



Artist Craig Carlson of Eldridge will feature his works in the Fine Arts Festival in DeWitt Saturday, Sept. 25. One of Carlson's drawings (right) depicts a tornado which he saw from the front door of his childhood home in rural Low Moor.

Photo by Kate Howes

## DeWitt Fine Arts Festival slated Sept. 25

### Event will feature works of former Low Moor man

By Kate Howes  
Staff writer

Craig Carlson can recall being a young man and enjoying some carry-out pizza with his sister when an emergency weather announcement came over the television.

A tornado was headed right in the direction of the Carlson family farm in rural Low Moor near Elvira. His parents were out for the night, and Carlson and his sister were home alone.

"I remember I walked out the front door, and there it was," he said of the tornado.

Luckily, the storm missed the Carlson home. Yet, seeing the massive funnel so close and so threatening left a lasting impression on Carlson — one which he has turned into a work of art.

That picture, along with several other drawings and paintings created by Carlson, will be featured at DeWitt's second-annual Fine Arts Festival.

The festival, sponsored by the DeWitt Area Fine Arts Foundation, will be held Saturday, Sept. 25, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Lincoln Park in downtown DeWitt.

Visitors to the festival will be treated to both music and visual arts, with performances by the Me, Myself and I band featuring Marion Sherer at 10 a.m.; Ed McMahon at 11 a.m.; the community band at noon; and Scott Kaczinski & Family Music Ministries at 1 p.m.

The works of 15 area artists will be on display, with visual arts including mixed media, polymer clay, clay, basket weaving, nature photography, caricatures and face painting, wood, pastel, acrylic and pencil and water color and beadwork.

In case of rain, the event will be moved into the community center.

#### Early affection for art

Carlson now lives in Eldridge with his wife, Julie, and their two children, Ben, who is in first grade and 3-year-old Katie. He works in Davenport as a graphic artist.

Carlson's love of art and drawing developed at an early age. According to his website, Carlson began drawing as soon as he could pick up a pencil.

Carlson said he becomes inspired by things he either has imagined or seen and growing up in scenic, rustic, rural Iowa, he had any number of intriguing scenes to choose from, including one of his favorites — wildlife.

"Wolves are my favorite of the four-legged critters," Carlson shared. "I also love to draw birds of prey, like hawks."

Small wild animals and birds he would see around the family farm were among Carlson's favorite subjects to draw as a child.

Today, while he still enjoys capturing

wildlife on paper, Carlson finds himself intrigued by old barns. One drawing which Carlson said he plans to keep for himself is of a rustic, old barn near Goose Lake.

Something Carlson said he likes to do is to capture a scene for a potential drawing on film first.

"Sometimes I'll go out and drive around and take pictures of things I see," he related. "I then use those photos to draw my pictures."

Carlson's works are on display in galleries around the Quad Cities and he exhibits his pictures in numerous arts and crafts shows throughout Iowa and Illinois. According to his website, his paintings have reached collectors in the United States, Germany and Belgium.

Carlson also donates prints every year to organizations including Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and other fund-raisers.

Carlson said he always is hopeful those who see his completed works get as much joy from them as he does creating them.

"It's relaxing," he said with a smile as he looked at the various prints scattered around his studio. "Drawing is a stress reliever for me. Anybody who does woodwork knows when you build something you get a little satisfaction out of it. In the end, you hope whatever you've made is useful to somebody."