

VENDOR PROFILES

By David Crowder

Jennifer Zeek

Jennifer Zeek has been in the business of turning re-imagined mementos and throwaways into art that sells since 2009.

She's been at it long before she started selling at Ardivino's Desert Crossing's weekend Farmers' Market last year with her husband, Al.

Her business is called Jennuwine Design.

"I really started when I was a kid," she said at a recent Saturday market. "People would bring things home and say, 'give it to Jennifer, and she'll make something out of it.'"

In Zeek's hands, tubes that may have been the cores for depleted packing tape rolls become colorful wrist or arm bangles while old children books may find new life as ear rings that go for as little as \$10.

Her highest priced items go for \$50 - or so.



The most striking piece she had for sale at one Saturday market was a gold flower she fashioned from the pages of an old King James Bible with leaves that are still legible if you look closely.

"They're all hand-painted, all sealed, and all signed," she said of her works. "God's creation has always been such an inspiration to me.

"There's so much waste. I didn't start as a campaigner for recycling. I just started seeing you could turn that into something else."

Zeek also has paintings that she'll be bringing to the market on future weekends.

"I tell people that if they have something that's special, it can be repurposed into something else," she said. "I mean how many times do you have kids' or grandkids' art, and there's no space left on the refrigerator?"

"You don't want to throw it away, but maybe it can be turned into jewelry or artwork that can be framed.

"I had a friend whose mom passed away, but we couldn't come to the service. So I asked him to send me the memorial, and I turned it into a beaded bracelet and there was a picture of her mom that I turned into a necklace and sent it back to her.

"She later said, 'You know it's like having my mom with me all the time.'"