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Michele Hefel owns A Frame of Mind Framing & Gallery in Dubuque.

Picture this

A Frame of Mind Framing & Gallery can add the finishing touch

BY JILL CARLSON • PHOTOS BY JESSICA REILLY

Framing works of art, memorabilia, family heirlooms, sports jerseys, kids' art, photos and many other items is Michele Hefel's specialty at A Frame of Mind Framing & Gallery.

Assisting customers who bring in items to frame requires a good sense of design, color and balance to choose the moulding and matting to make the piece pop.

Sometimes, framing takes more than color and balance, as Hefel can attest.

"The most challenging item I've ever framed was an NHL hockey jersey," Hefel said. "It was the jersey from the first team that my customer played for. He wanted to hang the jersey in the middle of the room so that both sides could be seen. The difficult part was figuring out how the jersey could be framed identically on both sides. We also had to use a hanging system attached to the top of the frame."

Military jackets framed in a shadow box with photos and medals is another option that Hefel offers.

"These are very difficult but some of the most rewarding things I can do for our veterans."

Hefel started her framing career at the Ben Franklin Framing Shop in Dubuque. Hefel and her husband, Jack, purchased the frame shop in May 2005 and changed the name to A Frame of Mind in October 2005.

"We are a full-service picture framing shop with a huge selection for framing mouldings, matting and glass options to choose from. All of the supplies we use are of high quality and have conservation in mind to help preserve everything we frame. Since everything is done in-house we are also able to turn projects around quickly," Hefel said.

The busiest time of the year is October through December when customers bring in items to be framed for gifts. Spring can be hectic, as many people want to have wedding invitations and college diplomas framed.

In addition to Hefel, two part-time employees work in the shop.

You'll find an art gallery filled with great framed pieces, prints and home décor for purchase. Hefel also carries glass art, artwork, jewelry and handmade wooden flags made by local artists.



Hefel works on an order. She purchased the former Ben Franklin in 2005 and changed to A Frame of Mind Framing & Gallery later. She has more than 25 years experience.

The shop hosts glass classes twice per year, usually one in the spring and one in the fall where participants can create a one-of-a-kind piece of art.

Hefel's 26 years of experience as a framer has garnered her praise from her customers, including Stacy Peterson, curator and registrar at the Dubuque Museum of Art.

"Michele has a real talent for the craft of framing. She has a great sense of balance and

needed for the work.

"Framing is a demanding business but also a highly creative skill, not only for design but also with manual skill. There is a need for talented people with these skills. I imagine Michelle would be an amazing mentor to the right young person who is considering this as a career."

Other business customers include Honkamp & Krueger; Dupaco Community Credit Union; Premier Bank; Diamond Jo Casino; MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center; UnityPoint-Finley Hospital; high schools including Cuba City, Wis., and Western Dubuque; colleges including Loras, Northeast Iowa Community College and the University of Dubuque; Hirschbach Trucking; many area restaurants; art galleries; law firms and the Dubuque Fighting Saints Ice Hockey team.

Hefel works with artists, photographers and cross stitchers to frame their works. She also works with Service Master to reframe and restore pieces after a fire.

"The favorite part of my job is all the amazing relationships I've made over the years with my customers. I love helping them create something special," she said.

Peterson lauded the skills



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