



September 2008

Chikage Windler's blog

Chik's Pics - Meeting Mr. Caponi at Caponi Art Park in Eagan

Chikage Windler - Meteorologist

My "Chik's Pics" Destination of the Day was Caponi Art Park in Eagan. I stumbled upon a list of places for family fun, and Caponi Art Park was on it. So I visited their website, got directions, and headed to the park. I have to be honest - I expected a sculpture garden like the one in Minneapolis by the Walker. What I found was an urban gem... a piece of the country in the middle of the burbs. Another thing I didn't expect: to meet Tony Caponi - owner, sculptor, founder, and philanthropist!

Tony was working on a retaining wall near the entrance to the park, and I actually thought he was just a contractor. So as I walked by him, camera in hand, I smiled and said "hi," then continued on my way to the sculpture garden to take pics. I walked along some trails, took my pictures, enjoyed a little solitude (I was the only one - except for a dog - at the sculpture garden during my visit), and walked back to the parking lot.

As I got to the parking area, Tony said to me "You've never been here before, have you?" And that's how our conversation began. He introduced himself as Tony Caponi and it all made sense. The park that bears his name is also his home - he built the home and an amphitheater in the woods, he sculpted the art that can be seen throughout the grounds...AND he's also the groundskeeper, which on this day meant working on a retaining wall.



Tony Caponi, Founder of Caponi Art Park

I learned a lot about Tony Caponi in a very short time. He's originally from Italy, but has been in Minnesota since the 1950's. He's the retired Art Department head at MacAlester College. He's 87 years old but acts half that! He's a fascinating man with a passion for art and life - and loves to share that passion with visitors to the Art Park. When I told him I was going to put some of my pics of the park on TV and this blog, Tony offered to show me some of his favorite getaway spots on the 60-acre grounds. Of course, I took him up on the offer. So away we went in his golf cart, zooming along the trails, into the grass, and through the trees. We saw a bonfire area, and a couple of clearings through which you could see a beautiful lake!

I snapped some nice shots of the goldenrod framing the lake and watched the bees buzzing away. I wish I could have spent more time exploring the park, but I had to high tail it back to work. My little girl Austen's only 11 1/2



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but when she's a little older, I'd like to take her to Caponi Art Park to explore for herself. They have events including "Family Fun Tuesdays" perfect for kiddos! By the way, Caponi Art Park is also hosting a photo contest (wish I would have known BEFORE I snapped my "Chik's Pics" because I was in a rush and didn't get any really good shots!) So if you go, take your camera along!

Thanks as always for reading my blog!

-Chikage

Want to find out more about Caponi Art Park? Visit the [Caponi Art Park Webpage](#)



Tony Caponi on his golf cart overlooking the lake