

# Meet the Tikis



## A new series of children's books by Florida's Peter Janus

By Nick Camara

Images Courtesy Peter Janus

*Meet the Tikis* is a series of Tiki-themed books for children young and old by Florida's Peter Janus. There are to be 16 books in all with the 1st recently released called "Cabana Tiki." What started as fun, tropical, Tiki paintings, turned into a cast of characters come to life.

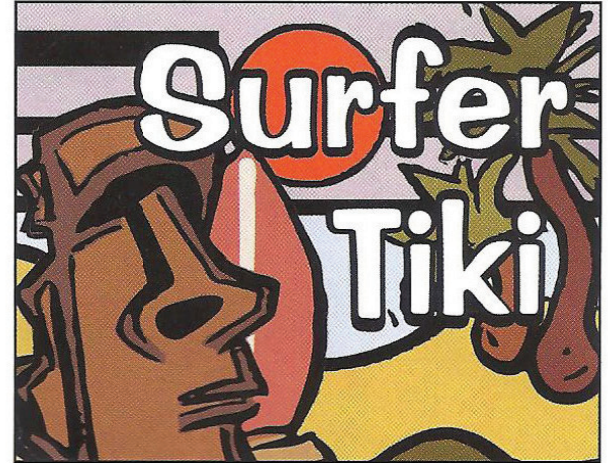
Who is Peter Janus? Peter is actually a Midwest transplant to Florida. He was born in Chicago and lived there for 10 years before moving with his family to Wisconsin Dells, WI. Peter refers to Wisconsin Dells as "the Disney World of Wisconsin." Peter's first Tiki memory is from a family trip to Hawaii as a child. "We went to Maui. I remember admiring the hand-carved Tikis at the local markets and seeing Coco Joe's in the local shops. I ended up buying one."

Peter was artistic with a business-sense as a kid. At the age of 16, he was working at the family motel businesses (his family owned 2 motels) in Wisconsin Dells. Peter's dad allowed him to use one of the cabins at one of the motels to start his own business. PJ's Cards and Comics was born. He came up with his own logo and designed the entire store. He even had an article written about him in a local newspaper.

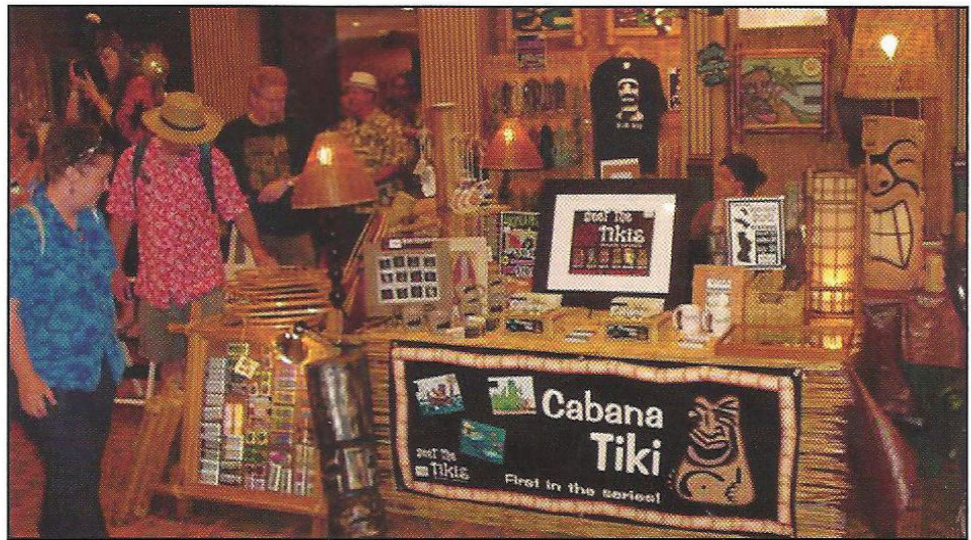
After a few years, he then moved to the college town of Madison, WI. While always loving to shop for toys, he decided to open his next business, a vintage/collectible toy store called Crazy Collectibles. "I designed the logo, painted the inside of the store and created the store signage which featured a character." It got a lot of attention and developed somewhat of a following. It even had a few celebrity customers like Foo Fighters front man/Nirvana drummer Dave Grohl and Smashing Pumpkins bassist D'Arcy Wretzky. The venture lasted a few years before eBay started and killed the market for small collectible toy store owners. But it was during this time, while at a thrift store shopping for toys for his business, Peter met his future wife Erin. "See, you never know what you'll find."

Peter and Erin moved down to Florida in 2004. "After working really hard for 4 years in real estate, I realized I needed to slow down and remembered how much I loved art. In 2008, I decided to get back into it and started painting again. My inspiration for the *Meet the Tikis* series comes from the fun free flowing abstract art you see in Florida, Disney, and Tikis from Wayne Coombs' Mai Tiki in Cocoa Beach, FL." You may remember Wayne Coombs as our featured carver in the Spring '09 issue of *Tiki Magazine*. "I really love Wayne's (Mai Tiki) Tikis. They are the true inspiration in my love for Tiki. I admire all that he has created and the great energy each piece of his has."

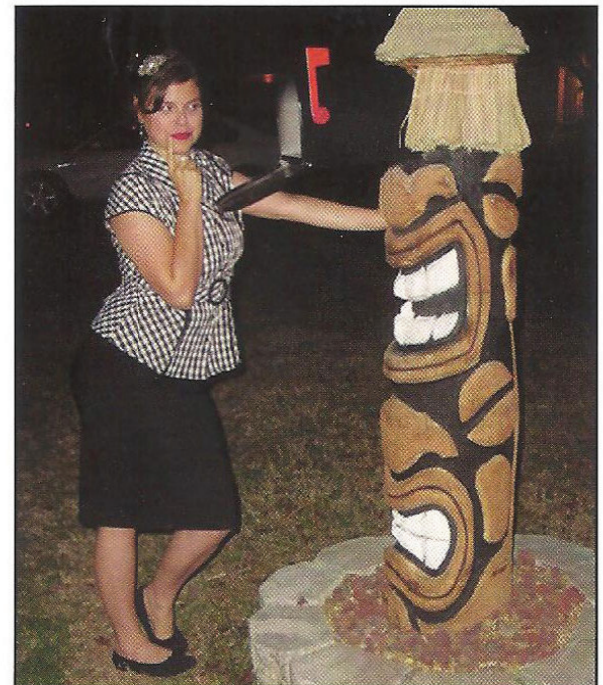
The next installment in the *Meet the Tikis* series, *Easter Moon*, will be coming out in June 2012. Look for Peter's art and books in retail stores and art shows throughout Florida. For more info, go to Peter's websites [www.tropikiglobal.com](http://www.tropikiglobal.com), [www.peterjanus.com](http://www.peterjanus.com) and [www.tropikiwholesale.com](http://www.tropikiwholesale.com).



The moral of book 3 is that "Persistence and focus pay off in the end."



The Janus's proudly displayed their wares at 2011's Hukilau in Ft. Lauderdale, FL



Janus's wife Erin in front of one of his Tiki mailboxes