

**Gallery owner earns framing prize** *By Jim Cornelius* News Editor.

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Myrna Dow, owner of High Desert Gallery & Custom Framing, recently competed with the elite of the framing trade in Las Vegas, and Dow's first-time entry garnered the top honor: first place, and a Judges' Award for high-point, first-time entry in the open competition.

The Professional Picture Framers Association (PPFA) hosts custom picture framing competitions in several categories during their Annual International PPFA 2008 Leadership in Framing Convention held this year in Las Vegas, Nevada, in early February.

Dow's winning entry framed a new work by Paul Alan Bennett titled "John Day River," an original gouache on paper.

"I asked Paul Bennett if he would paint a Central Oregon landscape," Dow told The Nugget. "I didn't tell him colors or anything like that; I just waited to see what he would do."

The competition has strict guidelines and judging criteria, involving creative elements, display of skills and craftsmanship and the impression created by the work.

As a competitive piece Dow had to create a high level of difficulty for herself, as well as crafting an attractive piece.

"That was the trick of this particular design," she said.

Dow has an extensive background, including a degree in graphic design, which she says has helped her master her trade - particularly in terms of color theory. But her design technique remains largely intuitive.

"It's hard to describe something that's second-nature to her," said her husband Todd Dow.

In creating her winning frame, Dow said: "I started with the play of colors. Basically I just use my eye."

Dow was thrilled just to attend the conference, which drew elite picture framers from as far away as Australia and New Zealand. Dow didn't spend her Vegas vacation at the craps tables; she was attending classes, including one session conducted by a framing specialist with the National Archives.

"It was very fun to be around all that," she said.

Dow said that entering the competition was part of the educational process.

"When you enter a competition, you get feedback; you see what others are doing - basically how you rate," she said. "And that was a lot of fun, too."

A lot of fun made perfect by winning first prize.

Dow laughs at the memory.

"I didn't expect first place at all," she said. "When they called it out, I must admit I didn't contain myself very well."



**Champion framer Myrna Dow.**  
*Photo by Jim Cornelius*