

ACCENT

The News Chief's guide to entertainment and lifestyles

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She makes portraits an art

By ANNA K. TURNER
The News Chief

LAKELAND — Chryssle Tavrdes' current status as a full-time working artist is the result of years of study and work — and a lifelong ambition.

"This is what I have done since I was very young and this is what I have studied forever," says Tavrdes, 59.

The successful Lakeland artist has two works on exhibit in Ridge Art Association's Fine Arts Competition, which runs through Feb. 5 at the Chain O'Lakes Complex in Winter Haven.

A Chicago, Ill., native, Tavrdes wanted to be a fashion illustrator when she was a child. Her father, a commercial artist, encouraged her to draw.

While in elementary school, she attended free Saturday morning programs for children at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago.

In high school, Tavrdes attended eight-week summer courses sponsored by the American Academy of Art.

She briefly attended Culver-Stockton, a small college in Missouri, before entering the School of the Art Institute, where she received a bachelor's degree in art.

Her husband, James Tavrdes, is a civil engineer with Jacobs Engineering in Lakeland. They have four children.

Though Tavrdes' artistic works are diverse, she is widely known for her portraits.

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Portrait of Ada Montero

Nature is a continuing inspiration to artist

By LISA RODRIGUEZ
News Chief Correspondent

WINTER HAVEN — As a child in Lititz, Pa., Dale Eitnier grew to know the Amish people. Observing their lives and learning about nature on walks in the woods with his father, he gained an appreciation for things "simple and basic."

Those qualities continue to influence Eitnier, an established painter and woodcarver and founder of the Ridge Woodcarvers Club.

Eitnier helped establish the club about four years ago.

"I did that because there were so many people older than me who were

doing nothing," says Eitnier, 56.

"Lee Eberly, Gene Wolf (fellow woodcarvers) and myself got together and met with other men who had some skill in carving, and then we thought that we should get more people involved," he says.

Today, the club has 35 to 40 members and meets once a month at an area restaurant to show pieces each has been working on. "We have both men and women," Eitnier says.

"It's not just a club for woodcarvers or retirees," says Eitnier. "Anyone can join who has an interest in art."

Woody Wilson, the current president of the club, sees the club as an opportunity for art enthusiasts to be recog-

nized and believes Eitnier's work has been an inspiration.

"There are a lot of people who can do some fantastic work and I'm trying to get these people interested in our club and get their work displayed," Wilson says.

"Dale is also a fantastic artist and a great asset to our club."

Eitnier's art often reflects his interest in nature that dates back to his younger days.

"I've been in all the national parks in the United States working for a living, because I had to work to pay my way through college. At the same time, I learned something of wildlife

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