

While going through a client list I ran across a commercial client who turned a hobby into a successful business. She is Dee Kegley of Dawson Kegley Designs and in the show horse arena, she is known as the “Stick Horse Lady”. She rightfully earned that moniker for her beautiful work making stick horses.

These are not the typical stick horses from your childhood, Dee takes great pride in creating beautiful works of art that are commissioned to resemble her clientele’s actual horses. She has become quite successful and she tells me that when she shows at the Roanoke Valley Horse Show, there are customers putting sold tags on items before she has her booth completely set up.

Dee’s love of horses began when her grandfather introduced her to a Shetland pony named Midget. That love transformed into showing saddlebreds and a fondness for Friesian horses. These



beautiful black horses are the mainstay of her business today. She will be showcasing her talent

in the Blue Ridge Classic in July when she and her favorite Friesian will be showing in handmade costumes.

It seems that Dee's creative skills were honed when she began to make clothes for herself because she could not find a bathing suit that she liked. , that turned into making resort wear and outfits for the Virginia pageant circuit and runway shows and over the years as trends have changed, she has made everything from t shirts to wooden purses. Based on her skills, one of her contacts at the Roanoke Valley Horse show asked her to make 2 custom stick horses based on real horses and from that moment, the current passion was born. From the time she is contacted about creating a stick horse to completion it takes about 3 months. One of the things that make her product so unique is that she will mail several swatches to her client for them to match to their horses coloring and send back the one that is the closest. She will also take or have someone else take very detailed pictures of the horse so that she can match their markings exactly. In her inventory I was able to see several examples of this detailed work.

Stick horses are not her only product. She also makes hand puppets, purses, dog bandannas, horse spirit masks (which are used to teach children), and Christmas tree ornaments. She also crafts the stands for the horses, which are picket fences (see pictures). After having talked to her, who knows what she will come up with next but with her commercial grade embroidery machine, I think the sky is the limit.

Every year Dee will make things for only two shows, the aforementioned Roanoke Valley Horse Show and the Roy's Folks Craft Fair at Oak Hollow mall in High Point. Dee herself has been one of Roy's Folks and she enjoys being able to give back. Her booth name for both shows is The Little Shop of Horses.

So if you have a love of horses or had a horse you want remembered, contact Dee and she will create for you a one of a kind stick horse. Her website is www.dkdinc.com and she can also be found on Facebook @ <http://www.facebook.com/thestickhorselady>

Gina