

## Customer Proposes with Romantic Custom Puzzle: Couple to Wed in 2004



Probably every man about to propose to the woman he loves faces the inevitable question: How can I ask her to marry me in a way that will be unique and memorable? When Robert Chalfour came upon the web site for Jim Ayer's puzzles, he dreamed up a plan of how to surprise his girlfriend Rhianna. He decided to create a custom-made wooden puzzle for Rhianna that included the words "Will you marry me?"

Robert asked Rhianna to get formal pictures taken with him at a local studio. Unbeknownst to her, the picture would become the centerpiece of the new puzzle. Across the top of the picture were the words "Will you marry me?" and "Our love can never have a happy ending"—a sweet missive that Robert frequently wrote in e-mails to Rhianna. Once the words were incorporated into the image by Jim's photo lab, they delivered the photo to Jim Ayer, who used his water-jet cutting machine to create an intricate puzzle. "It's really elaborate," says Robert, who enjoyed the challenge of putting the puzzle together:

On the big night, Robert invited Rhianna's parents over: "I wasn't sure if she would put the puzzle together right away, so her best friend and I started to put it together for her to get things started," says Robert. Then Rhianna became intrigued and began piecing the puzzle together herself. To make sure that she didn't see the words until the puzzle was finished, Robert had hidden the pieces with the words "Will you marry me?" at the bottom of the box. When she finally put together the remaining pieces, Rhianna was surprised and thrilled.

Rhianna appreciated the detail that went into the crafting of the puzzle. "It's very creative," says Rhianna. "The puzzle is made up of all different kinds of neat shapes."

The puzzle will remain a piece of Robert and Rhianna's history together: "We're thinking about framing it," says Robert. Rhianna and Robert will become man and wife in September 27, 2004 at a ceremony in Manchester, New Hampshire. We wish them much happiness!



## Fresh Ayer News FALL 2002

### FOREST AT FONTAINEBLEAU PAINTING MAKES AN INTRIGUING PUZZLE



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The latest addition to the J.C. Ayer gallery is a puzzle made from the enchanting Leon Kroll painting Forest at Fontainebleau. Now you have an opportunity to enjoy this picture on a finely crafted wooden jigsaw puzzle.

*(Continued on inside cover)*

## FONTAINEBLEAU PAINTING (Continued from cover)

"This is one of the hardest puzzles I've ever made because of the scarcity of contrast," Jim says. "The rich shades of green in the forest and the deep shadows beneath the trees make for a particularly challenging puzzle. The large size also makes it difficult," Jim added. "It is the biggest puzzle among my standard puzzles."

Kroll painted *Forest at Fontainebleau* in 1906 and named it for the famous royal forest outside of Paris, which is noted for its handsome old oak trees and its proximity to the Seine. Fontainebleau has been a hunting forest since the Middle Ages. It is home to a royal chateau, which was one of Napoleon's beloved castles. The painting was rumored to be one of Kroll's wife's favorites.

The artist was born in New York to a financially poor but musically rich family. At the age of 15 he swept floors and performed other odd jobs in order to scrape up the money to attend the

Art Students League. While at the League, he was fortunate to meet the gifted landscape artist Winslow Homer, who mentored the young Kroll in a career as a painter.



*Forest at Fontainebleau (detail)*  
15 1/4" x 23 1/2"  
\$620

Best known for his sketches of nudes, artist Leon Kroll (1884-1974) spent his early twenties studying in Paris under the tutelage of Jean-Paul Laurens. After just one year of study, he won the Grand Prix for painting. During this period, he was

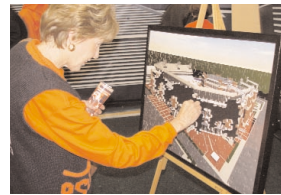
influenced by Paul Cézanne's early modernist dictum that "Art is harmony parallel to nature."

He later taught at the National Academy of Design, the Pennsylvania Academy, and the Chicago Art Institute. He won nearly every major prize in painting. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

*Forest at Fontainebleau* is another excellent example of how a fine landscape painting can be turned into a very complex puzzle. It's the ideal gift for the ambitious puzzler on your holiday list!

If you enjoy Kroll's work, look in the Scapes Gallery on [ayerpuzzles.com](http://ayerpuzzles.com) for our other Kroll puzzle, "Landscape."

## OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY PIQUES INTEREST IN NEW STADIUM WITH J.C. AYER PUZZLE



Oklahoma State University is embarking on a project to turn their existing football stadium into a first-class sports complex that is unique in all of collegiate athletics. Before the Nebraska game in late October, the university's athletic department hosted a pre-game brunch for university benefactors to raise money for the exciting endeavor. Athletic Director Harry Birdwell wanted to show the invitees that they were an important part of the project. And what better way to do that than giving them an actual piece of the puzzle!

They gave a computer illustration of the football stadium renovation project to Jim, who created the 20" x 30," 300-piece puzzle for them. They then mailed individual pieces of the puzzle to all of the people on



their RSVP list, along with a letter with the tag line "You're an important piece of the puzzle!" At the party, each guest placed their piece into the puzzle to show everyone what their contribution will be helping to build.

But the university also had a special request. They needed two identical puzzles, just in case one of the guests didn't show up or forgot their puzzle piece. "The fact that Jim cuts his puzzles with a computer-controlled water jet and has the ability to precisely replicate the puzzle was important to us," says Athletic Department Publications Coordinator Clay Billman. "The puzzle has created a lot of buzz. People are intrigued by it."

"This is a fun way to meet with our best potential donors, outline the project,



and get them to rally them around it," Billman says. The party featured the puzzle, plus wall-sized architectural renderings of the new stadium. Jim designed the puzzle with extra-large pieces so that it would be easy for party guests to put together by referring to the picture of the stadium.

During the tailgate-theme party, the university's auxiliary gym was turned into a mock stadium, complete with AstroTurf, to show guests what the new stadium will look like. The event included attendance by prominent former student-athletes and alumni. "We're excited to see the puzzle, and the project, come together!" Billman says.

We'll be rooting for you Oklahoma State. Go Cowboys!