

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Frankfort, Illinois

Frankfort

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Neighbors



Enjoying
Life's
surprises
in Frankfort
Meet Nella and E.J



Enjoying Life's surprises in Frankfort

Meet Nella and E.J

By Rex Robinson
Photos by Scott Duff

Nella Piccolin and E.J. Dal Bello are living proof that you never know how things are going to work out and the reality is that life will often surprise you.

It was the early 1970s and Nella was working at a salon in Chicago's Roseland neighborhood when the salon owner's daughter asked her to be a bridesmaid for her wedding. E.J. was the best man for his cousin at that same wedding, and the die was cast.

"It was like a lightning bolt – love at first sight," Nella recalls. "Unfortunately, we didn't get along very well so we went our separate ways."

Five years later, the two ran into each other at the post office and 30 days later, on July 6, 1973, they were married at St. Peter and Paul Church in Roseland.



Moving to Frankfort

They would move out to Frankfort, raise two sons, Frank and Antonio, and foster two other children, David Shelly and Felicity Shields.

The family moved to Brookside when the interest rate was 17 percent, Nella recalls. She and her husband intended to build a larger home and had plans drawn up until Nella's mom moved in next door. "We are still here in the Brookside subdivision after almost 40 years. My 92-year-old Mom (Ines Baron) still lives next door."

Nella and E.J. love how the park and the trail are right off of the backyard of their home. "I love the view and seeing people on the trail," Nella says. "We are now the empty nesters on the block. It is so nice to see the young families and their kids move in as we did years ago."

Nella, who owned her own hair salon for 20 years, has run the family business, Kensington Research and Recovery Inc., with her husband since 2001. Prior to that, E.J. had the first dollar store in Illinois.

Many Firsts

Currently Frankfort Township's Clerk, Nella has had many firsts in her life. She was the first female trustee for Frankfort Township, the first female collector. Also, she and Kay MacNeil started Frankfort's first recycling program when their children attended school in Frankfort School District 157C. Nella and MacNeil also are active together in the local Garden Club.

Nella is past president of the district's PTA. She also is past president of the Lincoln Way Special Recreation Association, as well as chairman of fundraising for the Lincoln-Way Key Club and Will County Committee Woman of the Year.

As for hobbies, Nella has a few. "My dear friend Paulette Domzal took me to a local artist's, (Sharon Roma) painting class 15 years ago. My hobbies are painting, gardening, going to the theater, movies, sewing, and we love music – especially local talent," she says.

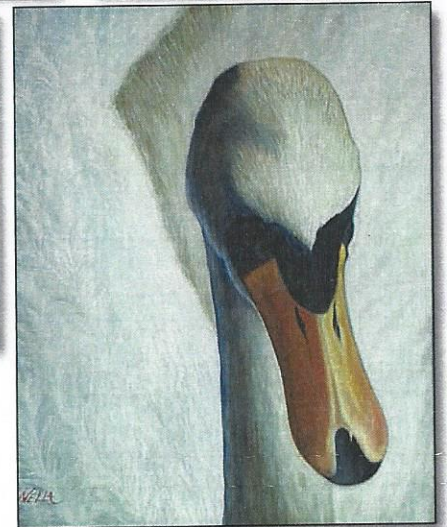
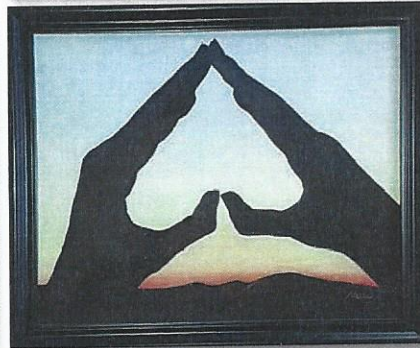
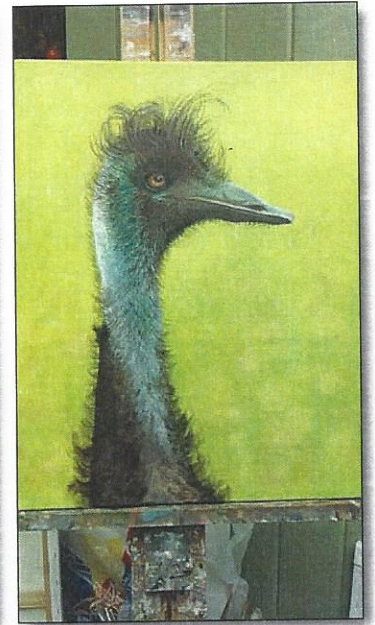
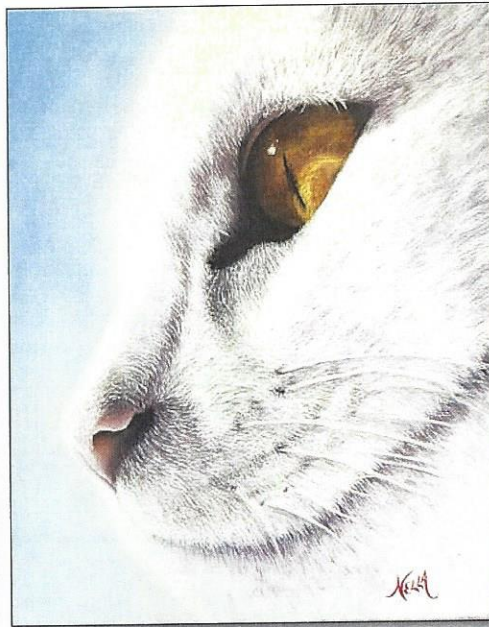
Dr. Doolittle

Dr. Dolittle comes to mind when Nella describes the family's love of animals. "We've had cats, dogs, birds, squirrels and just

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(Clockwise from above) Lucky is an adopted 6-year-old miniature pincher; these four paintings are just a few of Nella's many beautiful creations; E.J. is pictured with sons Frank and Antonio.

about every kind of injured wild life from the park adjacent to our backyard and brought to our door," she says.

For example, they had a pigeon who couldn't fly, which ended up staying with the family until he recovered. They had four gold fish from the Fun Fair that lived for 26 years. "My son won them by throwing the Ping Pong ball into the little fish bowl," she recalls.

Nella says their border collie died at age 14 and she misses him every day. She and her husband recently adopted a 6-year-old miniature pincher. "He was found in a storage locker in Steger. We call him Lucky and we feel lucky to have him," she says. "We have a lot in common – he growls and bites just like me."

Community Time

Nella and her husband enjoy all their community has to offer. Their favorite local thing to do is heading to C.D. and Me on Thursday nights. "They have great music and cocktails on the patio with the world's best hosts, Chuck and Dean," she says.

Their favorite local restaurants are La Dolce Vita, Parmesans, and Sorrisos. They also love the theater. "E.J. and I have a season tickets to Broadway in Chicago," she says. "There is nothing as exciting as opening night. We love going to the wine bar at Macy's

on the 7th floor before the show and the intimate bar in the Hotel Allegro where the cast hangs out after a performance.

Nella and her husband love to travel and they try to visit the Magic Kingdom in Florida annually and also never like to miss the Cole Porter Fest in Peru, Ind. in addition to seeing most of the U.S., they've also traveled to South America, Europe, China and Cuba, and have many great memories from all those trips.

Doing their part for the community is important to Nella and E.J. They deliver for "Day-End Dough-Nation," a program offered through Panera Bread. They deliver unused bread and baked goods from Panera to the Frankfort Township Food Pantry.

As for a motto to live by, Nella says she and E.J. have two. One is from the movie Moonstruck: "Just tell the truth. They find out anyway." The other is fairly well known as well and that is "Get off the cross. We need the wood."

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in upcoming issues! Contact us at jstein@bestversionmedia.com