



JUST ASKING

BY MARY KLEST

Why did you participate in the Barrington Roundup?

I asked artist Mary Lane.

Mary Lane was one of many to arrive early at the Barrington Area United Way Roundup auction in October. The fiberglass horses that stood regally on our town walkways and streets were being sold to raise funds in celebration of United Way's 50th anniversary. Five of the horses being auctioned were her creations. A live horse owner, she said, "I painted subjects I love on a canvas I love."

She never had the opportunity to paint on a life-size horse. In her 30-year career as an artist, she's taken her brushes to clothes, vehicles, walls, and, her specialty, transparent watercolors on canvas. She embraced the horse idea as soon as she heard about it, and submitted a design called "Cradles in the Wilderness." Flowing across the horse's back and hind legs are flowers, birds, and animals native to the Barrington area. It won the People's Choice award. "I think it appealed to the nature lover in us all," she said.

After seeing her initial design, other sponsors asked if she would do one for them. "We collaborated to create something that would appeal to a broad audience," Lane said. She browsed the Barrington Saddlery and brainstormed with the owners who liked a fox hunt theme. At Tudor Oaks Farm, the barns inspired her. She toured the property at Walk-On Farms and created a replica of one of the therapeutic horses there. The colt she painted carried a conservation theme.

PHOTO: MARY KLEST



ARTIST MARY LANE.

"While I was in art school the emphasis was not on detailed, realistic painting. Wildlife and conservation were not big subjects," she said. But that was what she loved and still does. After learning technique and materials as a student at The Art Institute of Chicago, she continues to depict nature and animals. It took her a week to finish each horse. "The first one was so much fun. Each one after that was even more fun."

What she liked about the project was the people she worked with. "From the office staff to the president of the [Barrington Area] United Way, they were absolutely determined to make a successful fundraiser." At the auction she was curious to see who bought her horses; the total raised from her horses was around \$27,000.

"I feel good they were able to raise that amount of money for a worthy cause," Lane said. All but one of the horses was bought for private homes. Now they are in good hands with generous owners.

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