Collectible action figures are more than toys to Scott Wilkowski—they’re his bread and butter. Wilkowski graduated from UW-Stout with a degree in art—industrial design in 1999. A Milwaukee native, Wilkowski went to work for Steve Kiwus, a toy sculptor in Minneapolis, soon after graduation. Three years later, he and his wife Anne Lenz ’01, also an art—industrial design graduate, moved to New Jersey where Scott worked at McFarlane Toys. After a year they moved back to Milwaukee where Scott now works from his home-based Waxbean Studio sculpting action toys.

Starting with a character, Wilkowski creates a wax sculpture. It takes Wilkowski two to four weeks to complete a figure, depending on the size and amount of surface area. The original figure is molded in silicone and then resin is cast in the mold. Multiple resin copies can be made with one silicone mold. All paint samples are created on resin copies.

Wilkowski usually works from photo clips creating figures from sports, movies and comics. Wilkowski says that “sculpting for production is very different from fine art sculpting. A figure may be broken up into separate parts with more than one person working on the same figure. It’s closer to working on an animated Disney feature. It takes many people to create a single vision.” Wilkowski estimates he’s sculpted hundreds of figures in the past six years.

Wilkowski is still a kid at heart when waiting for the finished product. “From the time a figure leaves my hands to seeing the figure at Toys ‘R’ Us is around six months,” he said. “I always look forward to seeing the product in person and trying to figure out how I can improve on the next one!”

For more information: www.waxbeanstudio.com
JEWELRY DELIVERED TO EMMY AWARDS

Being invited to design a piece of jewelry to be worn by a celebrity at the Emmy awards doesn’t happen everyday. Samara “Sam” Philipp Christian ’78 and her husband, Greg Christian ‘80, were honored to receive just such an invitation this year. Only an estimated 50 designers from across the country were invited to submit jewelry pieces for consideration by celebrities that might be presenting at the Emmys. According to Greg Christian, the jewelry is available for preview by stars and their dress designers who are looking for that certain piece that will generate just the right look. Because of the Katrina tragedy, the Emmys event and the attire of the guests was more subdued this year, so unfortunately, the Christian’s jewelry was not among the chosen.

The Christians met while in a metals class at UW-Stout. They discovered they had more in common than art metals and married soon after graduation. Since opening their business Gold and Silver Creations in 1981 in Sturgeon Bay, the business has grown and prospered into one of the premier jewelry stores in eastern Wisconsin.

As their business has expanded, Greg and Samara have held tight to their artist’s passion and still take great pride in their commitment to create one-of-a-kind jewelry. Greg Christian speaks highly of Ron Verdon, professor, UW-Stout, art and design department, and acknowledges Verdon’s influence and encouragement as a mentor. The relationship has evolved into a 25-year friendship between the two classmates and their teacher.

For more information:  
www.doorcountyjeweler.com  920-743-2570

STUDIO ARTIST SECURES HOMETOWN EXHIBIT

Richard “Rick” Hutter graduated from UW-Stout in 1987 with a degree in art—studio art with emphasis on printmaking. After spending a few months in his hometown of Minneapolis, he moved to Seattle to establish a career as a professional artist. With a solid art education foundation, Hutter worked diligently to gain recognition for his artwork. By 1999 he had his first solo show and by 2002 had representation in New York, as well as Seattle. His work has been included in numerous juried national exhibitions.

Hutter studied printmaking under UW-Stout art professors, Paul Delong and Rob Price. His current works are mixed media paintings incorporating found elements, collage, acrylic and ink on canvas. He sometimes employs methods borrowed from printmaking, namely serigraphy. A reviewer of Hutter’s exhibit at the Seattle Art Museum Rental and Sales Gallery wrote, “Hutter’s work has an approachable pop sensibility…These works have a well worked feel, though the images are graphically strong, new.”

A goal for Hutter was to someday be exhibited back in Minneapolis. In the spring of 2005 he secured representation in the Midwest. Hutter will mount a solo show at the Circa Gallery, 1637 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, March 17-April 14, 2006. An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, March 17, 2006, 5-8 p.m.

For more information:  
richardhutter@hotmail.com  www.richardhutter.com  www.circagallery.org  612-332-2386
HAVE PAINTBRUSH, WILL TRAVEL

Dale Manor received his degree in art—industrial design from UW-Stout in 1995. He then took some time to travel, and eventually found himself back in Menomonie. Today, he provides assistance to students, supervising the process lab in the art and design department at UW-Stout. Manor is an artist as well. In recent years, he’s pursued an interest in painting murals which, he confesses, has become “all consuming.”

This past summer Manor was one of 12 muralists selected nationally to receive a scholarship to attend the 2005 Mural Workshop sponsored by the Edwin Austin Abbey Memorial Fund for Mural Painting in America. Held in New York City at the National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts, Manor reveled in the month-long immersion into public art, design and discovering how 12 different artists could find “12 different solutions to a problem.”

Manor’s primary outlet for mural work is through a group called The Letterheads. Organized to further the art, craftsmanship and skills of sign painting, The Letterheads travel throughout the world, brightening public and private spaces and exchanging the skills and techniques of the trade. Manor says it’s fun because participants “leave their egos at home” and share in the pure pleasure of working cooperatively on a project that’s bigger than one person.

Manor has left his mark in the area, donating his artistry for a mural at a nursing home in Menomonie and a restaurant in Duluth, Minn. Recently, Manor took a little excursion to Lodi, Calif., where muralists converged to paint nine murals in four days...just for the fun of it.

For more information:
Dale Manor; manord@uwstout.edu; www.theletterheads.com

ARTISTS WIELD MAGIC WANDS

Repainting the kid’s room takes on a whole new meaning when you contract with Morgan Evan-Thorne, a Minneapolis/St.Paul area partnership operated by Christine Adams Evaska ’92 and Tyanne Hitchcock. They can turn a child’s plain bedroom into an unforgettable place.

When the business started, nine years ago, the duo created “grown up” spaces, painting decorative borders and faux finishes. They soon discovered that “designing for children’s spaces allowed them much more creative leeway.” Morgan Evan-Thorne captures a child’s dream and creates a one-of-a-kind environment. Evaska described the process as one of interviewing, brainstorming, sketching and construction. From an initial conversation to completed installation can take four to six weeks and costs $1,500 to $2,500 per room.

As a graduate of UW-Stout’s graphic design program, Evaska thanks art faculty for contributing to her success. Design theory classes trained her to brainstorm ideas “until it makes your brain hurt.” She acknowledges Sue Hunt, UW-Stout associate professor and current chair of the art and design department, for teaching her “to be meticulous and...on time.”

Evaska, a work from home mom, says that business has been steadily growing, and word-of-mouth advertising keeps the “fairy art mothers,” as they’re affectionately called, booked months in advance. Future projects include a book, some retail products and a possible television series and are proof that waving a magic wand does make dreams come true.

For more information: www.morganevanthorne.com
612- 961-6503

Tyanne Hitchcock (left) and Christine Evaska ’92 create fantasy children’s rooms

Dale Manor received his degree in art—industrial design from UW-Stout in 1995. He then took some time to travel, and eventually found himself back in Menomonie. Today, he provides assistance to students, supervising the process lab in the art and design department at UW-Stout. Manor is an artist as well. In recent years, he’s pursued an interest in painting murals which, he confesses, has become “all consuming.”

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Dale Manor; manord@uwstout.edu; www.theletterheads.com
CATERPILLAR UNDERGOES A CHOPPING

Martin Gierke, a 1979 graduate of UW-Stout, has had many interesting assignments in his career. None compare to his work with the Orange County Choppers (OCC) team as they built a pair of unique “choppers” (motorcycles) for Caterpillar Inc. The bikes were the subjects of a recent two-hour episode of American Chopper aired on the Discovery Channel.

American Chopper stars, Paul Teutul Sr., Paul Teutul Jr. and Mikey Teutul, toured Caterpillar facilities in East Peoria and Edwards, Ill., in early 2005. Gierke was one of the team members from Caterpillar working with OCC throughout the bike building process. “Interesting to note how much goes on behind the scenes,” said Gierke. “Teams of lawyers, company executives, media personnel, merchandise licensing representatives and others converge.”

“The Cat brand carries a legacy of quality, strength and toughness,” said Paul Teutul Jr., OCC’s chief designer and fabricator. “It’s the toughest bike built by Orange County Choppers.” The bike’s design features many characteristics unique to Cat machines, including Grade 8 bolts, sprockets, bucket teeth, a Track-Type Tractor exhaust and its distinctive color.

The Cat Chopper is currently on tour. Eventually, at least one of them will find a permanent home in Peoria, Ill. at the new Caterpillar Museum.

Martin Gierke is brand strategy and education manager for Caterpillar Inc. in Peoria, Ill. Prior to joining Caterpillar in 2001, Martin served as vice president of industrial design at Black & Decker, Inc.

For more information: 
Gierke_martin_p@cat.com or 
www.cat.com/cda/layout?m=73180&x=7
www.orangecountychoppers.com/home.php

QUALITY PRINTING REQUIRES A QUALITY EDUCATION

Clients, like Discovery Channel, have high expectations for the printing they require. HM Graphics has a standard of excellence for every project.

In 1969 John Sandstrom purchased a small print shop in Milwaukee with a dream of owning a business and providing for his family. Sandstrom guided the business, HM Graphics, from a one and two-color print shop into a four-color nationally known full-service printing organization.

Today, three out of eight of the Sandstrom children continue to manage the business focused on the company’s mission of quality results and outstanding service.

Kathy Sandstrom ’84, vice president of marketing, has been with the family business for more than 20 years. She’s proud to say that HM Graphics was recently listed as one of the top five printing companies in the country by Printing Industries of America. HM Graphics’ reputation is reflected in their client list which includes America Online, Kohler Company, Johnson Controls and the Discovery Channel.

Kathy Sandstrom and her brothers, Jay ’80 and David ’88, made the commitment to HM Graphics early in their careers and… all three graduated from UW-Stout. As a matter of fact, six members of the Sandstrom family have received diplomas from UW-Stout, one more will graduate soon, and the upcoming generation has the idea under consideration.

Kathy, who is an active board member of the Stout University Foundation, appreciates “the fact that UW-Stout supports niche programming that allows students to build upon their core classes and customize their course requirements to meet their goals.” HM Graphics knows first-hand that when they recruit or accept interns from UW-Stout, they will be gaining employees who understand the printing industry and the meaning of excellence.

For more information: www.hmgraphics.com