

# Interest in patriotic posters rises

By Asante Green  
Staff Writer

WESTPORT — Old posters once seen on the sides of buildings now rest in gilded frames in high-priced art galleries.

Since World War I, posters have been used to advertise, spread ideas, sway public opinion or promote causes, said Mickey Ross, president of Original Vintage Posters in Westport. Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, there has been a resurgence of people seeking patriotic images, he said.

“Posters reflected the evolution of events,” Ross said. “As it pertains to patriotism, they depicted the spirit of America and served to rally the nation to support the war efforts.”

Ross’ gallery features several patriotic images, including James Montgomery Flagg’s famous “I Want You for the U.S. Army” image of Uncle Sam, which urged men to enlist, and Norman Rockwell’s “Four Freedoms,” which expressed citizens’ right to freedom of speech and worship.

“Posters have always been well-regarded and collected. . . . As it relates specifically with patriotic themes, they have always been popular,” Ross said. “We are a nation of proud people, but there has been a particular emphasis in the last few months. People are refocusing their energy and looking at patriotic posters more favorably than normal.”

American flags and Old Glory pins were well-received after Sept. 11. Maria Dering, spokeswoman for the International Vintage Poster Dealers Association, said interest in patriotic posters — though not sales — has been overwhelming.

“For a long time, patriotism was not popular. After Sept. 11, there was a huge interest in patriotic themes. The greatest interest in posters done during World War II were of Uncle Sam and Norman Rockwell’s (work),” Dering said.

“To me, personally, seeing those old images tapped into something very deep.”

Other images depict the industrial and artistic history of America, said Gail Chisholm, owner of The Chisholm Gallery in New York City. Chisholm has more than 3,000 turn-of-the-century vintage American publishing posters and war posters. She said she began collecting American publishing posters, because they are “very



Kathleen O'Rourke/Staff photo

**Mickey Ross, president of Original Vintage Posters in Westport, stands in front of a poster of Uncle Sam yesterday.**

sophisticated graphically.”

“It’s a 7-second medium: You see it, you understand it and you remember it,” Chisholm said. “Publishers of that era hired the best graphic designers and illus-

trators of the day to do them. Half of my collection was done by a well-known artist, Edward Penfield, who was the art director for Harper’s magazine through most of the 1890s.”