

Rose O'Connor-Meyer

My interest in the arts began with a love for American and European paintings. After I earned my bachelor's degree in art history, I landed a coveted gallery position in Boston. I added postgraduate education in art history while at the gallery and continued on the path with a certificate from New York University in appraisal studies, all this time focusing on 19th- and early 20th-century works of art.

After 12 years at the gallery, circumstances dictated a move to New Jersey, where I started doing appraisal work. While on the hunt for unusual furnishings and art, it was not unusual to visit local antique shops or auctions in the area. One shop stood out; I could always count on finding a great painting or an out-of-the-ordinary collectible on each visit to Shore Antique Center, then in Point Pleasant Beach. It was important to me to find out whose eyes harvested these appealing finds. In 1995, I was introduced to the owner, Chris Myer.

We immediately began doing business deals together, building a strong foundation of trust, with mutual admiration. A few years into our friendship my previous relationship officially ended. We began to date. Our business dealings continued. In 2002 we wed.

We always worked well together. I just preferred keeping an arm's length from the antique center as a whole. The shop had a simple clockwork-like rhythm that did not need to be "fixed."

But after leasing the Point Pleasant Beach location for 18 years, the benefits of buying a building became apparent. However, if we were to buy and renovate a new space, I would be required to become a full partner in the new Shore Antique Center. We moved ahead and began negotiating the purchase, financing and renovations of 413 Allen Ave., Allenhurst. We felt strongly about this former plumbing supply building offering us 14,000 square feet with tall ceilings, skylights and ample parking right in our beloved home town.

Chris needed to continue operations in Point Pleasant, while I oversaw the contractor, architect, permit inspections and such. Getting the place ready for the opening took eight long, expensive months. The consolidation and move from our former location took just as long, with great effort, concluding with our grand opening in July 2008.

The list of hurdles jumped is a long one. If it were not for our relaxed synergy and our strong vision, this venture never could have happened. This success speaks to the way our skills complement each other.

Chris is such a knowledgeable buyer/collector; his time is spent seeking the wonderful merchandise we offer. I delved into refining our image by furthering the marketing, networking and outreach. Chris delivers the product and I bring it into the view of the folks who want to buy it. We both enjoy the staging of the items for sale. We both enjoy the scholarly research and the personal interaction with our clients.

We continue to grow and make changes to keep up with the ever fluctuating aspects of this business. With the greater interest in value-priced furnishings, we are offering an expanded

selection of recycled yet "chic" quality used furniture, which has become extremely popular. It's not unusual to find reclaimed stained glass, carved mantels and impressive doors, all enjoying attention because of their superior craftsmanship and bargain prices.

Chris and the others keep bringing in tempting merchandise. I continue offering fine art, arranging free appraisal days, the annual Holiday Magic Show, the Antique British Car Show, the Memorial Day Outdoor Antique Market and all of the successful customer appreciation events throughout the year. **The store has benefited from the networking evenings I arranged with the Greater Ocean Township Chamber of Commerce.** I am involved in various forms of community outreach. Our space nicely accommodates certain charity functions, which also serves to increase our visibility.

Being in the midst of large varieties of art objects has proven to be very dynamic and satisfying. No matter how difficult the responsibilities are, it is easy to approach each day as a new exciting adventure. This business offers me so many surprising rewards. Best of all are the people and the wonderful warm relationships built around the Shore Antique Center.

The Shore Antique Center (www.shoreantiquecenter.com) is located 413 Allen Ave., Allenhurst. Getting Ahead runs Sundays. If you are a businesswoman interested in writing about your career, please send your story to Business Editor Dennis P. Carmody at dcarmody@app.com