

The troupe capped its 10th season by producing "Guys and Dolls," and now plans to the group since 1976, doesn't imagine that the troupe will ever die out. "Every year we get chester 06045.

Artist in clay quits job, finds happiness and business success

By JUDY HARTLING
Correspondent

Marsha McCarthy is a former advertising art designer who chucked her job to create etchings on clay. About two years ago, she was thrilled with her new life as an artist, working in an attic studio with two horses in her backyard, seven cats and a dog to play with all day. Things have changed.

McCarthy's even happier and business is skyrocketing. Her works are in 500 galleries

nationwide and in Europe, and she recently signed a deal with Neiman Marcus stores to supply small etched plaques to be placed on easels for Christmas consumers. McCarthy, 51, and her business partner, Rebecca Raibley, are planning to open a factory to produce her works.

McCarthy and Raibley will spend the next year concentrating on the kitchen and bathroom tiles and the licensing markets. But Raibley handles the marketing end of the deal, while McCarthy creates.

"Now I just draw and ride my horse," McCarthy said. And then she laughed and laughed and laughed.

Is she happy she left a very healthy salary and the advertising business?

"You have no idea," she said. And then she laughed some more.

McCarthy's drawings, rather than being just pretty designs, tap into symbolism. She uses themes such as sisterhood, American Indian beliefs and suns and moons.

As people become more aware of

concerns for the earth and each other, the words and poetry McCarthy etches into her works takes on deeper meaning, she said.

While her limited editions are selling like crazy, McCarthy still does one-of-a-kind works. She has created several marriage and birth plaques along with a few funerary urns.

Her one-of-a-kind works start at \$1,200. Her clay jugs go for \$4,000 to \$5,000. Limited-edition plaques retail for \$270.

Plans are to license her designs

onto stationery, greeting cards and fabric.

"It's such an unbelievable market. We're finding all these different directions to go," McCarthy said.

She and Raibley still are not pulling much in the way of salaries, because the money is going back into the business. McCarthy now has seven employees who finish and frame the works for her. That leaves her free to draw.

Raibley and McCarthy have a few business edicts. One is: "If it's not fun you don't do it."

Marsha McCarthy



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