

the Angel
Accomplishment

the 20
most
intriguing
in the
lehigh Valley

SUCCESS
Influence

Glamorous PASSION

The Lehigh Valley has grown by leaps and bounds over the past decades, making it almost impossible to identify only 20 of the region's vibrant and colorful personalities as "Intriguing." Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton and their surrounding communities thrive with a rich and diverse population, with each township, borough and village bolstered by the others' successes. "The individuals spotlighted in the following pages represent only a small selection -- from artisan and attorney, to cowboy and conductor -- of the warm and wonderful melting pot that is the Lehigh Valley. Bravo to them all!

By Diana Morse

GENIUS
isio

RENAISSANCE WOMAN
MELISSA SHELLY PEKTOR

With the launch of her first jewelry collection, smart and vivacious Melissa Shelly Pektor hopes to inspire others to follow their dreams. The Parkland High alumnae began designing her line of charms in the early 90's as a grad student living in southern California, where she came to appreciate the expression, "Creo Que™" (I believe that), inspiring her Creo Que™ line being introduced nationally this fall. "It's never too late to revisit your dreams," says Melissa, who has returned to painting, acting, designing and "finally finding myself at age 50!" Though it has been 15 years since she sketched her first Creo Que™ designs, earning her Ph.D., marriage and the birth of her son sidelined the idea for more than a decade. After college, Melissa worked in Manhattan for a top ten advertising agency and then with ABC.



The acting buff also studied dance and acting with Fred Kareman at the Neighborhood Playhouse and, after missing a return flight to New York on a particularly harrowing business trip, Melissa realized it was time to quit her "highest paying job to date," she laughingly admits, to follow her dreams. Recently, Melissa returned to the local stage, performing with Bethlehem's Touchstone Theatre at Zoellner Arts Center with son George, now nine. Her wit and optimism also shine through in her seahorse-themed Chesapeake Bay house, a retreat where the family, who reside mainly in the Lehigh Valley countryside, goes to enjoy the simple beauty of the water, from fishing to sailing. "I am grateful to my husband for providing the firm foundation from which I am able to get back to my art," she says. "For me, it's all about gratitude and faith."