

Timpkos Go North Looking for Love, Culture, and Art

ENDIES MIKTOP, SENIOR STAFF REPORTER

The birth of Chuck Timpko in Rome occurred too late for Caesar to notice, Denise Timpko tells me.

"In point of fact," she says indignantly, "No Caesar paid attention at all to his birth."

No doubt the excuse for all of the various Caesars not remarking on the Timpko entrance to the world is their own deaths a couple of thousand years earlier, I say to myself, with a noncommittal expression on my face.

"Those ingrates," Denise points out, "They fail to notice the interest my husband pays to *them*. Books about them inhabit the finest, catless library in our house—upstairs behind closed doors. So this year when our travels led us to only a few miles from Rome, we pointedly followed roads to other cities."

She continues, "This year we sought a wedding, culture, and art in Vermont; Granby, Quebec; and Saratoga Springs, New York. And not

a single Caesar was mentioned, not a one."

It may be difficult for this holiday party audience and this writer to understand Denise Timpko's thought process. Perhaps her ancient Egyptian focus drives her to a new plateau of fantasy. Does she enjoy watching Stephen Summers' *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns* because she believes mummies can return to life? Does she really think that 2,000-year-old Caesars should have, or in this case *could* have, issued press releases celebrating the birth of her husband in Rome? Or is she, as they say, a tad bit off?

Let's get back to the Timpkos' 2007 vacations. I go to interview Chuck Timpko.

"First," he tells me, "Allow me to clear something up before you write even another word. I was born in Rome, New York, not Rome, Italy."

Okay, that puts a different twist on this article. At this point, it's best for



Maxfield Parrish exhibit at the Cornish Colony Museum in Windsor, Vermont

me to ignore the cities of Rome and concentrate on straight journalism.

"So why did you go to Vermont?" I ask him.

"Because we wanted to see it," he says. "And the wedding of a

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Holiday Party Guest Honored by Coffee Table Display

DISENE PIMKOT, STAFF REPORTER

Ashburn, VA—Chuck Timpko, *aka* the great Chef Charles Michael Timpko II, announced that he set up the display in the coffee table in the living room in honor of one of the holiday party guests. He refuses, however, to name the guest but says that he and this person worked together for a number of years.

"Everyone should be sure to examine the display," Timpko advises. ■

Welcome to Chez Timpko

- Place coats in the Dinotopia room upstairs, up two steps, and straight back. Bathrooms are on every floor.
- Drinks (sodas, wine, beer, and water) are in the garage. ■

Rules of the House

- Touch NOT the books.
- Smoking allowed OUTSIDE the house and in the garage.
- Errors in this newsletter are solely due to your imagination.
- Be sure to see the new Timpko headboard in the master bedroom crafted by the goddess herself. Don't mention any errors. ■

The Goddess Speaks

An annual column written by your own hostess, the goddess Denise

Where to start is the question for summing up 2007, the goddess Denise remarks.

“In this column, logic dictates that we should start with ourself,” she says.

She explains that her divinity took a big hit when on the morning of May 5, 2007, a stray gallstone liberated itself from the confines of a gastrointestinal tube and burst through the tube with the power of an exploding volcano.*

Fortunately, the rather sharp pain lasted only briefly and she resumed her activities. As a result of this somewhat irksome and definitely nondivine experience, she announces that the word *goddess* must now be written with a lowercase *g* in front of her name§ to reflect this all too human event.

“People may,” she very generously proclaims, “Feel quite comfortable in using the name *Denise* when speaking to us rather than bowing and addressing us as ‘O Holy Goddess.’”

“In addition,” she continues, “Discoveries of further divinity did not distinguish 2007 since genealogical fact finding did not occupy any of our time.”

In other words, she didn’t dig up another Norse god or king of Scotland, although notice that she has adopted the royal *we* in her speech.

The year 2007 brought a second great-niece, Emerson Grace Harlow, to her family tree on April 11. Emerson, like her brother Max and cousins Cody and Pepper, may now say—that is, when she learns to talk—that she’s the 43rd great-grandchild of King Malcolm II. Of course, to do so means totally ignoring the questionable reliability of the information on the

One World Tree (see *Chez Timpko News 2006*). No doubt, however, when her Aunt Denise explains the wonders of being a goddess (Emerson will be the 77st great-grandchild of Njord, the Norse god of prosperity and the wind), she, too, will announce her divinity to the world. If she’s lucky she won’t have inherited liberating gallstones and will thus feel able to use the capital *G* in *Goddess*.

The gallstone experience occurred during Chuck and Denise’s minivacation in May to marvel at the wonderful King Tut exhibit, which was at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. Fortunately, the volcanic eruption didn’t interfere with their sixteenth wedding anniversary on May 4 (the day before said event) nor with their enjoying the King Tut exhibit. The poster of the previous King Tut exhibit in the United States, which was at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1977, hangs in Denise’s office. It reminds her that she purchased it 30 years ago. One, of course, must remember that goddesses are ageless, even if *goddess* is written with a lowercase *g*.

At the Franklin Institute Chuck and Denise bought a small reproduction of Tut’s mummy case, which they sent to their great-nephew Cody Bertsch for his ninth birthday. Cody responded with an e-mail saying that it was “the best present ever” and that it was joining his “colecshun of things from around the world.”

In May Denise and Chuck said goodbye to their dainty cat Camouflage who had reached the age of 19. Until the last two weeks of her life, she remained in fine form, running

as quickly as she ever did and belting out her usual lion-size meows that said “Pay attention to me.” Cinnamon moved into the head cat position, and Maxine sleepily rejoiced that Cammie wasn’t slapping her in the face for the whim of it. Losing Cammie was the second big hit to Denise’s divinity.

This year Japan hosted the World Science Fiction Convention, or Worldcon. Unwilling to pay the bucks or frequent flyer miles to fly to Japan, Chuck and Denise took two week-long vacations, one to Vermont and Quebec the first week of July and one in October to the World Fantasy Convention in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Other events of the year included enduring a 90-minute commute one way to work in Washington, DC; hosting a tea for which she made damn good scones (thanks to her friends Karen Smith for finding the ideal recipe and Mariann Reddy for giving her the cookbook), learning how to tile (in particular the do’s and don’ts of grouting), sporting a five-o’clock shadow on her chin at a wedding, losing the up-to-date address list for this party a second time (Chuck’s eyes roll), buying a somewhat expensive painting, writing short stories (no, not published), and nearly losing all of the data on the hard drive of her computer three weeks before the party.

“It has been,” the goddess says, “a fairly busy and diverse year for anyone, despite our divine status.” ■

*Gallstones can form even without a gallbladder (hers was removed two years ago).

§Except in the titles of newsletter articles, which as any good editor will tell you should be written with an uppercase *G*.

Ancient Egyptian Design Salvages Homely Table

It obviously is the production of an amateur tiler,” Denise Timpko says, describing the table her husband’s mother gave him years ago.

“The table was probably bought by Chuck’s mom in the ‘60s,” she says. “Originally, it looked fine, although plain. Unfortunately, it lost any looks it had years before Chuck and I got married and combined households. Yet it is a very functional table. The top turns around like a lazy Susan, making it perfect for holding a TV set.”

For over 16 years Denise pondered how to improve the table’s looks. This year an idea came to her as she was thinking about the Las Vegas trip she took some years ago.

“We stayed at the Luxor casino,” she said. “The theme of the casino is ancient Egypt, so all of the decorations are reproductions of ancient Egyptian designs, including statues. The casino has an excellent reproduction of King Tut’s tomb showing how the tomb appeared when it was first discovered.

“In the giftshop I found tiles that had ancient Egyptian designs on them, and I bought five of them for what turns out to be a highly inflated price.”

She shrugs. “I was and am quite happy with them. I absolutely adore tiles, especially tiles that have pictures on them. I am quite easy to please. Just give me a picture.”

A greeting card on the back of each tile explained the Egyptian design on the tile. Denise admits it

From this table, which showed its age . . .



took years before she thought of removing the cards and looking on the actual back of the tile for the manufacturer’s name.

“Duh,” she says, “One would think my brain had fallen out my ears. Once I saw the name of the manufacturer, it took only seconds to

google the name and find the manufacturer’s website. That’s when I saw not only the actual price of the tiles but the fact that there are 13 tiles in the series. Then I thought of the old table.”

She pauses. “Years of watching *Trading Spaces*,

While You Were Out, and other such home improvement shows convinced

me that it was time for me to try tiling. Nothing I could do to the table would make it much uglier than it already was.”

Initially, she began to paint the table creamy white to be a background for the tiles. On a whim, however, she picked up the can of Rustoleum Hammered Copper spray, which was bought for another project, and began spray painting the table.

. . . to this reborn gem



Closeup of the tiles

“It looked very cool,” she says. “When I placed one of the tiles on top of the table, the colors of the tile and the copper worked very well together.”

After painting the table, she went to Weller Tile, a local tiling company, to select the glass tiles that border the Egyptian tiles on the top of the table.

“Chuck helped me decide the placement of the glass tiles. Originally, I wasn’t going to leave any space between the Egyptian tiles and the glass tiles, but I was having some difficulties in laying out the tiles. Chuck suggested leaving the space.

“I now need to wait until warmer weather to complete the table.” ■

Chez Jimpko 2007 Menu

Appetizers

Spinach-Artichoke Cups
Savory Mozzarella Cups
Spicy Shrimp and Crag Bruschetta
Chutney Cheese Spread
Peppered Turkey Mousse on Chili Corn Squares
Green Chile Cheesecake
Corned Beef Pinwheels
Crostini with Mushrooms, Prosciutto, and Blue Cheese

Entrées

Portobello Lasagna with Basil Cream
Lasagne with Pink Sauce, Leeks, and Sausage
Cashew Curry Shrimp Salad
Heavenly Ham and Turkey

Side Dishes

Confetti Barley Salad
Waldorf Salad with Lentils and Pine Nuts

Desserts

Apricot Chocolate Torte
Hazelnut Gateau Breton
Pomegranate Cheesecake
Pumpkin Tiramisu
Orange Cheesecake with Candied Kumquats
Maple Pumpkin Cheesecake
Gingerbread Lemon Cake
Dark Chocolate Tart with Gingersnap Crust
Flourless Chocolate Hazelnut Cake

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coworker in Granby, Quebec, was the reason we took a vacation in July. We toured Vermont on the way to Canada.”

“Actually,” his wife chimes in. “We wanted to tour Vermont because Chuck’s parents and their friends raved about their trip there some years ago, and the wedding gave us the impetus to go.”

“As I said,” Chuck shrugs, “We wanted to see Vermont.”

“So what was the best thing you saw in Vermont?” I ask.

“The Maxfield Parrish exhibit,” they both say simultaneously.

“And it wasn’t on our list of things to see,” Chuck says. “When we were in Bennington, the first town we visited, Denise saw a flyer about the exhibit in Windsor, Vermont, on Parrish. It was right on our way, the second day of our trip.”

“Actually, it was the third day of our trip,” his wife corrects him.

“We drove to your mom’s outside Allentown the first day and to Bennington the second day.”

I could swear I heard Chuck mutter something about technical writers being so literal.

“On July 2,” he says, “We drove to



Hildene Mansion, summer home of Robert Todd Lincoln and his family, Manchester, Vermont

Manchester to tour Hildene Mansion, which was built by Abraham Lincoln’s only surviving child, Robert Todd Lincoln.”

Lincoln built Hildene as a summer home. He, his wife, and three children would go to Hildene in the spring and return to Washington in the fall.

Lincoln was a successful lawyer, Secretary of War for President James Garfield, and later president and chairman of the board of the Pullman Car Company. He died at Hildene on July 25, 1926.

“The house and its setting were beautiful,” Denise comments. “And, of course, the gardens were lovely. The sad thing about Hildene was that there are no descendants from Abraham or Robert Lincoln alive today. Robert’s only son died at seventeen from an infection, and, although Robert’s daughters married, their grandchildren did not have children.”

She pauses. “After we toured Hildene, we drove northeast through the Green Mountain National Forest to Weston where we went to the Vermont Country Store (www.vermontcountrystore.com).

We had a good lunch and then we spent quite a while looking at all the different things in the store. It has games, clothing, linens, glasses, pots and pans, kitchen gadgets, and old brands of food—Walnettos or

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Clark bars—that you don’t see in the grocery stores these days. I bought a Shari Lewis Lamb Chop Puppet for our great-niece Pepper for Christmas and a bright turquoise Melamine plate, saucer, and bowl for my lunches at work.”

“And we bought two Vermont leaf ornaments for our Christmas tree at the Christmas store across the street,” Chuck says.

They then drove to Windsor to see the Parrish exhibit “Coming Home! A Retrospective Exhibit of Parrish, Manship, Faulkner, and Zorach.” All of these artists were members of the Cornish Colony, which was a large group of painters, writers, painters, sculptors, and critics who lived in Cornish or Plainfield, New Hampshire. Painters were drawn to the beauty of the Connecticut River valley. Parrish kept a post office box in Windsor, Vermont.

The exhibit included murals, studies for murals, recovered art works, and restored paints, some of which were never exhibited before. The Timpkos were enthralled.

After Windsor they headed for the Calvin Coolidge Historical Site in Plymouth Notch. One of Chuck’s comments about Vermont was that there was only one U.S. president born in Vermont: Calvin Coolidge. He was also the only U.S. president sworn into office by his father at his family home. Vice President Calvin Coolidge happened to be at home helping with the haying after they heard of President Warren Harding’s unexpected death. When reporters asked Coolidge’s father, John Coolidge, a notary public and a former state senator, how he knew he could administer the presidential oath of office, he said “I didn’t know I couldn’t.”

Plymouth is a small town. When Coolidge became president, village

residents numbered 29.

“And it doesn’t look like it’s grown much since then,” Denise says. “Coolidge’s family home is pretty small as most houses were at that time. It wasn’t like Hildene Mansion. It was a home for farmers.

“But folks who work at the U.S. Dairy Export Council, where Chuck works, should note that the cheese factory John Coolidge built in 1890 still produces cheese.”

The Timpkos set out north from Plymouth Notch to Norwich on Interstate 91.

“We were heading for Norwich because I wanted to see the King Arthur Flour Company’s store,” Denise said. “I make bread frequently and occasionally buy ingredients or bread-making items from King Arthur.”

“I buy cooking tools from King Arthur as well,” Chuck says.

“So,” his wife said, “We were curious to see King Arthur’s store in person. I was hoping to buy items, like different flours, in person because it would avoid shipping costs. And we very nearly missed seeing it at all.”

Her husband nods in agreement. “It was the evening of July 3. We arrived at the Norwich Inn, which was closed. We tried to open the door. It wasn’t locked, so we went inside the hotel only to find that no one—absolutely no one—was there.”

“While we were wondering what to do,” his wife says, “A couple of kids came in, looking for something, I think, and we asked them where everyone was. They told us that the hotel manager was at a barbecue not far away and offered to take us to the site.”

“So we followed them to the barbecue, which was just behind the buildings in back of the inn, and found

the manager. She accompanied us back to the inn and signed us in.”

“She had left a note for us in the mailbox outside the inn’s door with our names on it,” Chuck mentions, “But who looks at someone else’s mail



Camouflage Timpko
("Cammie")
Age 19
Rest in Peace

for their own names? It’s too bad she didn’t put a note on the door.”

“We did ask her if she knew whether King Arthur Flour would be open the next morning, July 4,” Denise comments. “She said that everything would be closed on the fourth, so we

took our suitcases up to the room and came back down to head off to The Baker's Store. When we got there, we only had 35 or 40 minutes to spend looking around, and, yes, indeed, the staff said it was closed on July 4. But we had time to buy a few things."

That evening the Timpkos drove to Hanover, New Hampshire, which was just across the Connecticut River not far from Norwich, where they ate dinner.

Until they got their bearings, they drove through the Dartmouth College campus.

"The next morning, I think," Denise recalls, "We went to the

Wilson Castle in Proctor. This house is in dire need of someone rich or some nonprofit organization to keep it up, although the owner lives there in the servant's wing. I don't think she has the money to maintain it very well.

"It was built in the mid-1800s and has some lovely stained glass windows and antiques."

They then headed to the Vermont Marble Exhibit in Proctor. The museum featured detailed displays on quarrying of marble and granite. One room had very large slabs of marble and granite from around the world. The gift shop tempted Denise, but the Timpkos limited their spending to a few gifts for friends and family.

"Years ago," Denise recalls, "I stayed at a hotel in Las Colinas in Irving, Texas (just outside Dallas) that had marble counters and floors in the bathroom. The curbstones on the street were pink granite. Marble and granite

obviously make an impression on me. Of course, most impressive were the Bronze Mustangs running across a stream in a field of pink granite."

The Timpkos then headed to the Billings-Rockefeller Mansion in Woodstock, Vermont.

"Chuck reminds me," Denise says, "That we changed some things around on our itinerary. I'm not so sure of the order of when we did what. But I think we went to Maple Grove Farms

in St. Johnsbury next. There we watch a film about the maple syrup business in a log hut. I was impressed with the gift shop where we spent a lot and we each ate a soft-serve maple ice cream cone and sat in chairs outside the gift

store admiring the gorgeous scenery of farmland."

"We arrived in Montpelier that afternoon and checked in to the Inn of Montpelier," Chuck says.

Montpelier is the capitol of Vermont. It was the only place in Vermont where they stayed for two nights. They went to the Vermont State Capitol and the Vermont Historical Museum. On the second night in Montpelier as they were walking from the restaurant to their car in somewhat poorly lit parking lot, Chuck said something to his wife. When she didn't respond, he turned around.

"I didn't see her for a moment," he says, "Then I noticed her sprawled on the ground."

"It was a surprise to me, too," his wife comments. "I fell hard. My left hand took much of the blow. Here it is December, and my left pinkie is still slightly swollen.

"When we got back to the inn, Chuck noticed that I had a bruise on my chin. By the next morning it was dark purple and black, and I had a wedding to attend the next day. Ack!"

They drove from Montpelier to Granby, Quebec, the next day. On the way they stopped at the Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory in Waterbury. Unfortunately, the next tour was an hour after they arrived, and they didn't have time to wait. So, since they needed lunch, they drove to a casual restaurant on Mount Mansfield in Stowe run by the Trapp family. The view from the restaurant looking over the Green Mountains is stupendous.

"The view surrounded you no matter where you sat in the restaurant," Denise says.

They bought a couple of books in the gift shop that presented the story of the von Trapps (yes, the family of *Sound of Music* fame).

They arrived at the hotel in Granby later that day and drove around the town to familiarize themselves with it.

At dinner that night, Denise realized that she needed help with her hair. That morning she had found it difficult to blow dry her hair properly with her injured left hand. She asked the waitress for the location of the nearest hair salon. The next morning she and her husband drove to the mall and found the hair salon. A half-hour later Denise paid the 19 Canadian dollars with glee.

"I felt human again," she says. "The lopsided bruise on my chin made me look like I'd been in a hell of a fight, but at least my hair looked good. I could now show up at the wedding and not shame Chuck too much."

The wedding was small and intimate. Held at a very nice restaurant, the bride and groom (Annie Bienvenue and Chris Robinson) were able to get outdoor pictures, including one with the Timpkos. The food was



Vermont Capitol in Montpelier

wonderful and the Timpkos had a good time. The five-o'clock shadow on Denise Timpko made for amusing conversation. The Timpkos spent time talking with neighbors of Annie's parents and with Chris' aunt and uncle. The neighbors advised the Timpkos to get a very early start the next morning on their return to the United States. As Chuck and Denise discovered the next morning,

with only two gates at the border in operation, lines at the border were very long. Despite their getting up very early (4 a.m.) to get to the border by 6:30, they waited about 75 minutes

before the U.S. Customs officer allowed them to enter the country.

"If you're going to cross the border, never drink anything when waiting on U.S. Customs," Chuck says.

Denise agrees. "The sodas were nearly our downfall. Fortunately, there was a McDonald's within a half mile of the border. In the line for the restroom, I met every other woman who had just crossed the border. There were at least 9 women in line before me."

The last day of their July vacation was a long day of driving.

"Yeah," Denise says, "But it was a great vacation. We ate at good restaurants, saw interesting places, drove through thick forests. We learned at the Billings-Rockefeller Mansion that at one point in the 1800s timber was such a hot commodity that



Annie and Chris

Woodmont was nearly void of trees. Now, however, the forests are thick and stately.

"My only disappointment," she says, "Was not seeing a moose."

SARATOGA SPRINGS

In October 2007 the Timpkos headed north again, this time not for Canada or Vermont but for Saratoga Springs, New York, to attend the World Fantasy Convention, which is on the nearest weekend to Halloween.

The big draw of the World Fantasy Convention was its art show in which only professional artists display their artwork. Most of the art consists of paintings or drawings; sometimes there are sculptures.

On the way up, the Timpkos stopped at Egypt, the Allentown suburb where Chuck's mom lives and spent a couple of days with her. Then they drove to Saratoga Springs.

"I was hoping to see the beautiful fall leaves," Denise mentions. "On the mountains we crossed, trees had long since lost their leaves. In the valleys, however, orange and red leaves clothed the trees, much to my satisfaction."

Finding the Saratoga Springs Hotel and Conference Center, she says, proved a bit frustrating. After driving up and down Broadway, the number 534 didn't appear on any of the buildings.

When they couldn't find any building labeled 534, Chuck played a hunch and turned right on the street by a large red brick building. When they had nearly circled the block, they came upon a parking lot labeled "hotel parking." Uniformed hotel staff at the semicircular entrance at the back of the building helped the Timpkos unload their luggage. When Chuck mentioned the lack of an identifiable hotel sign at the front or sides of the building, the staff explained that there was a delay in getting a sign posted but it was in

the works. Whatever that really means, Denise thought.

Their room faced Broadway and was well equipped with a king-size bed, small refrigerator, table and chair, a window seat, and a very comfortable chair and ottoman.

"This is a very plain undecorated room," Chuck commented. "This hotel doesn't seem to have been a hotel for long."

"But at least it has two chairs," Denise said. "We'll be able to play pinochle comfortably."

That night they ate in the Italian restaurant directly across the street from their room and found the store at the nearby gas station carried Diet Coke (neither of the Timpkos like coffee). Returning to the hotel, they played pinochle and started Denise on a winning streak for two days.

"I feel quite accomplished to beat Chuck," Denise says. "He's such a good player that when I win I can fantasize about being a good player, too."

The next day they began to explore the town. Everything in the city revolves around horses and the racetrack. For example, one or two full-size decorated horse statues appeared on every block of downtown Saratoga Springs. The main souvenir shop sold 10-inch tall decorated horse statues; sweatshirts, caps, key chains, postcards, etc. One store sold riding outfits. A couple sold saddles and other riding paraphernalia.

WORLD FANTASY

The convention started on Wednesday and authors, artists, and fans began to pour into the hotel. Convention attendees numbered about 800 people.

When the dealers' room opened, the Timpkos began to explore the wares, mostly books.

"Unlike worldcon," Chuck says,

Egyptian Wall Achieves Tomb Effect

ENDIES MIKTOP, SENIOR STAFF REPORTER

Ashburn, VA—In spring 2006, nearly a year ago, the Egyptian wall in Chez Timpko underwent a metamorphosis into the absolutely latest faux tomb decoration. Folks who came to the 2006 holiday party at the Timpkos may have noticed some of the change

Although the Egyptian Wall contains a non-Egyptian item (if you can't tell, it's the Roman cow), it definitely pays homage to ancient Egypt.

“Well, forty-some odd years after being a child in grammar school who became enthralled with ancient Egypt, I've been envisioning a wall symbolizing Egyptian tombs and artifacts,” Denise Timpko says. “Without the resources of an Egyptian pharaoh, sponge painting seemed the way to achieve the tomb effect.”

“Next year,” she says, “The wall should contain hieroglyphics officially welcoming guests to Chez Timpko.”

The Egyptian Wall



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“the dealers' room at world fantasy cons consists almost entirely of books. People who go to world fantasy cons are readers.”

“I think there was only one jewelry dealer,” Denise adds. “I was happy to see Bruce Coville, a children's author, in the dealers' room. He not only writes books, but his company, Full Cast Audio (www.fullcastaudio.com), produces unabridged books in audio format, which are acted out with all of the different characters. They are excellent.”

The Timpkos felt deep satisfaction when they entered the art show. Some of their favorite artists displayed several of their paintings: Donato Giancola, Ruth Sanderson, Bob Eggleton, Omar Rayyan, and Tom Kidd.

One of Donato Giancola's paintings fascinated Denise.

“Well, they all did, actually,” she says. “But this particular one—named *The Golden Rose*--was very unusual. The artist told me that

someone in Italy had bought this painting.”

“This one claimed my attention because the more you looked at it, the more details—which you didn't see at first—became apparent. You're looking down directly from above—a bird's eye view. At first you see a woman holding a man whose head is in her lap. They're on a rocky beach,

but you notice that it's night, sometime in the very early morning, about 2 or 3 a.m. The expression on the woman's face is profound grief because you then realize that the man is dead, evidently drowned. The water is lapping beneath cloak.

“Two naked men who are exceptionally pale lay on the beach near the

woman and man. The red areas on their bodies make you think they were

slain by a sword, but then you notice that the sword wounds are actually gills.

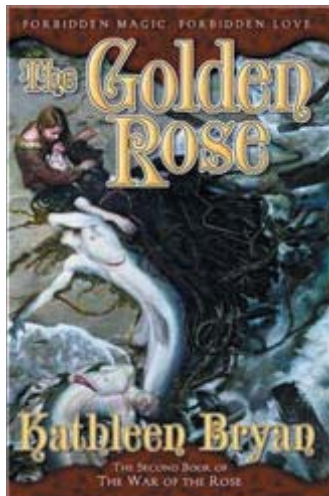
“Their curved bodies aren't human; waves break over the tail of the one whose whole body is in the painting. The men are mermen, and they, too, are dead. Could they possibly be drowned? Rope and broken wood washes up on the shore bearing witness to a shipwreck or some tragedy.”

“The artist told me when I was talking to him on the last day of the convention that he had planned for this gradual realization of the details.”

On one night of the convention, Denise went to “The Evolution of a Drawing” session where three artists, Donato Giancola, Bob Eggleton, and Shaun Tan demonstrated their drawing techniques.

“Their techniques were very different,” she says, “but very good.”

One night Chuck and Denise went out to dinner with Mark Doer of McFarland Press (<http://www.mcfarlandpub.com/>), which publishes limited runs of very reference and scholarly books. The Timpkos, particularly Chuck, buy books from McFarland nearly every year.

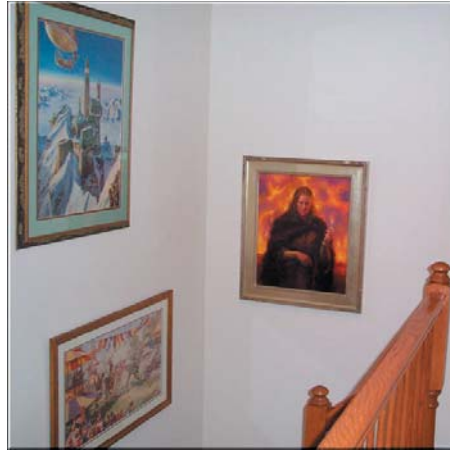


The painting that Denise found so interesting; the actual painting far exceeds this reproduction

“The best thing about the convention,” Denise says, “Was the painting we bought from Donato Giancola—*The Mystic and Rider*.”

The painting, which now hangs at top of the stairs going to the second floor in the Timpko’s house, is the cover art to Sharon Shinn’s book 1 of the Twelve Houses series.

“At a session I attended at the convention,”



Donato Giancola’s Mystic and Rider (on the right) hangs at the top of the stairs to the second floor; on the left are prints by James Gurney, the artist of Dinotopia.

Chuck says, “Giancola mentioned artists sent digital files of their paintings to the art director at publishing houses. The directors then play around with the files changing colors in the picture. When you look at the painting upstairs and then look at the cover of the book, you’ll notice that the changes immediately. They changed the color of the hair of the woman in the painting.”

“The painting is so

much better than the cover art,” Denise says.

So this reporter asks which vacation they liked best.

“Both were great,” Denise says and Chuck agrees. “But they had different purposes. After all, the first was to learn about Vermont and celebrate love, while the second was to indulge in books and art. We did both rather well.”

“Of course,” she adds. “I want to go to Rome and harass Caesar.”

It was bad of me, I must admit, but I had to ask, “Which one? Rome, New York, or Rome, Italy?”

Someone told me once that Denise Timpko could dish out very telling stares.

“Well,” she said and I felt my stupidity quotient in her eyes brim over the top, “Both, of course.”

Headboard Surprises Chef Charles Michael

A few years ago, Denise and Chuck’s mom gave Chuck tile reproductions of two of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s paintings. Chuck and Denise both like Alma-Tadema’s art.

The problem with the gifts were that the Timpkos weren’t going to use the tiles, something that Denise had not thought of. So Denise considered this problem for a few years. Last year she decided that the tiles would be very interesting as part of a headboard for their bed. About 4 months ago, she decided how she wanted to create

a headboard. Four weeks ago she found a company that sold decorative moulding that didn’t cost as much as wood moulding. So she bought a 30- by 80-inch door to her friend Karen’s house to begin staining and sanding it. She added a 24- by 80-inch door to serve as the base of the headboard. Denise, with lots of help from Karen,



Headboard

began spray-painting the moulding and gluing and nailing it to the upper door.

Denise then adhered the tiles to the door, and they glued ropes of cord around each tile. The small tile,



The expression on Chuck’s face when he first saw the headboard

which is also a reproduction of Alma-Tadema’s paintings, was one Denise had found on ebay.

On the day of the holiday party, a handyman, Karen, and Denise installed the doors on the wall behind Chuck’s and Denise’s bed. Denise invited Chuck, who had been in the kitchen cooking entrees for the party, up to see the headboard. He liked it!