

# He's gambling on his brush and the Maine coast

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Photos: DICK KELLEY

Like two teenagers, John and Anne Gable walked hand in hand along the beach of the Maine coast. Wouldn't it be wonderful, they told each other, if they could spend their lives like this?

That was several years ago; now they are about to make the wish come true.

Gable, 35, recently resigned his position as assistant chief designer for Pontiac Division of General Motors to become a full-time watercolorist. Scenes of the Maine coast have long been his specialty. The Gables sold their hilltop home on Bloomfield Township and began packing.

A 1901, seven bedroom home in Kennebunkport awaits them. And soon, John and Anne Gable and sons, Tommy, 4, and Christopher, 2, will be walking the Maine coastline again, but this time they will be able to look up and see their home, complete with a newly converted studio on the third floor.

"Some people talk about a mid-life crisis," Gable said. "For us, this is a life crisis. I have no complaints about GM. I worked there for 10 years. But, the problem was that more and more as I became involved in painting, I found I couldn't do both. Now, to improve as a painter, I need to live in the environment I paint — and that has always been the coast of Maine."

HE PAUSED, SMILED, and then to explain himself, said, "Anne and I are both safe people — this isn't really our nature. But, I told the people at GM that I couldn't afford to spend 20 more years there and not know how my painting would go. We're not the type to just take off."

Type or not, the Gables are going. He has committed himself and his family to a different lifestyle, predicated on a career as a full-time artist in a community that numbers about 5,000 in the off-season and about 40,000 during the summer.

Mrs. Gable shared in the decision and supports it. Trained as an interior designer with a degree in fine arts, she, too, is a painter and as such understands the meaning of her husband's need to uproot. Just as it is a shared crisis, the studio he plans to make from the three bedrooms on the third floor of the Maine home will be a shared studio.

"It's quite a change in philosophy from proving oneself in a corporation to proving oneself alone," he said. "Every penny I make is going to come from my own brush."

Interestingly, this story is a switch on the familiar man-goes-after-childhood-dream saga. As a youngster growing up in Iowa, Gable's dream was to be a car designer. He didn't catch his first glimpses of his now beloved Maine coast until many years later. The first coastline he saw was in California, where he attended the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles.

His first introduction to the kind of painting he does was through the work of an artist, Ted Kautzky, who had a strong impact on him — the total strength of which is just now coming to light.

GABLE WILL continue with watercolors. It's the medium he functions best in for the kind of

paintings he likes to do. He begins by sketching the scene and carefully recording the colors. Then, he takes a photograph. Although he trusts his eye for color (rather than the film's), he uses the camera to record composition and location. Gable is a realist painter — his sites are real places, the harbors, snug coves and

small villages along the rugged coast. He likes to catch the atmosphere of a foggy morning or the

peace that descends on the water in the late evening when the small boats are moored, sails down.

## LIT to offer new program

Lawrence Institute of Technology will offer a new degree program in the field of interior architecture beginning this fall.

Leonard Elise, an LIT assistant professor and a principal in his own interior design firm in Birmingham, will coordinate the program. According to Elise, the growing market for interior designers has been brought about, in part, by the energy shortage, the high cost of new construction and land, and the "no growth" arguments of environmentalists.

These factors are forcing architects into considering renovation of existing buildings and historic preservation, rather than the previous trend to build anew.

"In addition," Elise said, "designers of interior spaces are faced with increasingly more complicated design problems as society moves toward advanced methods of communication, merchandising heating and cooling efficiency and functional interior layouts."

"This has, in turn, created a need for more specialized training to provide professionals who can help solve the

problems while creating pleasing environments in which people can work, live and play."

The program is designed to attract new students and practicing professionals who wish to add another area of expertise to their credentials.

According to Karl Greimel, dean of the Southfield-based school's architecture department, students in the program first will be involved in basic architectural classes to provide a strong creative and technical base for advanced study. They will then be given specialized instruction dealing with a total interior environment as well as furnishings, finishes and graphics.

Students successfully completing the program will receive a bachelor of science degree in interior architecture.

Regular registration for the days of fall term at LIT will be on Aug. 30 and 31, and for the evenings of fall term on Aug. 22 and 23. Students should apply for admission well in advance of registration.

For further information, call the LIT admissions office at 356-0200.

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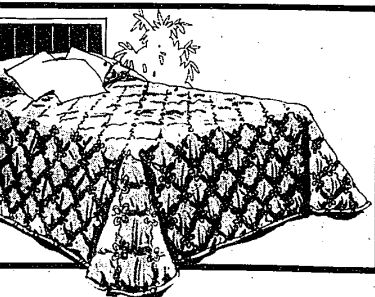
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