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**Mural had humble beginnings**

Continued from Page 1

vineyards and farmland, as well as the wildlife along the river. We believe it to be the first mural to combine both two-dimensional painting and 3-D sculptural elements."

Funding for "The Lewiston Mural" at Academy Park was provided by the Niagara River Greenway, with the support of the Village of Lewiston, the Town of Lewiston, and the Lewiston Council on the Arts.

Village of Lewiston Mayor Anne Welch said, "A few years ago, I invited several local artists to meet as a group to encourage public art in the Village of Lewiston. During our 'art meetings,' an idea of a mural was discussed and, thanks to our local artists Maureen Kellick and Dan Buttery, this amazing mural was created."

The wrap-around artwork was designed and painted by Kellick and features the jade waters of the Niagara River flowing around all four sides of the Academy Park building. In a unique collaboration with Buttery of Black Lab Metal Fab, the project is accentuated with three-dimensional elements.

Kellick's four-wall mural design showcases the natural beauty of Lewiston's Niagara River Greenway corridor. The dynamic color palette of the mural complements the beauty of the surrounding park.

Buttery's striking, 9-foot metal tree-bench on the north wall features hand-hammered leaves and a crescent-shaped bench detailed with fish and customized for Academy Park.

The east wall of the building mural boldly blends a two-dimensional painted scape with three-dimensional metal lettering creating the highly visible "Welcome to Lewiston" message - and a great photo op!

Lewiston's Academy Park building location is a central destination on the 14-mile-plus bike trail from Niagara Falls to the mouth of the Niagara River. Appropriately, the mural's graphic depiction of the Niagara River's gorge and escarpment region offers visual inspiration and a visitor-friendly destination stop within the Village of Lewiston, while also creating a beautiful spot to rest and take in the surrounding park, and - for a brief moment, become a "part" of the mural.

Buttery said, "I just want to say thank you for the opportunity to do this - everybody that was involved with it, I want to say thank you. After doing eight years of work throughout Lewiston, through the Brickyard, Gallo and that, it's finally good to see we were able to put some public art into Lewiston. Installing the 'Lewiston Landing' sign I did last year, and now with this and the sculpture down near Artpark, it's finally coming to completion."

Kellick said, "Five years ago, I was directed to come up with a building mural for this lovely, 70-year-old building behind me."

She explained, "I approached Dan a year ago, after the wonderful ribbon-cutting we had down on the Lewiston waterfront with his 'Lewiston Landing' installation. We had a coffee, and I said, 'I've got this whole mural. (It's been) four years; I'm waiting to do it. But, can you design a big, gnarly, 'Alice in Wonderland-y' tree with a bench so, when people came to Academy Park, there'd be a little bit of fun?' And, of course, he knocked it out of the park. And from there, every wall became, 'What dimension can we add to the two-dimension?'"

"I think we're both proud that we have a very unique mural here, that is two- and three-dimensional."

Kellick added, "My concept was all about the river. Lewiston has a lot of history. It's up and down all of our streets. But the river is the one piece of history here that predates all of us. I mean, the roaring falls was here 12,000 years ago. It's what gave us the beautiful farms and the orchards and the vineyards; gave us our great fishing; the fun we have in the river and the lake - no matter what the season."

"I think Dan and I worked very hard to encapsulate the fun of this community, the beauty and the nature of it, and also - as you find the little hints around the building mural - our greenway, which runs through it. I think we're a very big part of the greenway."

"I'm very proud that my sketch is finally standing behind me with doors and windows and a roof. ... I hope that everybody embraces it (and) enjoys it, as you ride your bike, as you bring your friends, as you play with your dogs."

**Project origin**

Initially, the plans for the Academy Park comfort station were much more pedestrian.

Welch said, "I would like to thank Assemblyman Angelo Morinello who was able to secure funding for the restoration of this restroom."

"This building was badly in need of repair: a new roof, exterior painting, the removal of all the old windows, sidewalk, and the complete renovation of the inside restrooms was done. The renovation of this building allowed Maureen and Dan to work their magic and create this beautiful mural. Without (Morinello's) help, this would not have been possible."

Fortuna Dean said, "All artists need a canvas. And as Mayor Welch said, we could not have arrived at this point with our beautiful mural without the initial founding support of (the assemblyman)."

Morinello explained, "When I spoke to the mayor, we talked about a grant availability. ... In our discussion, I never realized how this had come into a state of disrepair. And when we talked about it, we found that the grant ... would cover the cost."

"But I want to tell you what was the most surprising thing: The bathrooms get done. The mural was started. And I started hearing complaints. Complaints? 'It's not big enough.' And I'm looking at the outside of the building, and I'm going, 'What do you mean it's not big enough?' So, I went inside, and there's a wall halfway across the building, so it isn't the whole building."

"The mayor and I have gotten together, and what we've talked about is the engineers are now looking at expanding the inside, so that the bathrooms will have more capacity."

"But in addition to this being an art piece, and being a station for rest, it is also a stop on the bike route. Greenway has put in bike repair stations throughout the area. They put in road improvements. And this is on the direct path coming down the hill from Niagara Falls. It becomes a rest stop for the bikers."

"So, this is more than just a restroom that has been renovated. It is a center of activity to go towards less mechanical movements and more bicycles, more enjoying what we have in Lewiston and Western New York. It's getting out and enjoying it."

"And I want to tell you, I don't think there's anybody in this crowd that hasn't looked for a bathroom in a public space. Well, now you can tell people, 'Come to Lewiston, because we have one!'"

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