

MYSTERY: Painting draws interest

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getting a new home.

He disposed of the painting in the downtown bin behind Happy Hippie Pizza, which then led to the art being found by Happy Hippie co-owner Bill Tyree.

Tyree, an art lover with a new business that has plenty of bare walls, saved the painting and hung it in his eatery.

"My dad didn't actually say that he threw it away, but I noticed that last time I came back into town I was wondering where it was because it wasn't at his house anymore. And I probably assumed that he threw it away or something."

Crawford, a St. Louis Catholic High School graduate, now lives in Humble, Texas, near Houston. She said she moved there in 2006 with hopes of becoming an art teacher.

Crawford said her 2008 painting of the late Pink Floyd founder Syd Barrett — titled "Floyd" — is based on a 1970 Mick Rock photograph. It is one of her favorites.

"I still can't believe my dad threw it away," she said. "My dad emailed me the *American Press* news story. My aunt saw it on the front page and thought that it looked like one of my paintings."

She said she bears no ill-will toward her father for throwing the painting out. After all, she said, he taught her how to draw at a very young age.

Art-artist reunion

On Saturday, Crawford

was reunited with the painting at Happy Hippie.

She carried in the back of her car two other, smaller paintings from Texas to join "Floyd": a 2-by-4 foot acrylic on particle board of Brandon Flowers, the lead singer of the modern rock band The Killers, and a same-sized painting based on a still from the 1982 film "Blade Runner," which depicts a shadowy figure of actress Sean Young's character, Rachael Tyrell.

Crawford's 4-by-4 foot painting of Syd Barrett was signed "MAE 2008" with black paint on black paint that was not visible to Happy Hippie spectators.

The other co-owner of Happy Hippie Pizza, Jennifer Dwyer, said the painting has been generating interest in the restaurant since the newspaper article first ran.

"Some people who came in here for the first time came in to see the painting and asked if we had found the mystery artist yet. It was hysterical," Dwyer said.

Crawford will now have three of her works on the walls of Happy Hippie Pizza. Tyree and Dwyer hope to sell the art on consignment for the artist.

"We'd love to have her stuff up here on consignment sale. That way, when people come in to see 'the rogue' painting that we found on the streets, they can see the other pictures that the artist has done, too," Dwyer said. "We love to support other people who are starting in their venture, whether it be art or music or food, because we are

all in the same family."

Crawford said most of her paintings are done in the medium of acrylic on particle plywood.

"My family cursed at me for painting them on particle board," she said. "Because they help me load and off-load them at art festivals, they thought my paintings were so heavy. They highly suggested that I switch to canvas."

Crawford said artists like herself — a single mother of a 9-year-old girl — usually will have to work on a budget to fit her artistic integrity.

"Particle board is a lot cheaper than canvas. For example, a 2-by-4 piece of particle board will be like \$5, compared to the same-sized canvas, which goes for like \$40 or \$50," she said.

Crawford said that it would be great if other people besides her and her daughter get to look at her paintings.

"The hard part is coming up with a price tag for them. I mean, they used to be \$750, then they went to \$450 and then \$250. But, I mean, it's just a hobby for me. I'm not a businesswoman."