



Charles Auer/Freeman Staff

Paul Inzeo with his unique mailbox on Grandview Boulevard.

The skeleton on Grandview

Waukesha artist stops traffic with mailbox artwork

By Karen Pilarski
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WAUKESHA — Everyone has a skeleton in the closet. For artist Paul Inzeo, his happens to be sitting on top of his mailbox.

Grandview Boulevard residents may have noticed a skeleton chugging a beer, chilling while waiting for the mail over the summer. Inzeo has noticed cars slowing down and cellphone cameras flashing. He knows they are stirring with a million questions. For a passer-by who has the time, he has some answers.

Inzeo has been an artist for most of his life and also a marketing manager and graphic designer.

"I'm an all-around Renaissance man," he said.

His mother was an artist and he has followed in her creative footsteps. From oil paintings to working on antique clocks, the world is a blank canvas for him. His basement is full of photography, paintings and other tools. He has done freelance photography and paintings around Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

Plain is lame

It all started with a mailbox that was beaten up and falling apart. Inzeo wasn't satisfied with a simple gray primer-colored one. It was after watching "Pirates of the Caribbean" that inspiration hit like a thunderbolt, with Captain Jack Sparrow, a spirited, booze-guzzling pirate. The first creation was called "Peg Leg," a knife-

wielding skeleton with a jeweled eye patch and gold teeth shining through a smile.

For his second creation, Inzeo looked in his basement for supplies but then began rummaging through thrift stores for inexpensive items. That was a fun part for him. The lawn chair was made from a grate that he bent into shape. The beer canisters were from peanut containers. He purchased the shoes from Goodwill. He felt since it is Wisconsin, this dude needed a swig of brew. After two months a skeleton coined "Jack" was completed.

Inzeo already has plans to adjust Jack's look for winter.

"He wouldn't look right buried in the snow the way he is dressed," he said.

It is a challenge to think of different ideas but Inzeo is up to the challenge.

His wife, Cindy, and 18-year-old son, Tyler, are very supportive of him.

"My son holds the key to my heart; there is a note on the back of my paintings for him," he said.

Inzeo has eyeballed the yard to expand his work. For now, that is on hold. What he knows for sure is that he dislikes plastic pink flamingos. His vision would be to include motorcycles, since he and his wife are motorcycle enthusiasts.

Jack has seen some stuff go down

Mail carriers stop and gawk at Jack in his shades with a yellow bird on his shoulder. They find it

unique and amazing.

"A woman stopped while I was getting mail and said it makes her day," Inzeo said.

Peg Leg raised a few eyebrows since it depicted a severed zombie head and the skeleton gleefully holding a bloodied knife. Inzeo received a note in the mailbox indicating while the person respects his art, he or she didn't like the severed head.

Inzeo didn't take it down.

"Art is art. Are they going to leave town when people put up gravestones and monsters?" he asked.

Others have told him it makes them smile and he even had someone approach him to make them a skeleton.

If people asked him to make them a mailbox, he would negotiate a price but would love the opportunity.

There were a few incidents when he came out to find someone had taken a baseball bat to his masterpiece.

"It was probably a bunch of bored kids," he said.

Grandview is one of the main arteries of the city. Inzeo doesn't mind being a quick stop on someone's travels around Waukesha.

As for Jack, he is relishing an eternal summer until his scenery is changed.

"The name fits perfectly because what is he doing? He ain't doing 'jack,'" Inzeo said with a laugh.

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