

# Banking on a red, white and blue piece

By Sue Mason  
staff writer

Mike Benak called his boss, Gary Anoshka, from Washington, D.C., last weekend with good news. The Pentagon gave them the green light. Anoshka was elated.

Now, before you start thinking this is a story about another military contract for high priced hardware, think again. The green light was for the hanging of "The Storm Is Over" in the building.

"The Storm Is Over?" Yep, you read it right. The military brass were receptive to putting up a poster in its hallowed halls, a poster that Anoshka is selling wholesale for less than \$10. And you thought the top brass couldn't manage money.

"The Storm Is Over" is the work of Anoshka's company, G.A. Design, better known for the menus it creates than posters. But with the revival of patriotic fervor, Anoshka decided to do something for the troops.

The idea started fermenting in late January. Working with artist Gary Redfern, and with input from everyone from his wife Mary to Benak, he came up with the design.

"I didn't want just an eagle," Anoshka said. "But I wanted something simple with the olive branch to symbolize peace; I wanted to dedicate it to the people of Desert Storm, but I didn't want to alienate the Vietnam vets."

**THE FINISHED** piece dances with color and detail — A bright sun slowly rises over the desert sands; storm clouds part to reveal a starry late night sky. A bald eagle, sporting the Stars and Stripes, is perched on an olive tree, its talons firmly gripping a twisted limb. In its beak is the symbolic olive branch.

But there's more to it. The number of stars on the eagle's shoulders and stripes mixed into the wing feathers match the 13 Stars and Stripes of the original flag.



Gary Anoshka (left), president of G.A. Design, looks over the finished original artwork for "The Storm Is Over," done by artists Gary Redfern (right).

Blended into the bark of the twisted tree limb are the colors and stars of the Iraqi flag.

The poster is a myriad of color. Redfern used more than 500 colors, applying them by airbrush and by hand to a bristle illustration board. A World War II history buff, Redfern even dressed in fatigues to get a feel for the work.

At 38, the Ypsilanti resident is excited about the finished piece, excited at the prospect of it being seen throughout the country, excited at the thought — OK, dream — of it hanging in the White House. That's one of Anoshka's goals.

It speaks well for a man who describes himself as a "street artist."

"My work hanging in the White House

... Wow, what a blast to my ego," Redfern said. "I'm just an artist. I wasn't formally trained; I'm just a street artist. I've been doing it since I was six. It's all self-taught. I learned by observing."

**ANOTHER OF** Redfern's work can be seen at the Yankee Air Force Museum at Willow Run Airport. A last minute entry in a contest, he was selected to paint the figure head of the Yankee Lady on the nose of a B-17 bomber the YAF is restoring.

Anoshka has other dreams. He would like to get the signature of Desert Storm commander Gen. Norman Swartzkopf on one of the posters and — in his "extreme dreams" — print several million copies of "The Storm Is Over."

The idea for the poster began fermenting in late January at the height of the air war. Working with rough sketches, the two Garys considered using F-15 fighters in the illustration, but shelved it. Too one-side, according to Anoshka, a Livonia resident.

Nervousness took over as the ground war started and it became apparent it would be a rout. And it was "patriotic" when the cease fire was announced. In a push to get the poster done, other jobs took a back seat. On March 9, the first 9,000 finished copies of the poster rolled off the press.

By Monday morning, Anoshka was elated with initial response to the poster. Local vendors were scooping them up to sell in their stores and Benak, on a two-week

swing throughout the country, reported the Pentagon was displaying the poster.

It's good news, indeed, for Anoshka who started G.A. Design after losing his job with the Ford Motor Co. in the later '70s.

**ARMED WITH** a \$175 used plate burner, he set up shop in the basement of his house. Neighbors called it the House of Frankenstein because of the eerie white light that would emit from the basement windows each time he made a plate for the printing press.

He was ready to give it up when he landed a \$3,500 contract to design a menu. One thing led to another and now he has more than 700 clients, including Machus Red Fox, the Police of Auburn Hills and Marriott to name a few.

This isn't the first time Anoshka has printed a poster tied in with a major event. A visit by Pope John Paul II prompted the publication of a Solidarity poster, but it came too late to cash in on "popabilia." It did make its way to Rome and Anoshka did receive a thank you letter for the pope's secretary.

"I've got a good team here," Anoshka said, heaping praise on the crew that helped make "The Storm Is Over" a reality. "I wanted to show that we (The U.S.) were strong and we did."

For now, Anoshka plans on having the original artwork framed. He's already matted it in red and blue and plans on adding a white frame. If it can be arranged, he'd like to present it to President George Bush. If not, it'll hang in the office of G.A. Design.

"He did a wonderful job," he said, surveying Redfern's artwork.

For more information about "The Storm Is Over," contact G.A. Design at 25241 W. Warren, Dearborn Heights, or call 561-2339.



By HENRY ZOLYNSKA, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Marji Silk's work has appeared in numerous publications. In fact, a photo she took of a statue in the spray of a fountain at the Cranbrook Educational Community was on the cover of Cranbrook's 1989-90 annual report.

# Capitol idea She shoots for D.C. success

By Greg Kowalski  
staff writer

When Marji Silk takes a photograph strange things often happen. For example, she was intrigued by the large bronze bust in front of the R Mart headquarters in Troy. She carefully set up her shot, took the picture and sent the film out for processing.

What came back was a stunning photo of a face tinted a deep metallic green. But the color wasn't real — it was created by the film reacting to the statue's actual color and the fading natural light.

That kind of luck has paid off Silk's Oak Park home is bedecked with awards and trophies from area and national photo contests. Her work is in constant demand.

And while admittedly, she has been lucky, she also is a talented, hard-working professional who has honed her skills to a fine degree.

For the past eight years, she has been studying photography and seeking new techniques to achieve different effects.

The result, in addition to the awards and steady flow of business, has brought her an honor few photographers ever realize. Now, through March 22, a selection of her works will be on display in a one-person exhibit in the Cannon House Capital Building in Washington, D.C.

The show was arranged by U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, who received one of her photos from a friend. He was so impressed, he hung it in his office and set the wheels in motion for her exhibit.

**IRONICALLY,** "I've always had a feeling for color, but wasn't very good with design," Silk said.

Her photos glow with vivid hues and tones, and her compositions are striking. Silk specializes in city scenes and has an affection for neon lights. She loves shooting in the handful of minutes when the twilight sky glows.

"My passion is in color," Silk said. "I think of myself as a painter. I'm not interested in just any color. It must be magic. Color evokes a feeling and a mood in me and in the viewer."

*She loves shooting in the handful of minutes when the twilight sky glows.*



Silk's photo of the Detroit People Mover, shot in the early evening, radiates pastel colors that somehow don't really seem to be there, colored by the surrounding neon lights.

Take her picture of the Detroit People Mover. It was shot, typically, in the early evening. The scene radiates pastel colors that somehow don't really seem to be there. A building front in Grosse Pointe exhibits a palette of hues. The actually white facade has been tinted pink by surrounding neon lights.

Through long practice, Silk has learned to stage her pictures in advance and position herself exactly for the shot she wants — even if that means a foray into the traffic whizzing by.

"I always liked taking pictures," Silk said. But she never did it seri-

ously until eight years ago when she took some photos while on a trip. That "sparked something in my life."

**WITH TYPICAL** abundant energy she plunged into studying photography.

"I took a course, and my instructor was so enthusiastic about my work I couldn't believe it," she said. That encouraged her to become even more proficient and to master all the technical aspects of photography. Her camera of choice is a 35mm Nikon, although she has experimented with a 2 1/2 inch format Pentax.

Her favorite film is Ektachrome.

"I studied up until two in the morning studying new techniques," she said.

She took more classes and got straight A's. Almost immediately, she found a market for her work. Attracted to the month-escalator at the Detroit Science Center, she got permission to photograph it. The center was delighted with the result and converted it to a post card. The center printed 10,000 copies and has them on sale at its gift shop.

Silk's work has appeared in numerous publications, such as Michigan Today and The New Englander. A photo she took of a statue in the spray of a fountain at the Cranbrook Educational Community landed up on the cover of Cranbrook's 1989-90 annual report.

Her philosophy of photography is simple. "First, I find a subject that

excites me."

**THE THEN** examines the subject from a variety of angles until she finds the look that she wants.

"I compose the scene in my viewfinder, composition is critical," she explained. "I use it to bring the viewer into the photo."

In the process, she inspires herself.

"I push it to the max," she said. "I try to capture some magic on the image. My enthusiasm lifts me to another level. It gives me such a high."

So do the awards, sales and achievements that have frequently marked her so-short career. And, she sees many more milestones ahead.

As she puts it, "I have an endless quest to let my ability soar."