

Hingham man's illness inspired him to paint for charitable causes

Scott Leaver said he had never painted anything in his life before he was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Now he not only paints as much as he can, he gives the proceeds from the sale of his works to charities.

"People are genuinely interested in buying my art work," Leaver said last week. "So I'm selling it via donations to brain cancer research."

Leaver, 33, a technical consultant for a software company, was diagnosed with a brain tumor in August after experiencing dizziness and blurry vision on a business trip to Atlanta. Before that, he said he had mild headaches that were easily dismissed with a pain reliever.

But on the plane ride to Atlanta, Leaver said he felt dizzy when he stood up to get his bag out of the overhead compartment. A hotel doctor and two paramedics examined him before sending him to the hospital, puzzled over his symptoms.

A doctor diagnosed a brain tumor and 24 hours later, Leaver underwent surgery.

"The whole thing happened so fast," Leaver said. "My wife flew down to be with me and my parents came from D.C. The strange thing was that 48 hours after surgery, I was out having dinner with them in a restaurant."

Because the tumor was malignant, Leaver began chemotherapy when he returned home to Hingham.

While recuperating, Leaver said his wife Sharyn encouraged him to do some paintings for the blank walls of their new home.

"She had bought me an easel two years ago and it had just sat in the basement," Leaver said. "She had seen my doodlings and thought maybe I could do something nice for the walls."

Once he started, Leaver said he really enjoyed the work. He has done oil paintings, mostly of an abstract nature. When friends and family encouraged him to sell some of the pieces, he decided to donate the proceeds to charity.

"I wanted to help in the research of brain tumors, and do something for other groups," Leaver said.

So far, proceeds have gone to the National Brain Tumor Association; the American Heart Association (his father-in-law died of heart disease); the Hingham Food Pantry and the Mary Martha Learning Center in Hingham.

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"I thought I should help close to home, too," he said.

Leaver said he prefers not to handle the money. Anyone interested in looking at his paintings can go to his web site, www.empoweredart.com. Before they can buy a painting, they must show proof of a donation they have made (a photocopy of a canceled check) and a contact he can call at the charity for verification.

"People are welcome to any art I've got on my site now or they can commission me to do a piece specifically for them of whatever they choose (abstract), no formal (family) portraits, etc."

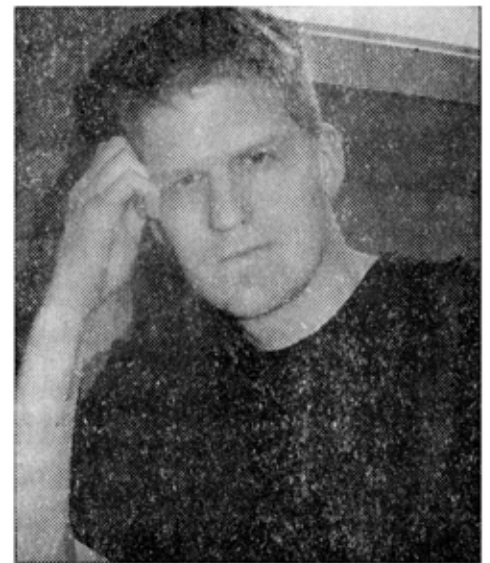
For now, Leaver is back to work full time and painting whenever he gets the chance. His latest MRI showed everything was clear, he said, but he'll still undergo radiation treatments after chemotherapy.

"I have a (medium) aggressive form of this type of brain cancer," Leaver said. "I'll do the paintings as long as it works out."

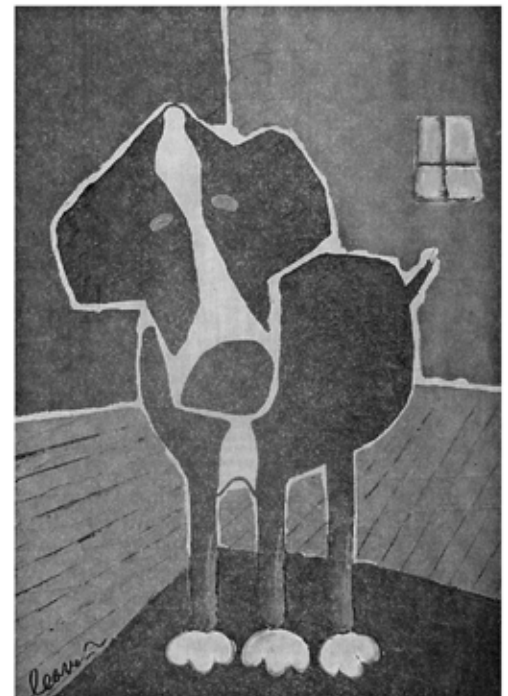
Leaver suggests a donation of \$100 to a charity for each of his paintings, though some people have paid \$50 and others, \$200.

"Things are rough economically, so I leave it up to people," he said.

— THE PATRIOT LEDGER



Scott Leaver, 33, of Hingham, was diagnosed with a brain tumor in August.



Scott Leaver's paintings can be seen at the web site, www.empoweredart.com.