

Minutes of the Third National Mural Symposium

*July 16 - 18, 1999
Pembroke, Ontario*

Friday July 16

GUIDED WALKING TOUR

Pamela Dempsey, of Pembroke Heritage Murals served as guide for a tour of the city's murals. Participants met and talked with artists Robin Burgesse, Karole Marois, and David Yeatman. Pamela showed the group a model of Pembroke's millennium project - a 264 foot long mural by Pierre Hardy called "Marching Toward the Millennium".

Saturday July 17

WELCOME ADDRESS

Karin Eaton welcomed everyone to the symposium and thanked the Kiwanas for donating the use of the Kiwanas Field House for the day's sessions. Karin then introduced Pamela Dempsey, chair of Pembroke Heritage Murals. Pamela welcomed everyone to Pembroke and introduced Mayor Les Scott, who, on behalf of City Council, welcomed the group to the Ottawa Valley. Mayor Scott said that Pembroke is proud of their mural program, which would not exist without the dedicated efforts of many volunteers. Karin thanked the Mayor for coming and presented him with a print of the Scarborough Bluffs mural.

The philosophy of Mural Routes is to teach, learn and share, and as such, Karin hoped the symposium would be of value to all participants. Karin then introduced the Mural Routes Board members along with guest speakers Connie Manning, artist and president of the Chemainus Festival of Murals, and artist Bill Wrigley of Toronto

SESSION ONE: NEWS AND NETWORKING

Facilitator: Karin Eaton, President of Mural Routes Inc.

Delegates were invited to share news and comments on past, present, and future mural projects. The following communities, organizations and artists participated:

COMMUNITIES

Welland: Kim Reep, Tourism Manager for Welland/Niagara represented Welland. Until the early 1980s, Welland was an industrial based town whose economy centred on a Union Carbide plant. When the plant closed, the economy was devastated. A committee was formed to investigate ways to revitalize the town's economy. Inspired by the success of the mural program in Chemainus, Welland raised one million dollars and launched its own mural program. Welland now boasts 28 heritage murals, but its program is at a standstill. Kim was interested in preservation issues, as well as developing an infrastructure that would sustain the mural program, and hopes to learn from the efforts of other mural communities. She stated that Welland's mural files have been lost, and

made a request for any resource material or documentation on Welland murals. Mural Routes offered its resource package entitled "Behind the Scenes of Mural Production".

Vanier: City Councillors Roger Crete and Yvon Dube represented the City of Vanier. Yvon spoke briefly about his visit to Lake Placid, Florida, where he discovered the idea of outdoor murals, and wondered whether the idea could work in Vanier. He learned that Lake Placid had been inspired by the murals of Chemainus. Vanier is just beginning its mural program, with 7 murals currently "in the works". They were interested in learning about all aspects of mural production. Yvon showed the group a sample of "Bungee Banner", a reinforced banner material that can be used as a mural surface. There was a brief discussion regarding the pros and cons of various painting surfaces.

Chalk River: This village was represented by Reeve Pearl Osborne. On January 1, 2000, the village of Chalk River will amalgamate and become part of a larger municipality. To commemorate Chalk River's heritage and celebrate the millennium, the village is planning a large heritage mural. The theme of the mural will be the CPR railway. The village hopes to get some government funding. Pearl was interested in the production aspects of outdoor murals, as well as maintenance and preservation.

Essex: This community was represented by Marlene Markham, Manager of the Essex BIA. Essex has 12 heritage murals, two of which are by John Hood. Recently, Essex acquired three silos on which they would like to paint murals. Currently, an environmental assessment is being done on the property. However, if Essex is successful in its bid to put murals on the silos, Marlene believes that the murals will be the tallest free standing outdoor art in Canada. Essex was particularly interested in learning about maintenance, preservation, and the tourism aspect of murals. Marlene inquired as to whether any artists use sealants on their murals. Sealants were not recommended.

Napanee: Shaune Lucas represented Napanee. Shaune is the chair of the local BIA, vice-chair of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and is also a local paint retailer. Napanee has been working on developing an outdoor mural program in an effort to revitalize the downtown area and to increase tourism. Shaune was interested in learning more about the process of mural production, as well as copyright issues.

Chemainus, BC: As guest speaker for Session Four, Connie said she will address a number of issues including the funding, maintenance, preservation and merchandising of mural art. Connie believes a comprehensive contract is essential to a successful mural program as it protects both the artist and the community.

ORGANIZATIONS

BLOOM: Lorri McMullen, artist and co-ordinator of BLOOM (Because We Love Our Outdoor Murals) explained that this 16 week government program is funded by the Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). Fourteen young adults between the ages of 16 and 29, have been hired along with artist-coordinator McMullen and an administrator to create six outdoor murals. Because the program is also a division of Communities in Bloom, all the murals have flowers as their general theme. BLOOM has

just completed a 150 foot mural on the side of the Tottenham Food Bank. Team members Luke Artymko, Tara Bossenge, Natalie Greer and Reg Dubkowsky explained that the career development portion of the program has provided them with the opportunity to hone their artistic skills, and learn about fund-raising and public speaking.

Pembroke Heritage Murals: Joyce Moore, vice-chair of PHM, briefly explained how Pembroke's mural program began. A number of years ago, someone from Pembroke visited Chemainus and returned with idea of outdoor murals. The City Council approached the Economic Development Committee for funds. Money was also raised by the BIA. In the beginning, the community was not supportive because they felt that the money should be spent on infrastructure projects such as road repairs. However, when the murals began attracting tourists, the community bought into the project. One fundraising idea that was particularly successful was used in the production of the "Ploughing Match Mural". For a small donation, community members were allowed to paint a small part of the mural. This idea inspired and excited the whole town. Pembroke now has over two dozen outdoor murals with six more planned for this summer, including a 360 degree mural by artist John Ellenberger, to be installed on the CPR Water Tower.

Mural Routes Inc.: Karin Eaton said she became interested in murals after visiting Athens, Ontario which has 12 murals. She then saw the murals of Welland and felt that this was an idea that could work in Scarborough. Karin said that comprehensive research in the initial stage of a mural program is essential. She also felt that a written contract is important. Karin said the issue of mural maintenance is also important – specifically, who determines who should repair or repaint a mural? Karin spoke briefly about funding and grants, and said that the Canada Council had rejected Mural Routes recent grant application. Information on various grants and how to apply is available from the Mural Routes office. Karin mentioned some mural communities that were unable to attend the symposium, including Kenora, Collingwood and Georgetown.

ARTISTS

John Hood: John's murals can be seen in towns such as Athens, Welland and Concord. He is currently working on a 1000 square foot mural in Collingwood, Ontario. John feels it is imperative for artists and administrators to address the legal issues involving the ownership of the building versus the ownership of the image on the wall surface.

Robin Burgesse: A resident of Ottawa, Robin has painted murals for cities such as Pembroke and Oshawa. He is currently working on a mural in Pembroke. As a muralist, Robin often feels isolated from the artistic community, and attended the symposium in order to connect with others interested in mural art.

Karole Marois: Karole recently finished a mural for Kenora, and is currently working on her third mural for Pembroke. Born and raised in Vanier, Karole hopes to become involved in their budding mural program. She has done a number of indoor murals for museums, historical sites (Point Pelee) and for Parks Canada. Karole has applied for a millennium grant to do three murals based on growing up in Vanier.

Laurie MacIsaac: Laurie lives in White Rock, B.C., where he paints, exhibits and decorates. Although White Rock does not have a formal mural program, it does have a number of murals including one of a family of gray whales by American artist Wyland. Visitors to White Rock can find one of Laurie's murals near the Town Hall. Laurie and another artist have formed their own mural company, called Hollick Murals.

David Yeatman: David has painted murals for 12 years. Before becoming a muralist, he earned a living doing illustration, graphic design and picture framing. He was commissioned to do the murals on the interiors of the Olive Garden Restaurants. David was impressed and inspired by the enthusiasm generated by the symposium.

Bill Wrigley and Leslie Davis: Bill has been a professional artist for 20 years. For the last four years, he has been designing and creating indoor murals for an American restaurant chain. He paints them in Toronto and ships to the U.S. He has completed approximately 160 murals, each one measuring about 80 feet long and 6 feet high. Leslie Davis has been working as an art assistant, developing her artistic skills under his tutelage. Bill was interested in health issues related to mural work.

Marillyn Saffrey: Marillyn has a fine arts background. She said she is a good "forger" and has painted several murals designed by others. In addition to doing outdoor murals, Marillyn does set painting for theatres, as well as private commissions. She is currently working on an outdoor mural in Pembroke.

Pierre Melancon: For the last five or six years, Pierre has been producing larger scale artworks, and is now interested in getting involved in mural production. He attended the symposium in order to learn more about mural possibilities and to network with other artists and with administrators.

The session concluded with a brief discussion on the importance of site selection and the effect of extreme temperatures on mural surfaces.

SESSION TWO: MURAL ROUTES MILLENNIUM PROJECT – MAPPING THE MURALS OF CANADA

Facilitator: Karin Eaton

Speakers: Rick Santos, Graphic Designer and Mural Routes Board Member
Jackie Eaton, Web Artist and Mural Routes Board Member

MURAL ROUTES MILLENNIUM PROJECT

Karin introduced the Mural Routes Millennium Project, which involves creating an internet site that would link and map Ontario's 22 mural towns with other mural communities across Canada. Thus, a "virtual gallery" of outdoor murals would be created on the Mural Routes website.

The Virtual Gallery

Rick Santos and Jackie Eaton explained how an internet site would become a virtual gallery of mural art, and elaborated on some of the technology involved in scanning

photographs. Jackie then walked everyone through the Website Registration Form (the green sheet – contact Mural Routes for a copy). They also listed some of the benefits of a virtual gallery:

- Easy to access
- More cost efficient than individual portfolios
- The resolution of images on a website is often superior to that of many photographs

Suggestions:

- A travel agent or carrier, such as Air Canada, could be contacted with regard to website sponsorship.
- John Hood suggested that communities in Eastern Canada be contacted so that the project is truly national.
- It was noted that Mural Routes artists are listed on the website. A link can be added to the artist's website or e-mail, if he/she has one. Through a special arrangement with Jackie and Rick, artists can have a website designed for a reasonable fee.

Mural Routes Photographic Ambassador:

Another aspect of the Millennium Project involves a cross-country trip by photographer and Mural Routes Board member John Hands. Beginning in May 2000, John will become a "photographic ambassador" for Mural Routes, travelling across Canada photographing outdoor murals. John's travels will be posted on the internet, with his location updated regularly on the Mural Routes website. This part of the project was the inspiration of Rick Santos. Those towns interested in having John visit during his tour should contact the Mural Routes office.

Suggestions:

- Lorri McMullen suggested John visit Esquimalt B.C. where there are a number of murals, two of which are hers.
- Chalk River suggested that media involvement would raise the profile of the project. Also, the project may be able to get media sponsorship on a local level.
- Welland suggested that we contact Canada Post as well as the CBC television production "On the Road Again"
- Another recommendation was to produce a brochure that would identify all the mural towns, and would be co-sponsored by the participating towns
- Welland strongly endorsed the Millennium Project and suggested that millennium grant applications include letters of support from all participating towns.

SESSION THREE: PAINTING THE TOWNS – MURALS OF CALIFORNIA

Slides: Robin Dunitz, RJD Enterprises, California

Presenter: Bill Wrigley, Artist

Bill explained that Robin Dunitz was unable to attend the symposium as planned, but had sent her slides. Bill divided the murals into five categories:

1. *Trompe L'Oeil Images* – A trompe l'oeil mural depicting the last California earthquake illustrated the effectiveness of this type of mural.
2. *Super Sized Images* – This category featured murals with super-sized images of everything from eyes to escalators. A super-sized image of a group of musicians was very impressive.
3. *Graphic Images* – Bill felt these colourful murals were “fun, funky and playful”.
4. *Images Celebrating Life* – These murals featured events such as festivals, carnivals and parades. They celebrate cultural diversity and sometimes highlight community awareness issues.
5. *Social, Historical, and Popular Culture Images* – This group of murals featured figures from history and popular culture, such as John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Nat King Cole, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Karin thanked Bill for his insightful comments on mural art.

SESSION FOUR: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Speaker: Connie Manning, Artist and President of the Chemainus Festival of Murals

Connie Manning gave a brief history of the origin of the Chemainus mural program. Chemainus is a small town with approximately 3900 people. In the early 1980's, the economy of this logging community was falling apart. Something was needed to revitalize the town. A proposal was made to attract tourists by painting outdoor murals. Thus, the Chemainus mural program was born and the town has never looked back. Chemainus went from obscurity to international renown. The program is now 17 years old and continues to attract tourists. Chemainus has found that by keeping a high profile, and by using a variety of spin-offs (such as attracting the film industry), they have been able to maintain interest in their mural program. Connie talked about a number of issues from her perspective as an artist and an administrator.

MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION

Chemainus has just completed a mural maintenance report that concluded over half the murals needed some form of repair. Some murals had simple chips and cracks, and needed minor repairs. However, others murals, due to severe water damage, needed major repairs. The surface of one mural is “floating on water”, and chunks of another painted wall surface are falling off. Three murals are so severely damaged that they will have to be “retired”. Connie made the following points regarding mural maintenance:

- Site selection is important. Investigate the wall surface before you begin, and make sure it is sound. This will minimize maintenance work in the future.
- Refurbishing murals is costly. Set up a contingency trust fund. Chemainus has a contingency fund of about \$45,000.
- Try to keep murals clean and avoid a build-up of dirt on the surface. Chemainus washes their murals twice a year with a gentle spray of water
- Do not use sealants on mural surfaces. The surface must be able to breathe.

- Avoid painting murals at ground level. This can lead to damage from the snow and salt that is ploughed against the mural's surface in winter. Also, cars parked in front of low level murals obscure a significant portion of the mural from the viewer.
- The amount of paint applied to the wall surface is critical. Paint that is applied more generously will better withstand the elements. Air brushed images are applied using thin layers of paint, and therefore tend to fade more quickly.

FUND-RAISING AND MERCHANDISING

Connie suggested a number of fund-raising possibilities:

- Chemainus has also had a successful merchandising campaign that started with a book of their murals. They are currently printing the 7th edition of the book. The initial cost of this venture was high - about \$60,000, but the investment paid off in only two and a half years. Connie stressed the importance of quality - hiring a professional graphic designer, using top quality paper and binding etc. Get a number of quotes but don't sacrifice the quality. Also, make sure you get an ISBN number.
- Other merchandising ideas include mugs, T-shirts, pins, postcards, limited edition prints, videos, key-chains and fridge magnets! Again, keep the quality high
- Chemainus has raised significant funds through gaming, lotteries, bingo and casinos
- Currently, Chemainus is exploring the possibility of audio walking tours
- An "Adopt-A-Mural" program is a good way to fund mural repairs
- A royalty program is another way to fund mural repairs. When business owners understand the maintenance issue, as well as the economic value of murals, they are more accepting of the idea of a royalties

PROMOTION AND TOURISM

Promotion and tourism are important aspects of a mural program.

- To successfully promote the murals, they must first be well documented
- Create an electronic library of your murals with pictures of the artist, the work in progress, and the finished mural.
- Keep the artists' resumes on file as raw material for books, or promotional ideas.
- Have several sets of slides on file for merchandising and for use by travel writers.
- Try to cluster murals in one or more areas, so that a walking tour can be developed. The success of a mural program is determined, in part, by the ability to establish it as a tourist attraction. Information in accompanying guide maps should not overlap the information in the mural book, as this will undermine book sales.
- Develop partnerships with other organizations. For example, work with a horticultural group to enhance the mural site through landscaping, or develop a local theatre program that would draw tourists. Chemainus is currently working on a park project to house sculptures and a banner project. They are also trying to develop a marina to attract boaters, and increase the number of bed and breakfast establishments in the area.
- Having a conference centre is another way to attract tourists.
- Remember, a successful mural program depends on the support of the community.

ADMINISTERING THE MURAL PROJECT

Connie gave a few tips on how to successfully administer a mural project:

- Set the budget for your project
- Establish a basis for determining the artist's fee
- Send out a call for entry asking for a proposal, not a maquette (to keep costs down)
- Use professional artists
- Get a qualified committee to jury the proposals
- Request a maquette from the selected artist. Allow 10% of the total cost of the mural for the maquette. The maquette becomes the property of the mural committee.
- Make sure you have a comprehensive contract that deals with all legal issues including copyright

Karin thanked Connie for her valuable contribution to the symposium.

Sunday July 18

The wrap-up round table discussion dealt with issues from Saturday's session.

FUND-RAISING AND MARKETING IDEAS

- Merchandising - books, prints, calendars, mugs etc. – quality control is essential
- Gaming options- lotteries, casinos, bingo
- Silent auctions – use some items donated by artists such as palettes and T-shirts
- Corporate sponsorship – can be cash, goods or services
- Individual membership program
- A walking tour map
- Sell pieces of damaged or “retired” murals
- Adopt-a Mural program – Pembroke used this idea and have had 5 murals adopted
- Develop a strong Board membership – one that will make things happen

COPYRIGHT AND CONTRACTS

- Get agreements in writing before the project starts
- Lawyer Paul Sanderson has written a reference book about contract law
- Repairs on a mural cannot be done by any person other than the artist, without the artist's permission – therefore, it is important to keep in contact with the artist
- Copyright of the painted image belongs to the artist, but the artist can waive his right to copyright, or negotiate a shared copyright agreement
- The copyright issue with regards to photographing the mural image was raised – it was decided that this was a complex legal issue, and that we needed the advice of a lawyer specializing in copyright law
- A workshop dealing with copyright and contract issues, led by a lawyer, was a suggested topic for the next symposium

WALL SURFACE OPTIONS

- Site selection and wall preparation is critical
- Lorri suggested using marine quality plywood when painting on panels

- “Outsulation” products such as Drivit are becoming more popular – Karin will contact the manufacturer for more information on this product
- A reinforced banner material called “Bungee Banner” was suggested as an alternative painting surface
- Don Campsall of PHM, is a Para paint distributor and will forward some information on various paints to Mural Routes

MAINTENANCE

- This issue was covered quite thoroughly yesterday, but Connie emphasized the importance of establishing a contingency maintenance fund

LANDSCAPING ENHANCEMENT

- Creative landscaping enhances the murals
- Control weeds
- Keep the mural site tidy and litter-free

INSURANCE ISSUES

- Group accident or disability insurance is not available for artists
- A number of insurance issues were covered in the last issue of “Off the Wall”
- With regard to insurance, the municipality will generally cover third party liability

The location and date of the next symposium were discussed. It was agreed that the next symposium would be hosted by Welland in June 2000. The exact date will be determined later.

Karin thanked everyone for attending and the symposium was adjourned.