

## Joins in motion

### Nassagaweya woman to run marathon in Portugal for charity

By JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Before March of this year, Amanda Presutti would have had trouble imagining herself running a full marathon. But that's just what the Nassagaweya resident will be doing on December 5 of this year when she takes part in a 42-kilometre race in Lisbon, Portugal.

Earlier this year, she found out about a fundraising effort run by The Arthritis Society called Joins in Motion. Miss Presutti says participants in the program are required to raise \$5000 through pledges, funding that goes towards arthritis research and community-based programs offered by The Arthritis Society. Through Joins in Motion, participants are enrolled in an 18 to 20-week personalized marathon training program. The goal is to walk or run a half marathon or a full marathon.

At 27, Miss Presutti says she was considered a good candidate for the full marathon, but she wasn't confident enough in the beginning. It took some convincing on the part of her trainer, Gregory Weber. But since she began training more than a month ago, her courage and resolve has increased. It helped, she says, when she watched an 82-year-old man complete the New York City marathon on television. "I figured if he could do it, I could do it."

She says that running doesn't seem like so much of a chore when you have a focus. Miss Presutti's grandmother, who is confined to a wheelchair because of arthritis, is an inspiration for her. And there are many others that give meaning to what she hopes to accomplish. "There are people who can't even get out of bed in the morning and here I can run. I'm running for people that can't."

If you would like to make a pledge, contact Amanda at 519-853-9182 or 416-406-2400, ext. 224. For more information, the website is [www.arthritis.ca/joints/ontario/amanpresutti](http://www.arthritis.ca/joints/ontario/amanpresutti). Donations of \$15 and over are tax deductible.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Amanda Presutti, a resident of 6th Line in Nassagaweya, is taking part in a program called Joins in Motion run by The Arthritis Society. As part of the program, the 27-year-old will run in a full-length marathon in Lisbon, Portugal in December. Miss Presutti does some of her training in her neighbourhood and she says the area is ideal with its rolling hills. She says the terrain alone provides the kind of challenge she needs as a runner.

## Tom Dietrich – The art of the executive

### Campbellville man forsakes fast track for a different medium

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA DANIELLI

It was a scary moment four years ago, but one that Tom Dietrich has had little occasion to regret. In February 2000, he turned his back on his career as an account executive for IBM, choosing instead to apply as a student to the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD). Now, four years later, he is an honours graduate preparing for his first major gallery showing.

He likens the experience to that of entering a swimming pool. "You can either go in slowly, inch by inch and risk never making it all of the way in, or you can just take the plunge," he explains, laughing. He was no inexperienced student with a three year Bachelor of Arts Degree in economics and a Masters Degree from Wilfred Laurier University under his belt, but that first year as an art student was an eye opening experience for him.

#### "IT MADE GETTING MY MBA LOOK LIKE A HOLIDAY"

"I worked seventy to eighty hour work weeks that first year," says Tom. "It made getting my MBA look like a holiday."

All that work has certainly paid off for the Campbellville artist though. His work has been featured in group shows at OCAD, with the Fine Arts Society of Milton, and as part of the Toronto Outdoor Art Show. Next month however, will mark his first gallery showing at Gallery 401 in Toronto. Entitled "Wild Whispers", the show is a collaboration between Tom and two of his fellow OCAD students, Po Chun Lau and Karen Zavitz. "Our work had all been dealing with the notion of humanity and the spirit of humanity. We were dealing with connections in some ways," Tom explains. "Our work, although very different, seemed to have a common inspiration or wellspring."

Although he works in many media, this display will only feature Tom's paintings. It takes a visit to his home and his studio though, to truly appreciate the variety and uniqueness of his art. "I paint like a sculptor and sculpt like a painter," laughs Tom. "I like a sense of tradition, but I don't believe that anything is sacrosanct. Innovations today become traditions

tomorrow." Current work focuses on the abstraction of the forest, using colour, light and changing mood to reflect an understanding of an environment forever changed by its encounter with man. "Each painting is an intuitive response, striving for the idea of tree or the idea of forest that reflects the idea of humanity and our interconnection to the environment," he explains. "We construct our reality. I'm jarring those notions a little,

#### "AN UNEXPECTED DEATH... WAS A WAKE UP CALL FOR ME"

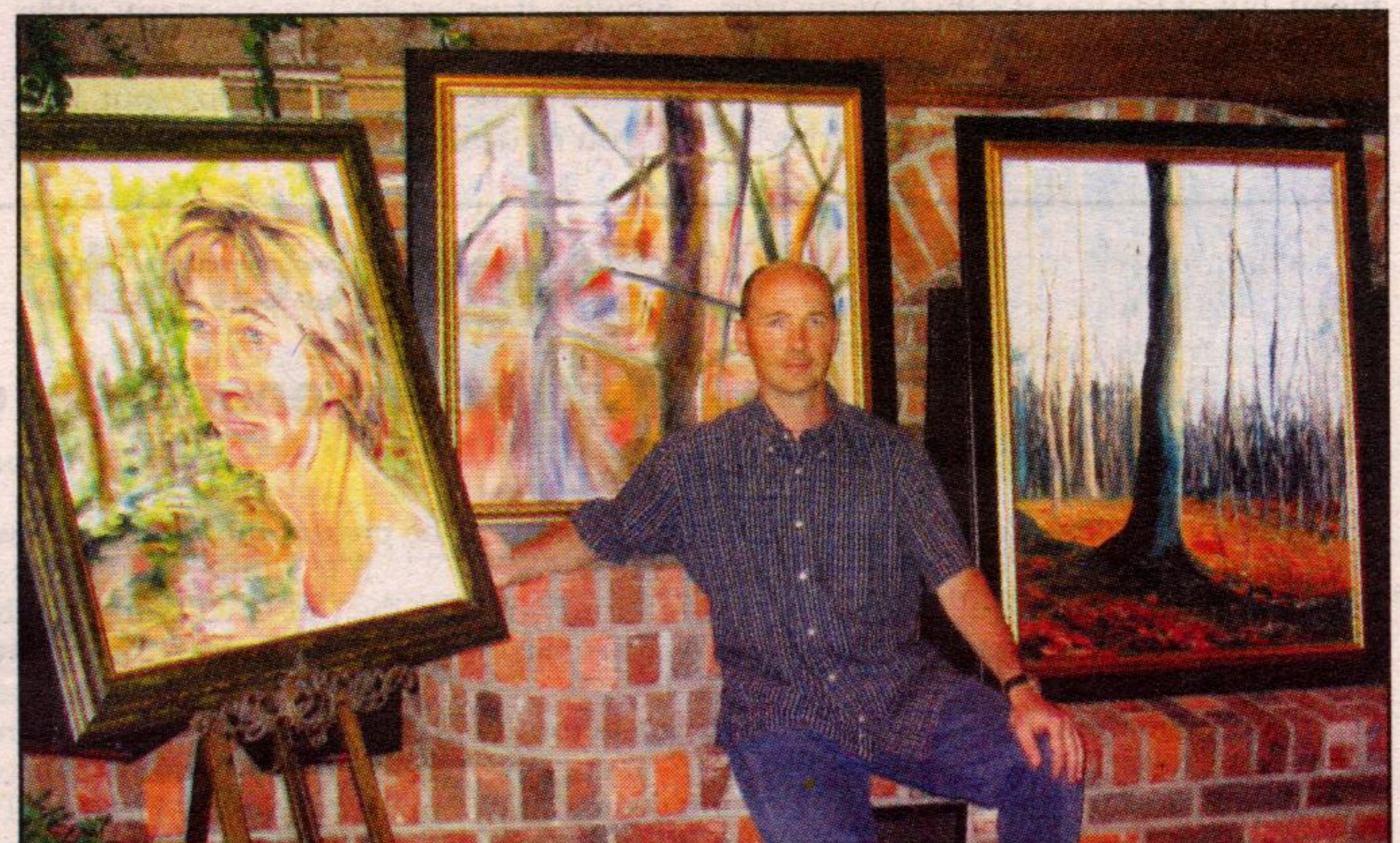
changing the traditional way of looking at landscapes, and re-assessing." Particularly in tune with the environment, Tom bemoans the often disastrous effects man has had on his surroundings. "Through our involvement with the environment, we have poisoned it," he argues passionately. "Because we have poisoned it, we need to protect ourselves from it. We have turned the environment into the enemy. Often, to solve one problem, we create another."

Tom made the switch in careers after witnessing a co-worker's heart attack and subsequent death at the office. "Being present at an unexpected death changes you," he says quietly, lost for a moment in memories. "That was a wake up call for me, I started to look at "am I doing what I want to do?". With the support of his wife Cheryl and their three children, Tom embarked on his journey to capture the images and feelings in his head in a medium for all to see. In fact he credits Cheryl's support for much

of his success. "It's cliché to say but she is my muse. The inspirations come from her. She models for me even when she doesn't know she's modelling."

It is Tom's fervent hope that anyone viewing his artwork will have a response that leaves them pondering each piece. "I want people to walk away from my studio asking questions," he explains. "I like questions more than answers. One way to a real connection to our self, to our environment and to each other is through questions. We're right to question. As soon as we stop asking questions, that's the danger."

"Wild Whispers" will preview at Gallery 401, located at 401 Richmond Street in Toronto on September 21 and run until October 2. A special event at the gallery will see all three artists present amongst their work on September 23 from 6 pm to 9 pm. Tom will also open his studio to the Fine Arts Society Tour the first weekend of October and another exhibit of his work is planned for the Ontario College of Art and Design at the end of October. More information is available on Tom's website at [www.tomdietrich.com](http://www.tomdietrich.com).



Campbellville artist Tom Dietrich poses with a few of his many original paintings, as he prepares for a gallery showing in September. Shown on his right is the portrait he created as a recent birthday gift for wife Cheryl.