Club Garden Walk: 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Saturday, July 9 and Sunday, July 10, tickets are \$8 each and available at Gardens on the Prairie, 3242 W. 169th Ave., Lowell; Leo's Feed & Garden Center, 13406 Wicker Ave., Cedar Lake and The Artful Garden, 611 N. Indiana Ave., Crown Point, 696-8282



ART ADVENTURE

SAM DALKILIC-MIESTOWSKI

C.P. artist finds inspiration in life and nature

Fine artist Gerrie Govert has lived in Crown Point for nearly 35 years. She's a prolific artist who has received numerous awards throughout her life. I asked Gerrie to share her thoughts on why she creates art, and her artistic journey:

My Art is an expression of my soul. I want to do something significant with each piece of art.

I studied at Indiana University Northwest and at the American Academy, Chicago. I also spent many years at a private art school, Drisi School of Fine Art. I was a member of the Palette and Chisel Academy for eight years.

I was born in Illinois, and raised in Indiana. I was the oldest of three girls. My family moved several times during my school years, which meant I was always the new kid on the block. I was shy, read a lot and created games from scraps of building materials. I was my father's helper as he built homes and assumed that I could create anything I wanted to.

I married, had three children and went to work for several local photographers doing their negative retouching and backdrops for their studio work. I thought I needed to improve my technique so I decided to go art school, which immediately became the new focus of my life.

Painting portraits is like studying human nature at its best. It is my desire to capture more than the physical likeness of the subject. I want to portray emotion and a glimpse into the person's inner spirit as well.

Landscapes: My primary goal is to find a place of peace to let my paintings flow. I am currently working on completing a series of studies from my travels this summer.

The colors that are created with the changing seasons always inspire something new, even in the same locations.



Gerrie Govert is a long-time, award winning, artist.



A pastel landscape by Gerrie Govert with the Indiana dunes as its subject.

You can look at the water forever; it is mesmerizing.

I have been working with a camera and the dunes for over 30 years and I never come back with any thing like the last group of photographs. If I was lucky enough to live there I might never get any thing done, between walking the waterfront for miles, painting and photographing; it seems like I am always trying to capture that next wave.

Each painting is like a puzzle. It is up to me the artist to search for the successful combination of elements to solve the puzzle and complete the work of art. This search, and the eventual discovery of the solution, is what inspire my artistic growth.

For further information visit www.wix.com/gerriegovert/gerrie-govert-art-gallery. The Steeple Gallery, 11107 Thiel St., St. John will be exhibiting works of Gerrie Govert this fall.

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