



Side Dish
By Chris Stevens

Close to Home

Mother's Day tinged with sadness for birthmoms. B2.



THE DAILY ITEM WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2009

WHEN THE HEAT IS ON ...

Time for a cool change

Some things to consider before buying an air conditioner

LYNN

By MATT BELLIVEAU
FOR THE ITEM

While the mercury was forecast to return to the seasonal 60-65 degree range today, the scorcher on Tuesday, a record 93 degrees, and the back-to-back days in the mid-80s last weekend may have some thinking earlier than usual about keeping cool in their homes through the warm months ahead.

It's that time of year — perhaps a couple of weeks sooner than usual given the recent heat — for homeowners to lug their air-conditioners up from the cellar or down from the attic and install them in their assigned windows throughout the house.

So far, the few hot days have not resulted in a rush to appliance stores to scoop up new air conditioning units. And some dealers are wondering whether the recession will have many who need air conditioners hold off as long as possible.

"It seems to be the same thing every year, the summer starts off cool and we say to ourselves it's just not going to happen this year and then we're hit with a heat wave and we're sold out of units within a week," said Richard Covert, owner of Covert TV & Stereo on Broadway in Lynn. "We've seen a lot of people who thought if they could just get by a month or three weeks they'll be able to withstand the summer. But once that run of hot days comes around and they've gone through a few sleepless nights, they come running."

With the average homeowner spending over \$1,000 a year on heating and cooling, Covert suggests consumers purchase Energy Star-qualified models to cut their cooling costs.

While there are units that sell for a lower cost without the Energy Star label, Covert says the energy-efficient models save customers money over time.

Unit prices range from \$100, which generally generates up to 5,000 British Thermal Units (BTUs), to \$500, which can produce over 14,000 BTUs.

Mindful given the economy that people are focused on savings, retailers also caution consumers there are medical risks associated with lack of air conditioning during heat waves.

"A house without air conditioning can lead to some seriously dangerous air quality issues," said Irwin Rome, a sales associate at Tri-City Sales appli-



Richard Covert of Covert TV & Stereo on Broadway in Lynn, displays the various air conditioners he has for sale.

ance and electronics store on Highland Avenue in Salem. "Air conditioners can help ease the discomfort that people may have with allergies from ragweed or pollen."

Rome suggests consumers arrive at the store with a BTU number in mind.

To calculate the appropriate BTU for a room, Rome suggests users multiply the room's square footage by 25. For instance, if a homeowner's room

is 180 square feet, consumers should be looking to purchase a unit that generates about 4,500 BTUs.

"Every air conditioner has a cooling capacity number that ranges from 5,000 to 18,000 BTUs," Rome said. "The higher the BTU value, the stronger the air conditioner is."

Consumers should add or lower the BTUs based on several factors.

"If the unit is going up in an attic or some third-floor apartment, you'll

want to bump up the BTUs," Rome said. "The amount is also dependent on the number of people who will regularly be in the room. The more people the higher the BTU."

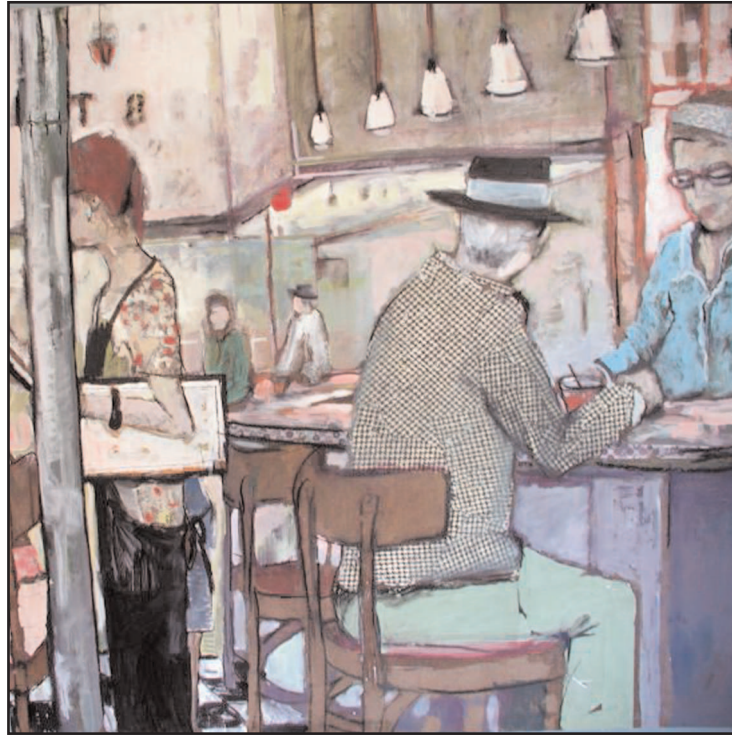
Visit or contact **Covert TV & Stereo Sales** at 334 Broadway in Wyoma Square, Lynn, 781-599-4500. Visit or contact **Tri-City Sales** at 272 Highland Ave., Salem, 978-744-6100.

See **SIDE DISH**
PAGE B2

Swampscott native paints his way to success; in Marblehead this weekend



Traeger di Petro



Restaurant #8, by Traeger di Petro, is one of the works the artist will display during the Marblehead Festival of Arts Friday night and Saturday at Jambu Jewelry, 38 Atlantic Ave., Marblehead.

Work decorates walls of Blue Ox restaurant in Lynn

By SEAN LEONARD
THE DAILY ITEM

By day, Swampscott native and Martha's Vineyard resident Traeger di Petro drives a truck on the island for Pepsi, all the while soaking in images of people, places, landscapes and seascapes, to later capture on canvas.

Di Petro, a 1995 graduate of Swampscott High School who studied art at the University of Maine, has honed his skills as an oil and mixed-media artist and photographer since age 18. And the word is spreading; this guy has talent.

Di Petro's work is exhibited in the Dragon Fly and Picnic galleries on the Vineyard, and locally, 10 of his pieces are displayed and available for sale at the new Blue Ox Restaurant on Oxford Street in Lynn. The connection there is that di Petro and Blue Ox chef Matt O'Neil are buddies from childhood and worked together for a while on

the Vineyard. "The work on display at the Blue Ox is mixed media; charcoal, crayon and paint. There are images of Lynn, the tower and the train."

"This coming Friday night and on Saturday I'll be at Jambu Jewelry as part of the Marblehead Festival of Arts ... I'll have 10 pieces on display there and it's a chance for me to meet with people."

Di Petro said his day job provides him plenty of scenic and inspirational images to fuel his passion.

"Through my oil and acrylic

paintings I try to recycle the precious moments that I see and experience. Many of these instances are very short; so I freeze them to make them last. My figures and ideas constantly transform within the paintings, allowing the painting to help me create the image," he explains on his Web site, traegerdipetro.com.

The Web site offers images of much of di Petro's work. One of his recent paintings, Restaurant #8, shown here, is among the pieces di Petro plans to display at Jambu.

"I've been fortunate

because I work during the day, paint at night and I've been able to sell quite a few paintings," he said. "I haven't experienced the starving-artist life."

"I live in an old farm

house and I'm lucky enough to have a studio and plenty of storage space."

Elaine Jambu, owner of Jambu Jewelry which specializes in custom, hand-made designer jewelry, said

she will have di Petro's work displayed throughout her shop during an artist's reception 7-9 p.m. Friday. And di Petro will also be on hand at the shop much of Saturday afternoon.

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