



To Mat or Not to Mat

Local framing galleries can help with all those pressing questions.

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Many of us receive mementos, pictures, and special items as holiday presents that we want to showcase, so after the holidays our thoughts turn to framing those items. Such was the case of Mike Boorsma, who decided to take a few of his favorite comics to a big box store for framing, where he got quite the sticker shock.

“It was disappointing in that the selection wasn’t that great,” Boorsma said. “It was ‘here’s what we have and this is what you should do’ with no explanations. I felt like I was being pushed toward something that really didn’t go with the concept I had in mind and then I was expected to pay a price that seemed out of range for what I wanted to do.”

At the encouragement of his wife, Boorsma decided to try a locally owned frame shop. “The selection was amazing,” Boorsma said, “and the staff offered fantastic tips and advice with the price being less than what the big box store was offering at half off.” Boorsma said his favorite tip was the finger trick. He would lay down a mat and

frame on the corner of his comic and then form his fingers into a circle so he could block out distracting elements and focus on the framing.

The moral of this story: don’t just settle, be creative and get what you want and to do just that, head to a local Grand Rapids Gallery Association frame shop. The framing experts at these galleries can help guide you through the process, answering such questions as mat or no mat, color or natural frame, working with you to create the perfect piece. “I didn’t realize how important archival framing was in preserving the art work,” Boorsma said, adding he also discovered that selecting the right glass was another factor he hadn’t considered. Conservation glass helps reduce the amount of ultraviolet light, which can damage the work.

In the end, Boorsma found a black frame with a hint of color that coupled with a black mat complemented the comics and made the ensemble a centerpiece in the family’s living room. “The comics look fantastic,” Boorsma said. “We wanted to make a statement about who we are and our interests. Putting the comics up on the wall did that and the frames just pulled it all together.