

Beacons Reach Resident Rescues Carousel Horses

By Bob Ruggiero



Rich and Judy Kelly came to Beacons Reach from South Hackensack, New Jersey. Rich was an assistant principal at Fort Lee High School and Judy was an instructor at Dumont High School in the Garden State.

Rich has a unique hobby that was started while living in New Jersey. A friend scavenged a miniature carousel horse that needed quite a bit of repair and painting and had been destined for a trash bin. It was offered to the Kellys instead. Judy tried her hand with the refurbishment, but soon was

overwhelmed by the extensive repair the project needed.

Rich picked up the rehab and reported that from start to completion the work on the repair, sanding, and repainting with a super high glossy paint required 22 to 23 hours of loving labor.

These miniature carousel horses started life as a Wonder Horse children's toy. A child could sit and bounce as the horses were mounted on a heavy spring.

After receiving the first horse from a friend, word spread that the Kellys were

seeking other horses that needed repair. The additional horses came from curb



trash, junkyards or flea markets. Rich tells me that the high gloss finish is a result of utilizing expensive brushes that minimize brush strokes. Two coats of paint are applied and, finally, a clear

coat of sealer. After completing the first horse, Rich revised what had been a wonderful and productive hobby and now became a labor of love.

To completely finish one of these splendid works of art requires much time and dedication from start to finish. Rich

has finished 12 horses and has offered a few to friends who have given him horses that needed a complete makeover. He has sold a few to friends that were painted to color coordinate with the room in which the horse would be displayed.

Rich took me up to the attic of his house to show me six horses that either were works in progress or others waiting to be repaired. It was then that I appreciated the total dedication and hard labor that went into a project of this nature.

As an aside, Rich told me that his son, who owns a restaurant in New York that features a finished carousel horse in the front window, has been asked by diners whether they could purchase the horse or give out the name of the artist who produced the glorious restoration. When told by his son, Rich said, "No thanks. This is a hobby and nothing more."

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