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Lines of designs

Local artist pays attention to detail in city montages

By Heather Rule

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Austin artist Bruce Loeschen drew his first city montage, of Austin, in 1979 for an art show advertisement.

When his advertisement seemed to create more buzz than the event, that was the first sign that Loeschen might be able to go forward with drawing pen montages.

"It was a wonderful surprise," Loeschen said. "How often does your ad sell more than your artwork?"

He began to get requests for more city montages, so he made just a few over the next couple of years. As demand for the artwork continued to grow, he eventually reached completing 24 cities a year.

Background

Originally from Golden, Ill., Loeschen is a retired art teacher, having spent 19 years at Austin High School and 15 years in Southland Public Schools before that. He has a bachelor's degree from Wartburg College.

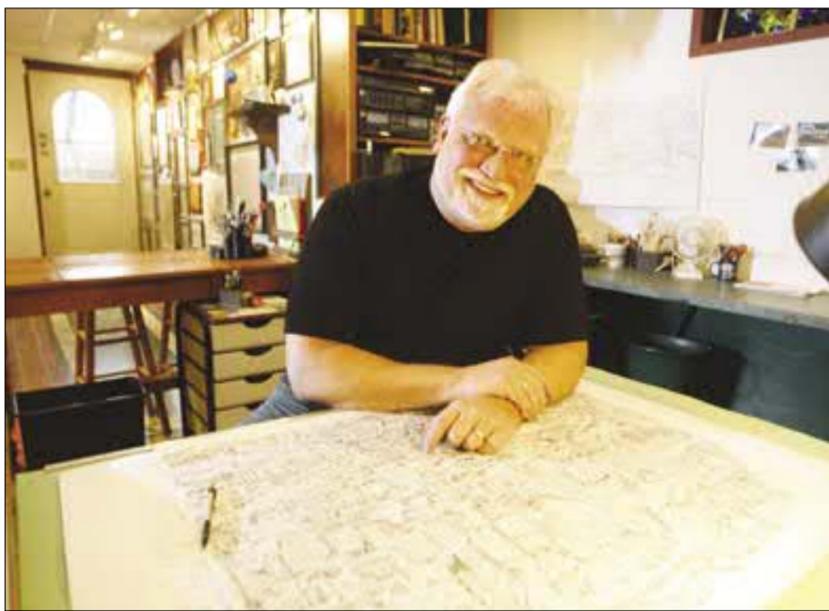
He works through Community Creations to determine what cities he will draw and what items to include. There can be about 200 items in a montage. Of those, about half are landmarks, historical aspects and famous people "to give a character of the city." The other half is ad space, negotiated between Loeschen and the company.

He is sent pictures and lists of items that need to be included. He uses bulletin boards and smaller sheets of paper to plot out the montage based on the items involved and their directional areas in the city.

"It's supposed to look like a 19th century portrait illustration," Loeschen said, "and still keep them photo realistic."

Works of art

Loeschen has drawn more than 200 montages (some cities multiple times.) Thirty-six pieces are from Minnesota cities, like Rochester, Red Wing, Adams, Albert Lea and Owatonna. Fifty-one works have been done for Iowa. Other states include Colorado, Indiana, Illinois, Florida,



Photos by Ken Klotzbach, kklotzbach@postbulletin.com

Austin artist Bruce Loeschen works at his home studio.

Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Maryland, Michigan, Kentucky, Kansas, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

When it rains, it pours. Loeschen said there was a six-week period recently when he didn't have any montages to work on. Then four projects came in the same week.

"It's so busy, I haven't got time to be bored with it," Loeschen said.

As far as his art goes, Loeschen said pen montages are "definitely the focus" for him. His pieces are so filled with detail that they've become easy to spot across the country by friends and former students; they

know it's a Loeschen print.

Other montages are out there, but what makes Loeschen's art stand out is the degree of detail he puts into them. There's one other thing that makes his pieces of work identifiable.

"Every time I do a city, there's a Volkswagen Beetle somewhere," Loeschen said. "And that's a sure sign that it's mine."

"The fun part is the appreciation you get from the work. And it's a great feeling when you've finished it."

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LAKE CITY / OFFICER FATALLY SHOT

Officer Shawn leaves behind legacy of love

By Heather J. Carlson
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LAKE CITY — A devoted husband. A loving father. A dedicated police officer.

That is what friends and colleagues say they will remember most about slain Lake City police officer Shawn Schneider.



Schneider

"He was a family man, a person who put his family first. But his job was right next to it," said Lake City Police Chief Gary Majchrzak.

During a visitation for Schneider on Friday night at Lake City's First Lutheran Church, mourners shared their favorite memories of the man known to many in this small town simply as "Officer Shawn."

Schneider died 11 days after he was shot in the head on Dec. 19 while rescuing a teenage girl from her ex-boyfriend. Authorities say the shooting suspect — 25-year-old Alan Sylte Jr. of Hager City, Wis. — then committed suicide.

REMEMBERING A FALLEN HERO

The funeral for Lake City Police Officer Shawn Schneider will be at 1 p.m. today at First Lutheran Church in Lake City. More than 2,000 law enforcement officers are expected to attend. Gov. Mark Dayton has also plans to attend.

Members of the Minnesota Patriot Guard clutching American flags lined the driveway to the church and next to the fallen officer's coffin. While, members of the Minnesota Law Enforcement Memorial Association Honor Guard stood at attention at the entrance to the church and next to the fallen officer's coffin.

Wabasha County Probation Director Traci Green said Schneider was not only a co-worker but also a friend. Asked what she will remember most about him, she said, "his smile, his sense of humor and his love for his wife."

That love of family was illustrated in the dozens of photos on display featuring a grinning Schneider posing with his wife, Brittany, and their three children, Lillijuana, Colin and Alexa.

He was also a hard worker. Patrick Arendt said his father, who worked at Lakeside Foods, would gather up children willing to help pick up rocks and other items in the fields. Even as young as 10-years-old, Schneider worked hard to help — even when other kids his age grew tired of the task and took off.

Schneider held on to that work ethic. Majchrzak recalled that while some officers would roll their eyes when a mundane assignment would come in, Schneider would never complain and take it seriously. But the 32-year-old officer also had a lighter side. He had a tremendous sense of humor and what Majchrzak described as a distinctive "hyena laugh" that would echo through the police department.

"I'll miss that laugh," he said.

Austin native brews up a career

By Mike Dougherty
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FORT COLLINS, COLO. — Joe Mohrfeld developed a taste for craft beer in college. Now it's turned into his livelihood, taking him from Colorado to Texas in a career that's still young, but budding nearly as fast as the country's microbreweries.

The 2001 Austin High graduate is the head brewer at Odell Brewing Co. in Fort Collins, but he is set to move to Austin, Texas, for a new brewpub effort called Pinhouse Pizza. He'll help showcase beers brewed there and could highlight other craft beers from there and elsewhere.

It's been a different route for a philosophy major from Mankato State University, but it's a path Mohrfeld, 28, is happy to be on.

He seems at home guiding a visitor around the tap room and brewery at Odell, a fixture in the growing craft brewing industry in Colorado. The company is growing, having expanded already and it's likely to expand again as demand and market grows. It employs 60 people and plans to hire more this year, he said.

"I started drinking craft brew in college," he said. "I had a Summit Pale Ale and it was different, but I wasn't sure if I liked it. There just weren't a lot of options then."

Today, the United States is approaching close to 2,000 craft breweries. It's estimated by the brewers association that numbers will increase.

Mohrfeld is riding the upward surge, bullish on brew and how it links people and communities.

"I love what I do at Odell and the beer we've been able to produce," Mohrfeld said. "And I like how the industry is going, developing beers by regions and by brewers. It's similar to the culinary world and how chefs in different regions develop followings."

That's what he's hoping to cultivate further in the other Austin, not his hometown. At Pinhouse Pizza, he's hoping to foster a following for his beer and raise awareness of other brewers in the city, region and elsewhere in the country.

Mohrfeld's rise as a brewer started at Mankato with home brewing. His taste developed on road trips with buddies and when he landed at Colorado



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Joe Mohrfeld, head brewer at Odell Brewery in Fort Collins, Colo., checks a brew in the brewery's cask room.

State University for graduate school, he eventually found himself at Odell, as a volunteer. Within three years, he's worked his way from the packing room

to the top brewer.

"Brewing is a beautiful blend of science and art," said Mohrfeld last month while sampling some of his wares in the Odell tap room.

He credits his upbringing in Austin with developing his foundation.

"The art scene there helped me, being with others who were creating, helping me express myself," Mohrfeld said. "It's not an affluent community, but it's one where you can risk and make everything on your own. It shaped me a lot."

He still gets back to Austin, his hometown. It's where family remains: His parents, Kim and Joe Mohrfeld, as well as grandparents Jerry and Evie Mohrfeld and Kenny and JoAnne Knutson all live in Austin.

He likes what he sees in Minnesota's craft brewing efforts, with Surly and Summit leading the way.

"It's good for the economy and good for communities to see the creativity going into brewing across the country," Mohrfeld said.

He hopes to continue that in Austin, his new hometown, in Texas.

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