

Clubs & Organizations

Needle Artisans to meet

The Needle Artisans of Northwest Indiana will meet at 7 p.m. Feb. 6 at the Munster Community Center, 8751 Lions Club Dr., Munster. The topic will be "edging techniques."

Participants in classes must be a member of the guild and must register in advance. Contact Elaine Hein at 663-6391 or at ECHein@yahoo.com, or visit the website www.surfnetinc.com/nani.

Junior tennis

The Southlake YMCA is teaming up with the United States Tennis Association to start an indoor tennis league for children 10 years and

younger.

USTA representatives will be at the Southlake YMCA at 6 p.m. Feb. 7 to educate interested participants, coaches, and sponsors about this new program. Food will be provided.

Participants in the league will receive a USTA membership, uniform and tennis racket. The winners from the league will be automatically qualified to play in the sectional championships in Indianapolis in August.

Practices and matches will be held from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays starting in June. For more information contact Carl Zurbriggen at the Southlake YMCA at 663-5810.

Retirees to gather

Retirees of Youngstown Sheet & Tubing, LTV, ISG, and Mittal or invited to the Feb. 8 meeting of Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees - SOAR - at 1 p.m. at 7047 Grand Ave., Hammond. The meeting topic is health-care.

Art Adventure I Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski



Art marries art

In the last column, I talked about St. John artist Richard DePirro whose wife, Karen DePirro is also an

artist.

Born and raised in a working class family in Chicago, Karen Depirro (nee Schroeter) was the first born of two children. Karen's mother was a homemaker, and her father worked at U.S. Steel on the south side of Chicago.

Karen grew up with a typical blue-collar upbringing. The father worked and provided for the family, while the mother tended to the domestic duties. The word "art" or anything that had to do with art, wasn't in her culture or vocabulary. Karen wasn't exposed to anything that was even remotely related to art until her senior year in high school, when a student art teacher from the School of the Art Institute casually mentioned she should apply to the school.

She would eventually apply to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, be the first person in her family to receive a college degree, and then attend the school on a full scholarship.

Karen graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting with a minor in art history. Her area of particular interest was the Renaissance period. The Renaissance masters would influence her style of painting for her entire life. The paintings below and at right reflect not only her educational achievements, but her early life experiences growing up on the south side of Chicago in the 50's and 60's.



Her childhood experiences included bike rides to the Field Museum and Museum of Science of Industry, riding the public busses alone, going to the Rainbow Beach, and vacationing on weekend visits with her grandparents, which often included stays in Cedar Lake.

She would later relocate to Northwest Indiana, teach at Thornton High School where she would meet her husband, another art educator, Richard Depirro.

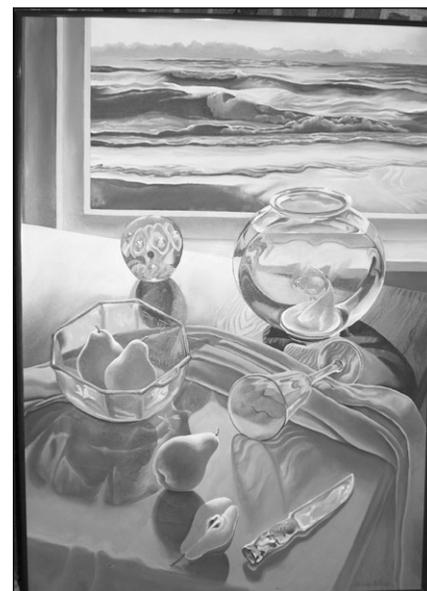
Until she had children, Karen DePirro primarily painted life-sized, super realistic, figurative works of art. She entered many local art

fairs including, the Old Town, Park Forest, 57th Street, and Northwest Indiana Arts Association. She won numerous awards including the Grand Prize at NIAA. Being a mom didn't stop Karen Depirro from creating art. She did switch to pastels on paper due to convenience and accessibility.

Her focus on pastels created a new market. Even though her pieces were considerably smaller in scale, the intensity and craftsmanship were outstanding.

All of her still life pastels sold, which is quite an achievement for any artist. Now that her sons are grown, Karen still feels the passion to create. Within the past five years she has returned to large scale realistic oils. She continues to enter art shows and competitions inspired by her childhood experiences.

Interested in finding out more about Karen DePirro? Call 219-365-4667, or visit www.karendepirro.com.



Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski owns and operates The Steeple Gallery, Ltd. in St. John, Ind. Please email your comments to: samowner@sbcglobal.net.

▶ **PREVENTION**

▶ **TREATMENT**

▶ **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Drug Free Alliance

Sheriff Roy Dominguez & Prosecutor Bernard Carter

Announce Free Grant Application Seminars for Lake County Community Groups

Tuesday, February 6th
6:30 pm
at the Sheriff's Office in Crown Point

Wednesday, February 7th
1:30 pm
at the Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond

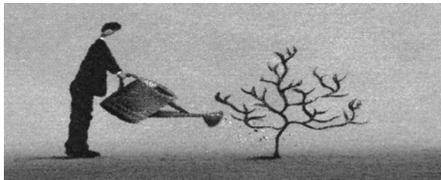
Thursday, February 8th
10:00 am
at Genesis Center in Gary

Please RSVP to
219-648-6121



\$1 Million in Community Grants Already

Awarded by the Lake County Drug Free Alliance



ADDRESSING THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCIES AND PLANTING SEEDS FOR A STRONGER LAKE COUNTY