



"An artist cannot fail; it is a success to be one." ~Charles Horton Cooley



Creating Art by the Sea

BY JESSICA WESTERLAND



Mike & Debbie Gallo in their art gallery

Almost everyone has one thing they are good at, or one thing they really love doing. Not everyone gets to make their living doing the thing they love, but Mike Gallo does. He is an artist, and sign maker, and is very good at it.

Mike moved here as a kid and went to Wildwood High. He grew up in Wildwood, where his family owned a bar. He always loved drawing, and at his parents bar he met his mentor Harry Lanza. Harry gave him 5 painting lessons and helped him turn his lifelong love of drawing and art into a job he could make a living at- creating signs and murals. "He was kind of my hero," Mike said of Harry. "You can't always just dive into art and be a starving artist, but sign painting was a way to supplement my income and do art."

Growing up he had other odd jobs until he was able to have his own sign painting business, but his life experiences have all helped him build into the excellent artist he is today.

His art and projects involve many different kinds of media. Mike can work with metal, carve wood, and create paintings that also incorporate sand blasting and air brushing, and frequently has the help of his wife Debbie as his assistant on larger jobs.

You can find his work on the walls and on the signs of many local places, some of which are: The Ravioli House, Kona, The Crest Tavern, Mulligans, North Wildwood Elks and Winterwood, the metal sign at the Wildwood Vietnam Memorial, the Korean War Memorial and the new Coleman-Cal-lahan Memorial Park in Wildwood Crest.

He and Debbie live in a log cabin home they built themselves- and Mike used knowledge his 'do-it-yourself Father' passed along to him as well as brick laying skills from one of his earlier jobs to build his house and complete details like his stone fireplace. "It was a lot of work and a lot of hours, but worth it," Mike said. The whole house only took a year

to build, with the assistance of his wife and a few contractors to help with things they couldn't do alone.

On his property, besides his house and sign workshop, he also has a gallery filled with his art. "It's nice when I have time to do something strictly for myself," Mike said. The walls of the gallery are full of his painting, many of which are nautical themed, or inspired by nature. Mixed in with the paintings are carvings he has done, including several in his yard from a humpback whale to a totem pole representing his family.

One thing that is consistent with Mike's work, whether you are looking at a sign, a painting, or a carving, is a noticeable joy in his work. All of his pieces are meticulously detailed and executed, and give you sense of the joy and pride that went into their creation. Mike Gallo is truly a talented artist, and all you have to do is look at some of his work to agree.



Mike created this Korean War Memorial by the Viet Nam Memorial Wall



Mike painted the beautiful Italian landscape scenery that wraps around the Ravioli House building on Bennet & NJ Aves.

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Remembering C bo Gallo



Mike & C bo, his cockatiel daughter

By Jessica Westerland Mumford

Sometimes a pet is more than a pet. A pet becomes your companion, and your friend- one who improves your life each and every day.

C bo was Mike and Debbie Gallo's cockatiel, and she was their companion- from the beginning of their day to the end of their evening.

She woke up each morning and ate breakfast with Mike- usually sharing his cereal or waffles, or a little bit of whatever he was having. After she finished her food she would nudge his arm and go sit on his lap until he was done, and then they would continue their morning routine and get a shower. "I would take her out of the cage in the morning and she would fly up in the shower, wait until I would get done and get a drink," Mike said. "And when I had time, she would sit on my arm and let the water splash on her and put her wings up and head down and do her little [bathing] ritual."

She would also eat other meals with the Gallo's, and loved foods like icecream, pizza, wings and pasta. While Mike and Debbie relaxed in the living room and watched TV she would be sitting with them, on them, or nearby, and when they went to sleep they would move her into the cage in their room when it was bedtime.

The only time they were ever apart was the 9 days she was missing, after accidentally flying out of the front door. The Gallo's posted an add in the Shoppe, asking for information on her, and after 9 days of searching someone called them. A woman who lived in the Villas was walking down the street and heard a strange song, unlike a wild bird's song, and saw C bo up in a tree. C bo flew down and perched right on her shoulder, and the woman took her home and called the Gallo's to tell them. "My wife called me and told me someone found C bo, and I was on my way to Wildwood, going over the bridge. I got to the bottom and instantly turn around... We got to her [the woman's] house and walked in and in the living room we see a cage just like ours, and there she was. It was unbelievable!"

C bo shared the same birthday as Mike, which is March 8th. She was 18 years old, and just passed away in her sleep on April 11.

She was deeply loved, and will be greatly missed.