

# CHANNELS

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## Second Adirondack Chair Is Released For Lumina Daze Event

'Life Is Oh So Sweet Down By the Sea'

By Kristina Florea  
Staff Writer

Deborah Cavanaugh looked to the sea for her inspiration for the Adirondack chair she painted for the Lumina Daze/Lumina News fund-raiser. "I chose the colors (washed out blues and washed out turquoises) to sort of give you that sense of the old beach," said Deborah.

She writes on all her paintings, whether it is a sentence or a fragment of a sentence. "They (the sayings) are always positive in nature," said Deborah. "They are a verification or a validation of what I believe or what I want to remember that is good."

The chair is no exception. Across the seat of the chair, she has written, "Life is oh so sweet down by the sea." Deborah sees it as a way to connect with the people who view her work. "I think that they help me have a conversation with the people who look at my work. I've written them in. You look at this piece, you see the little dancing Japanese lights and the shells and you read the saying. And, for that moment, you remember that life is oh so sweet. It is good to be you. It is good to be alive. It is good to be by the sea."

Deborah's chair is the second chair featured as part of the Lumina Daze/Lumina News fund-raiser. The chair joins five others to be auctioned off at Lumina Daze on August 10. All proceeds from the auction benefit the Wrightsville Beach Museum of History.

Deborah's career as an artist began with a simple gift of a watercolor set from a neighborhood toy store her children gave her for Mother's Day. "I knew nothing about painting," Deborah recalled. "The only thing I knew about art I learned from the movies." After painting a dozen pieces, a frustrated Deborah put away her watercolors, her brush and her paintings. Following her divorce and a move to North Carolina, she decided to frame one of her pieces for her new bedroom. She took several paintings to a frame shop, which was owned by a gallery. The gallery owner was in the store that day and said to Deborah, "If you can part with your paintings, I can sell your paintings." The owner put Deborah under contract and sold three paintings the next week.

Deborah's first showing came six months later, at Caffe Phoenix. She committed to the show with no paintings and only 28 days in which to paint. "I still only had one paintbrush, a box of paints from the toy store and about two sheets of paper," Deborah recalled. After a trip to the art supply store, Deborah painted around the clock. At that showing, the owners of her current studio, Acme Art Inc., saw her



Staff Photo by Kristina Florea

Deborah Cavanaugh, pictured above in her studio, is one of six local artists painting an Adirondack chair for the Lumina Daze / Lumina News fund-raiser.

work and asked her about her future plans. She ended up taking a studio under a one-year contract. That was in March 1994.

"I gave myself one year to see if I could figure out a career from arts," Deborah said. "I had been really hoping and praying to have some sort of work that wouldn't take me from my children, but would allow me to integrate them into my work life." Deborah had found her wish. She set up a corner in her studio for each of her children with a desk and chair. They would come every day after school and spend some Saturdays with their mom at the studio.

Deborah's children helped her find her career in the arts and continue to support her today. "They have absolutely been an unfaltering support," she said. "They motivate me

because I support them and I want them to be proud of me and I want to do a good job for them. They inspire me because I love them so much."

This love for her children comes through in her work. "I really want to focus on family and familial love a lot in my work," Deborah said. "I want to represent to them that it is good to have a family, that it is good to love them, care for them, to put them first."

To learn more about Deborah, contact her at 686-6519 or visit her Web site at [www.deborahcavanaugh.com](http://www.deborahcavanaugh.com).

To learn more about Lumina Daze, contact the museum at 256-2569.

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