



Swikar Patel | The Journal Gazette
Photographer and designer Dawn Haney shows one of her throws that has photos of Fort Wayne scenes knitted into the fabric.

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Photographer cozies up to city

Cotton throws feature pictures of local landmarks

Rosa Salter Rodriguez | The Journal Gazette

A lot of folks in Fort Wayne wear their love for their hometown on their sleeve.

Now, they can also wear it on their lap, city resident Dawn Haney says.

Haney is the local designer behind a full-color woven throw that combines her passion for photographing Fort Wayne scenes with the coziness of sitting at home on the couch in front of a crackling fire.

Well, the fire is optional, she says, because the 50-by-60-inch washable cotton throws are "really warm" all by themselves.

The throws depict 14 city landmarks, from the iconic downtown light display of Santa and his reindeer and the marquee of the Embassy Theatre to the facades of Powers Hamburgers, Coney Island hot dog restaurant, and Cindy's Diner.

"I'm just an avid hobbyist who turned my two hobbies – photography and graphic design – into an art form and then made a part-time business out of it," Haney says, adding she first started photographing Fort Wayne scenes because she was impressed by the variety and beauty of its well-loved places.

"It was a request from family and friends, to start doing more with my photos," says Haney, who was born in Huntington and has lived in Fort Wayne for about 25 years.

Haney, a member of the Fort Wayne Photography Club, started with note cards, but moved beyond them into photo prints. Some Fort Wayne scenes caught the eye of Kevin Hunter, general manager of Windows, Doors and More, who bought several to hang in the city business' showroom.

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"He asked me if I could put them into a throw, and I said, 'Yes.' The first ones included the business name at the bottom. They were given to customers as appreciation gifts," Haney explains.

But then she and Hunter agreed that she could sell them herself without the name, and the business blossomed.

Haney now markets the throws online at www.dawnhaney.com, at area craft shows and in the gift shops at The History Center and the Fort Wayne Visitors Center downtown and at New Ground Coffee Co., 5925 N. Clinton St.

Other popular items in her line include Fort Wayne scenes infused into two sizes of glass cutting/serving boards and tapestry tote bags and pillows.

Haney, who also does custom work for individuals, businesses and nonprofits, recently completed a series of large photos the new Parkview Regional Medical Center.

The 52-year-old mom says she's a self-taught photographer who started out with a Sony 3.3-megapixel digital camera – "Ancient, I know," she says. She now uses a Canon Rebel XTI with "some lenses and some filters."

"That, and a little bit of Photoshop, and you're in business," she says, referring to a popular digital photo processing program.

Haney works with a North Carolina computerized textile manufacturer, Woven Moments, to produce the throws.

"They're kind of unique, because the photo images aren't printed onto the fabric but are woven in," she says, adding she and her husband, John, visited the factory in Hendersonville and were fascinated by the technology.

"I remember walking out of there and my husband just said, 'Wow.' We were so intrigued by the process," says Haney, who occasionally does contract work for the company, helping other photographers and artists achieve their vision.

Other images on the \$64 throws are of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, The History Center, Science Central, the General Electric and Perfection Bakery signs, Club Soda (the Indiana Textile Building), Historic Fort Wayne and the downtown statues of Gen. Anthony Wayne and Abraham Lincoln.

Haney says she has always looking for new Fort Wayne subject matter. Any photograph she makes can be turned into a throw or another item with enough demand, she says.

When people see her displays, Haney says, they stop and immediately start reminiscing.

"It's 'Oh look, mom – Coney Island! Remember when Grandpa took us there?' or 'Perfection Bakery! I remember counting those bread slices when I was 3,'" she says. "No one stops and looks at the throws without lingering."

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