

**“CANAL CONSTRUCTION”
MURAL
140 KING STREET
WELLAND, ONTARIO**

Prepared for City of Welland Heritage Advisory Committee
(Heritage Welland)

Nora A. Reid, M.A. (History of Art)

Feb. 7, 2018

“CANAL CONSTRUCTION” MURAL

Prepared by Nora A. Reid, M.A.
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ARTISTIC VALUE

The mural (Figure 1) has intrinsic artistic value as part of a mural arts project in the 1980's and early 1990's that engaged the whole community of Welland. In addition, it is the work of a painter who was well known locally, nationally and in Europe (see ARTIST below.)

As to it's value as a stand alone work of art, the mural is a bold and striking creation that expertly illustrates its theme of “construction of the Welland Canal bypass – machinery” as chosen by the Promote Welland Task Force in 1988.¹

The mural depicts the construction of the Welland Canal bypass in the 1970's and expresses the relationship between man and machinery. The artist, Bas Degroot, gave this interpretation of the mural: “I mainly tried to create an atmosphere of labour, suggesting the huge size of the project by visualizing the machinery as large, insect-like black silhouettes with just a few, seemingly unimportant people. The white silhouette of a gull reminds me of spiritual motivation and human strife, that shapes our world.”²

CONSTRUCTION

Almost all the murals were constructed using the same materials and methods. The Promote Welland Task Force set up a Quality Control Committee under Chairman Mario Ventresca of Star Painters and Decorators in Welland. This Committee did extensive research into the technical aspects of mural construction before launching the project.

First, painted or masonry walls were water blasted to remove paint or other treatments and leave a clean surface. Each wall was framed to the correct size with 16 gauge, 2” x 1 ¼ “anodized aluminum angles using stainless steel drive screws. A semi-rigid expanded polystyrene insulation board named “Thermwall” manufactured by MacNaughton-Brooks was bonded to the substrate in 2'x4' sections with resin-fortified “Thermwall 1874” adhesive. More adhesive was used to attach the next layer, a specially woven and treated fiberglass mesh. The final finish consisted of an acrylic-

fortified coat of white Portland cement and fine silica sand known as “Gazelle Hyde”. This was troweled on to provide a seamless surface and was supposed to give a high degree of strength and crack resistance with light weight.

Acrythane paint was selected for the murals, a polyurethane acrylic isocyanate enamel used in industrial settings including for locomotives, trucks, aircraft and petroleum tankers. It was chosen for its physical and chemical properties including high gloss retention, exterior durability, solvent and mildew resistance, stone chip resistance, colour retention, fast drying and flexibility.

The artists used various methods to transfer their maquette designs to full scale. Some used gridlines, others projected the image onto the wall after dark and traced it. Still others worked freehand. Bas Degroot produced a full-scale stencil of the Canal Construction mural offsite and used it to trace the outline on the Thermwall panel.³

AGE

The Canal Construction mural was created during the first summer of the Festival of Arts. Artist Bas Degroot began work on “Canal Construction” on July 26, 1988 (Figure 4), just four months after relocating to Canada from Holland.⁴ The mural was finished that summer.

ARTIST

Bas Degroot

Local artist Bas Degroot was born into a family of Dutch craftsmen and artists in Gorinchem, the Netherlands, in 1948. He later studied at universities in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Canada. Bas and his family immigrated to Canada in March of 1988.

“Canal Construction” was Degroot’s first Canadian work and his first opportunity to create an exterior painted mural.⁵ Major works by Degroot include works completed in terra cotta, bronze, brick, paint and stained glass in 25 cities in Canada and the United States. Many of his works can be found in the Niagara area, including Niagara Falls and Welland. He was also a translator, book illustrator and author of many articles and eight books in Dutch.

Important works in the Netherlands include a brick mosaic and square for theater "De Bussel" in Oosterhout, a brick mosaic for the Moonen building in Waalwijk, and a mosaic in granite for the arena "de beverbol" in the city of Ridderkerk.

Degroot had a particular interest in creating original Christian art. Locally he created twelve stained glass windows for the Crossroads Centre in Burlington, a large brick mosaic for the Maid of the Mist building in Niagara Falls, a sculpture of two beavers for the Welland bus terminal, a brick mosaic mural "New World" constructed in 1990 on Holy Trinity Anglican Church hall at 77 Division Street (facing Market Square) containing almost 12,000 bricks of seven colours (Fig. 10), also the design for the Welland Canal Memorial Monument in Merritt Park (Fig.9). Major works in the USA can be found in Florida, Kentucky and Louisiana.

The Bas Degroot website describes him as a visual artist whose work

...ranged from meticulously detailed illustrations of nature's smallest creatures, to monumental mosaics of brick and mortar that stretched across more than 1,000 square feet. In much of his art, Degroot championed social justice, wrestled with the conflicting nature of modernity, and explored the enduring value of spirituality. Degroot pioneered innovative artistic techniques, including many-layered, brilliantly unpainted stained glass, and a new kind of monumental brick mosaic that could incorporate over 12,000 bricks.⁶

Degroot found working outdoors on the Canal Construction mural challenging, not least because he was afraid of heights, but with some positive elements. He was quoted as saying,

Working outdoors can keep me from further developing a design. That is a disadvantage, since I have the habit of almost endlessly adjusting and (hopefully) improving, only stopped by deadlines. On the other hand, being in contact with the people who will have to live with my work, having a chat now and then, exchanging views, is very rewarding. Yet, in the future, someone should prevent them from climbing and shaking my scaffolding while I am attempting to paint at the highest stage, being very afraid of heights, trying very hard to forget where I am.⁷

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

EVENT, ACTIVITY, ORGANIZATION

Welland Festival of Arts

This mural was part of the “Festival of Arts”, a project of the “Promote Welland Task Force” started in 1988. The idea came from the mural project in Chemainus, B.C. that had made the Vancouver Island town a tourist destination. In 1986, Mike Allen, owner of the Seaway Mall, visited Chemainus and brought back the idea to Welland. He commissioned the first mural on the Seaway Mall in 1986.

In the 1980’s Welland was in the process of losing its industrial base and the unemployment rate was at 27% as compared to the national average of 11%. Added to this was the decay of the downtown core exacerbated by the establishments of malls and plazas on the City’s outskirts.⁸ In an effort to address these problems, the Promote Welland Task Force - a non-profit organization whose mandate was to promote economic growth and prosperity - took up the Chemainus idea, creating the “Festival of Arts” and raised money to execute the first 13 murals in the summer of 1988, including “Canal Construction”. Ten more were completed in 1989 and three more in 1990, including Bas Degroot’s brick mosaic mural “New World” on Holy Trinity Church Hall (Figure 10)⁹

Fundraising was kicked off with a full-page ad in the Welland Tribune on June 26th, 1987 that explained the plan for “permanent, exciting” murals that would become a “must see” and asked “Have you heard? Welland is on the brink of something big!” and continued over the next two and one-half years. At the start of the project there was much community support – 12 committees were established and hundreds of local volunteers helped with organization and opened their homes to the artists. Volunteers researched mural themes and locations, solicited memberships, raised funds, researched paint, did marketing and sold souvenirs. Financial backing came in from local companies and businesses including Seaway Mall (Doral Holdings), Leon’s Furniture, Canadian Tire Acceptance, John Deere, The Royal Bank, Gencorp Automotive, Shoalts Construction, Atlas Steels, Atlas Credit Union, Stelco, E.S. Fox, Lincoln Plaza, Downtown Development Board, Rose City Plaza, Casa Del Toro and Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Local service clubs and other organizations contributed including the Jaycees, Legion, Masonic Association, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Moose Lodge, St. Andrew’s Church, Niagara Regional Exhibition, Slovak Club, Optimist Club and Welland Area Clergy Association.¹⁰

All levels of government, local organizations and individuals contributed to fund the project. Total federal funding was over \$109,000. The Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications provided a \$15,000.00 grant. The City of Welland gave \$30,000.00 and the Regional Municipality of Niagara \$1,000. ¹¹

For the first murals in the summer of 1988, the Task Force chose 15 themes from local history. The Welland Public Library at 140 King Street (now the Welland Historical Museum) was one of the sites chosen for a mural.

Artists were invited to submit biographies and slides of their work and a panel of three judges - Dr. Peter Harris, Director of Rodman Hall Art Gallery, Toronto architect Terry Fitsialos and Ken Cosgrove of the Fine Arts department at Niagara College - selected 19 artists from the 42 entries from across Canada to provide maquettes (Figure 2) (small pictures of the completed work) based on one of the selected themes. The submissions were judged on artistic merit, historical accuracy and architectural suitability.¹²

The festival continued the following two years and a total of 29 murals were completed on the walls of buildings both publicly and privately owned throughout the downtown area and in the north end of the City.

Rick Woodward, Executive Director of the Festival, promoted it extensively to local groups and officials, predicting that it would become the generator of an economic renaissance here, bringing in millions of dollars in tourist revenue to the community by 1992 and making about \$64 million in direct and indirect revenue for the local economy. Ontario Chamber of Commerce director Bill Cook echoed the sentiment, predicting that "...it will attract throngs of tourists."¹³

There was a spike in media interest during the actual painting of the murals, with reports in print media and TV news locally, in Toronto and Buffalo, and as far away as Japan and Latvia¹⁴ and tourists, local and out-of-town, watched the process as murals were painted. Unfortunately, unlike Chemainus B.C., where the mural project brought in hundreds of thousands of visitors and injected millions of dollars into the local economy,¹⁵ the predicted long-term tourism and economic benefits for Welland never really materialized. As Tribune writer Mark Tayti noted in May of 1997 "...the local boost in tourism was nominal and enthusiasm for the project slowly fizzled out."¹⁶

The long-term survival of the murals became an issue as early as 1996 (see more under **CONDITION** below). Rick Woodward spoke of the failure to make long term plans for the care of the murals in an article urging citizens to attend workshops seeking a

solution: “Failure to take action will hurt in the long run” he said. “They reflect the stories of our forefathers, our grandparents...I think it’s important we don’t let this slip away from us...What’s needed...is a way of creating a sense of ownership of the murals and creating events around them.” He also cited the need to develop a collections management policy, budget and fund-raising initiatives.¹⁷

The Promote Welland Task Force in the first flush of creating the project in the 1980’s not only failed to make long term plans for upkeep of the murals and the associated costs, but also failed to consider the fact that most of them were on privately owned buildings and could be removed at the whim of any future owner. The Task Force divested itself of any interest in maintaining the murals citing the fact that the members did not have the financial resources or the “skills and expertise” necessary.¹⁸

Two citizen workshops were held during May of 1996, organized by Tourism of Welland Niagara, to discuss the future and the maintenance of the murals. Attendees agreed on the need for a newly redeveloped “Festival of Arts” and a charitable organization that could take over “ownership” of the murals from the Task Force.¹⁹ The word “ownership” in the news articles is somewhat misleading as technically, the murals are “owned” by the owner of the building they are affixed to. “Responsibility” for their upkeep might have been a better choice of words.

In 1997, Bas Degroot became Chairman of a “New Festival of Arts” Committee headquartered at Seaway Mall that was organized to restore the murals, promote them better and initiate new murals and cultural projects. The new Board had about 12 members, with Susan Morin as vice-chair and Don Holland as secretary-treasurer. At the time Degroot said one mural was in such bad condition “it should be painted over”. The committee aimed to first restore and preserve the murals and improve their surroundings with new lighting and signage. Other ideas were to hold workshops and guest appearances by the muralists, use them to teach Welland’s heritage to school groups, hold an annual summer festival with exhibitions, courses and special performances and stimulate the creation of new art works in the City. A membership campaign was launched with categories from \$5 to \$50 with the \$50 (platinum) donors receiving a free mural poster and limited-edition lithoprint of one of the murals.²⁰

DeGroot wanted to shift the focus on the murals from business back to arts and culture. The week of August 23rd, 1997 saw a two-day celebration sponsored by the Welland Downtown Development Board with mural tours, a display at the Welland Museum, a children’s contest, clowns, artists displaying their work, workshops and music at the Bus Terminal, but the turnout was less than well attended with only about 200 people showing up. Some restoration work on the murals continued in 1997 and 1998, with 16

of the 28 murals restored by the summer of 1998. The manager of Tourism of Welland Niagara (TOWN) offered a free “step-on-guide” to describe the murals for bus tour operators and endeavored to encourage them to stay in town for a meal at local restaurants afterward rather than heading to Niagara Falls or St. Catharines.²¹

The original murals painted between 1988 and 1990 cost a total of \$1 million. In 1998 the New Festival of the Arts under Degroot developed a plan to expand the existing number of murals with new, “low maintenance” ceramic and terra cotta murals. The aim was to make them much less expensive, more durable and less prone to vandalism as well as to revive interest in the murals. The new committee also suggested landscaping, parking and refreshments near the murals to encourage tourism. Concurrently, there were efforts to continue to market the murals to tourists through the City’s TOWN (Tourism of Welland Niagara) agency.²²

In June of 2000, the New Festival of Arts received \$45,000.00 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to create a Festival of Arts website, an electronic photo gallery, a full colour walking tour map of the murals and to hold a national mural contest.²³ Since then the walking tour brochures have gone out of print and the Festival, along with any plans for the long-term upkeep or marketing of Welland’s giant murals has faded into history.

PERSONS

Promote Welland Task Force Board

Members of the Board in 1988 when the Festival of Arts was initiated were

President – Mikki Roy (Executive Director, Big Brothers Association)

Vice-President – Connie Sonnenburg

Secretary – Heather Rohrer (The Tribune)

Treasurer – Ivar Noren (Head of Business, Niagara College)

Member-at-Large – John Van Kooten (Publisher, The Tribune)

Past Chairman – Gerry Bujold (Bujold, Colburn and Donahue Insurance)

Executive Director, Festival of Arts – Rick Woodward, previously Program Director for CHOW Radio, public relations professional.²⁴

ENVIRONMENT

CONTINUITY

This mural contributes to the continuity of the display of murals in the downtown area, some of which have already been lost. The loss of any other murals would further diminish and be detrimental to this display of outdoor art.

LANDMARK

Along with other remaining murals in the downtown core, "Canal Construction" is a conspicuous and familiar landmark in the downtown.

INTEGRITY

SITE

The 27foot x 17foot mural is on its original site and has not been moved. The mural is located on the north wall of the Welland Historical Museum (former Welland Public Library) at 140 King Street facing the parking lot off Young Street. The Museum building was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 2006 but this portion of the building, added in 1961, is not covered by the designation.²⁵

Downtown was chosen to locate the main cluster of murals to accommodate walking tourists and for proximity to downtown businesses and the bus terminal. The site for Canal Construction, like those of other individual murals, was chosen based on the following criteria: accessibility, parking availability, security (not in a secluded area), good lighting, and proximity to other murals.²⁶ In an interview in the Welland Tribune of Jan. 7, 1988, Mary Anne Christoff stated "They (the murals) must be well-lighted or must allow for lights to be installed; they must be accessible to pedestrians and there must be parking nearby..." and the locations must also be "...vandalism proof..."²⁷

CONDITION/ ALTERATIONS

Despite the Task Force's careful selection of materials, methods and sites as described above, it was evident quite early that the carefully chosen materials were not holding up as predicted against the weather, bird droppings and vandalism. Problems with the materials and process used to paint the murals, along with damage caused by vandalism surfaced within a year. Ross Beard's mural on the liquor store showed

damage from both vandals and materials failure as early as December of 1988. At the time Woodward admitted that curing of the base on the panels may have been rushed: "Maybe it would have needed another week of curing before the paint was applied..."²⁸ April of 1989 saw tempers flare at a meeting between artists, the head of the Festival Technical Committee, representatives from the manufacturers of Thermwall and the acrythane paint as to whether it was inferior materials or an unforeseen level of vandalism that caused the damage and cracking on five of the barely year old murals.²⁹ By 1996 Mary-Anne Christoff, past president of the "Promote Welland Task Force" stated that "These murals are in a mess" with a "crisis situation in some cases".³⁰

The Canadian Conservation Institute provided a report on the murals in April of 1996, citing damage such as peeling paint, bird droppings and nests, cracking and flaking, rusting screws, dirt, graffiti and deficient caulking. Severe vandalism was reported on the murals on the front and side of the Welland YMCA building and the LCBO building on East Main, with an estimate of \$10,000 for repairs earmarked by the Task Force for those alone.³¹

Despite good intentions and some restoration work, it has been decades since any upkeep has been done on the murals. As Rick Woodward noted: "Once you make a commitment to building something you'd better make a commitment to taking care of it afterward".³² Neither ongoing maintenance nor the problem of ownership has been addressed. An easement on the property title of each building where a mural was located requiring owners to retain the murals would have prevented the loss of murals like "Canal Digging" by Brian Romagnoli and "Lift Bridges" by Greg Garand.

"Canal Construction" has fared better than many other murals. The paint appears to be intact and has kept much of its vibrancy of colour (compare Figures 1 and 5). This could be enhanced with a cleaning to remove the surface dirt evident in Figures 15 & 16. More concerning are a number of cracks mostly located on the black painted areas depicting machinery (Fig. 15). The uneven surface created by the cracked sections suggests that the cracks are not merely on the paint surface but extend through to the "Thermwall" base and may become a problem as time goes on. At one point during the last decade there was water seeping down from the roof behind the mural but the seepage problem was resolved by repairing the roof flashing.³³ This could be what created the cracking of the paint surface and perhaps the base panel.



Figure 1
"Canal Construction" 2017 Photo: N. Reid



Figure 2
Maquette for Canal Construction
Source: Welland Historical Museum



Tribune photos/Doc Mitchell
A mural of the Welland Canal between the Main and Lincoln Street bridges will be located on the Community Futures building on West Main Street as part of the Welland Festival of Arts. Festival executive director Rick Woodward and Richard McLagan, manager of Futures, view the picture above. At right are some of the artists chosen to paint the murals. From left to right are: John Hood, Paul Elliott, Lorrie Black, Ross Beard and Bas DeGroot.



Murals unveiled

City set 'to make history'

By KEN AVEY
 Tribune staff writer

WELLAND — It was an expression of confidence in the future of Welland.

City, Niagara Region, provincial and federal government officials, representatives of the Promote Welland Task Force and those involved in the project all agreed Welland Festival of the Arts '88 is about to put Welland on the national and international tourism map. They said so during an unveiling

of the 13 murals which the Festival of Arts plans to put into the city as a boost to the local economy.

The murals will be put up on various downtown buildings during July and August.

"One of the most important things this has done is stimulate pride in this community and to get people working together," said Niagara Regional Chairman Wilbert Dick.

"There has never been anything like this," he said. "It has created a new excitement in the community and will benefit both the City of

Welland and the Niagara Region." Mayor Roland Hardy said the Festival of Arts unveiling, which took place on Merritt Island yesterday afternoon, was a boon to the city.

"This was only a dream a couple of years ago, but it is a dream which is real today," he said.

"Welland is on its way and we're going to make history. The city is moving ahead and we are seeing a great improvement," said Hardy.

The artists' depictions of the murals were revealed for the first time yesterday afternoon. They depict various scenes, from ships going through the canal to the immigration of people to the city.

The theme of the murals is to combine "water-and-rail" as well as giving tribute to the ethnic population of Welland.

"Each of the paintings represents an historical page from Welland's past," said Welland-St.



Artist Bas Degroot, library representative Bill Wallis and Ken Jensen of the Festival of Arts '88 at this morning's start-up

Artist down to work at library mural

By LYNDSEY BARRETT
 Tribune staff writer

WELLAND — Bas Degroot makes the Festival of Arts a genuine international affair.

Degroot moved to Thorold from Holland four months ago to start a new phase of his life and artistic career.

"When a friend told me about the festival I was quick to respond," he says. Degroot got his name in just in time.

"It is a lucky start for me in Canada."

His mural will be the sixth to get underway for the festival. The theme is machinery with people working behind the silhouettes of different machines.

"The machines are the environment the men are working in," says the artist.

Degroot has not associated a specific period of time with the work but it could simulate the digging out of the Welland Canal, says Rick Woodward, executive director of the Festival of Arts.

This will not be the first mural the artist has created but it will be the first he has painted.

"In Holland we call murals monumental works of art," he says. "We use different kinds of material to create these works of art."

One of his past works is a natural setting created with different colored bricks on the outside of a building in Holland.

Art has been a life-long occupation and love for Degroot, who has studied it since he was five-years-old.

"I can't help it. It is something I have always had to pursue."

Figure 3
 Unveiling of maquettes for murals
 Welland Tribune June 25, 1988
 Bas DeGroot at right

Figure 4
 Bas Degroot first day of work
 on Canal Construction mural
 Welland Tribune July 26, 1988



"CANAL CONSTRUCTION" by Bas Degroot

Figure 5

"Canal Construction" in 1991

Source: Jerry Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art: Welland's Giant Outdoor Murals
(Promote Welland Task Force, 1991)



Figure 6
 Bas DeGroot accepts donation
 for mural restorations as Chair of
 revived "Festival of Arts" in 1997
Welland Tribune Aug. 20, 1997



Figure 7
 Restoration work on one of the murals
 September 1997
Welland Tribune Sept. 24, 1997



BAS DEGROOT,
Winger, Ontario

Figure 8
Artist Bas Degroot
Creator of “Canal Construction” Mural
Source: A Festival of Canadian Art:
Welland’s Giant Outdoor Murals

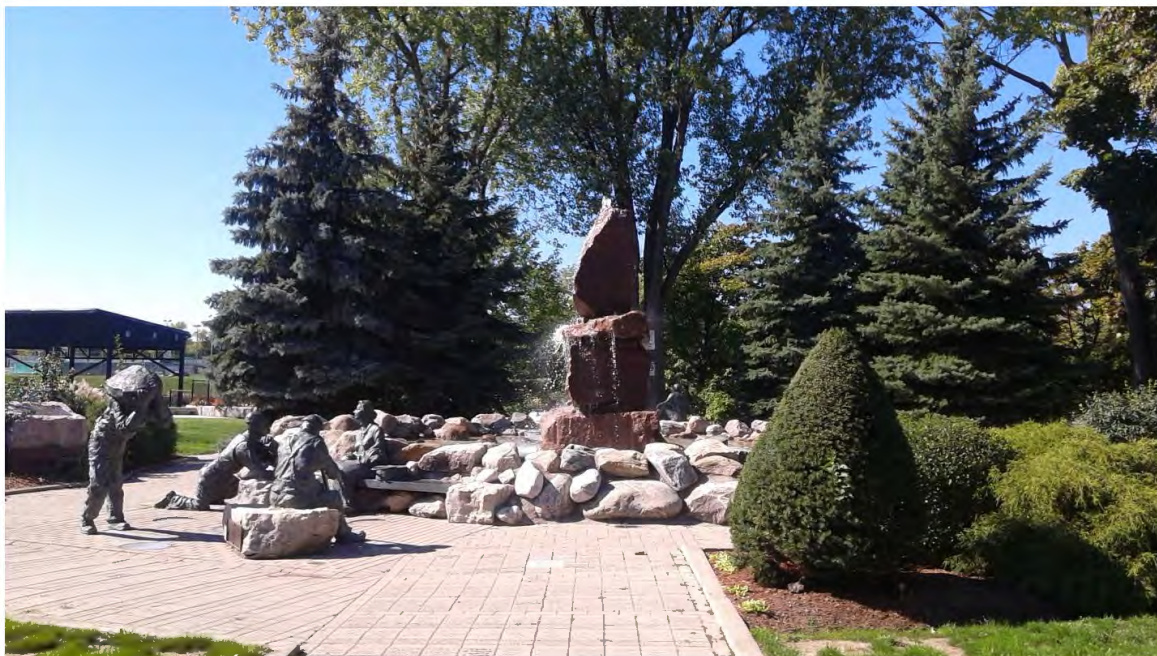


Figure 9
Welland Canal Memorial Monument, Merritt Park, Welland
Designed by Bas Degroot
Photo N. Reid 2016



Figure 10
Bas Degroot brick mosaic "New World" on wall of Holy Trinity Church,
Division Street, Welland



Figure 11
Festival of Arts donor recognition certificate



We want YOU!

The people of Welland ...people **vital**ly interested in the **future** of our **city**.

We have the start of what can only be described as the most inspired, thought provoking, undeniably riveting idea ever designed to stir the hearts and minds of our citizens. Fund raising events are springing up all over our city in support of **Welland's Festival of Art's 88**. A festival that will put **Welland on the map** in a whole new way.

By Labour day 1988 we expect to unveil our collection of **eye-catching murals**, each with a specifically developed **theme** depicting the rich heritage and history of Welland. We invite your participation in this tremendous job of researching our past with any photographs, postcards or memories you may want to share. All will be greatly appreciated!

Our office is now open for your convenience in the Seaway Mall, **call us at 788-3000** or drop in, we welcome your visit.

ERMA ETTORE

Remember, **Tourism** is a healthy industry, in fact by the year 2000 it will be the worlds largest industry. **Jobs, jobs, jobs** will be available in **Welland**, not only today but for today's youth as they enter the work force. These jobs will be in Welland. We **can** have a **major tourist attraction**.... it's up to **us**.



October 1, 1987

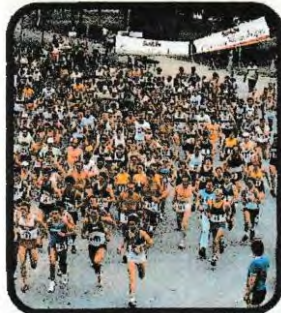
Figure 12

Flyer advertising Festival of Arts, 1987

The people of Welland hold many celebrations and events throughout the year. Fellowship, heritage and good old-fashioned fun are their underlying themes. You are invited to help celebrate.



Our festivities include: The Heritage Folklore Festival, Rose Festival and Parade, The Mike Burwell Triathlon, Regattas and other water competitions, Rose City Tennis Tournament, Day on the Island, Hockey and Baseball Tournaments, Niagara Regional Exhibition, and the annual Winter Carnival to name just a few. Contact Welland Chamber of Commerce at 732-7515 for actual dates.



Come join us for Welland's Festival of Arts '88 and enjoy a truly memorable vacation.

Welland's Festival of Arts '88
Seaway Mall, 800 Niagara St. N.,
Welland, Ontario, Canada.
L3C 5Z4

Photos Courtesy of Bogner Photography.

This Brochure Funded by Unemployment Insurance Section 36 Job Creation Program.

Welland's Festival of Arts '88

A Unique Cultural
and
Historical Experience



*We're painting the town....
for you!*

**WELLAND, ONTARIO,
CANADA**

Figure 13
Festival of Arts '88 brochure

*Welland welcomes
one and all....*

*and there's more....
much more....*

Throughout July and August 1988, you can join in the excitement of the creation of outdoor art about the Welland Canal.

The city itself will become "the canvas" where world renowned artists will create giant murals which will permanently grace exterior walls throughout the community. During this time art lovers of all ages will have the unparalleled opportunity to mingle with the specially selected painters and sculptors.

Welland is located in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula, just a short drive from Niagara Falls - one of the most popular tourist areas in the world. Historic Niagara has much to offer with many cities, towns and small villages, each with its own distinct flavour.

Famous for its canals and aqueduct system, Welland offers its visitors a unique vacation to remember.

Welland is also known as the Rose City....famous for both its public and private rose gardens. Yes, Welland has it all....delicious gourmet dining, fast foods, excellent accommodations and top notch service.

Welland is rich in history, rich in beauty and rich in recreational resources. Where else can you waterski in the heart of a downtown core? The recreational waterway offers a unique opportunity to partake in all forms of water related activities.

Swimming, boating, hiking, and picnicking are all pleasant ways to spend a summer afternoon on the grassy slopes of the canal banks. Spectators can enjoy the fast pace of power-boat racing, rowing regattas, and waterski competitions.

Ships from around the world pass through the 8.3 mile long canal bypass which features two tunnels. Considered one of the greatest engineering feats of our time, this system provides an exciting attraction.

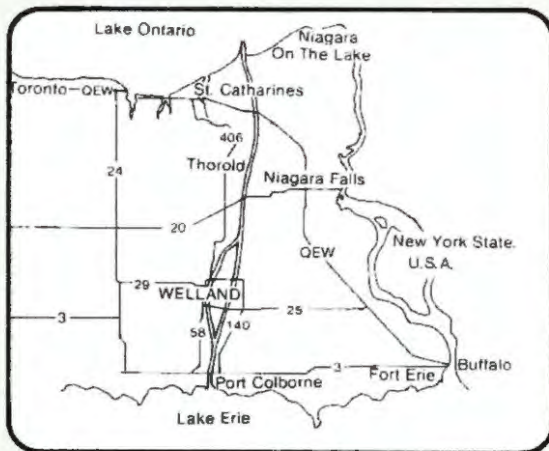


Figure 14
Festival of Arts '88 brochure



Figures 15 & 16

Mural today showing surface dirt on light coloured areas and cracking and uneven surface on black. Photos N. Reid, Feb. 2018

REFERENCES

¹ Monograph, “Chosen Themes” Welland Festival of Arts, 1988. Logo of Festival of Arts in top left corner with stamp of “Seaway Mall, Welland, Ontario L3C 5Z4 788-3000 beneath. This is a list of 15 themes chosen for the artists to interpret for the first murals. Other themes included the Aqueduct – Building of etc., the Welland Canal-Welland Club 1915, Sports Today – Triathlon etc. College, Bridges – Up&Down. Port Robinson mishap etc., Downtown Welland – 1940, Welland Fair – Trolley, Tug Boats, Canal digging -Men digging by hand-Mules hauling dirt away, Founding Fathers-Opening of Canal, Tunnel with cars, train, ship going through canal, Battle of Cook’s Mills, Waiting for the bridges (Cartoon), Immigrant Families and Industries – Large mural depicting different industries (Circular).

² Jerry Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art: Welland’s Giant Outdoor Murals; Promote Welland Task Force, 1991, p. 36 reproduced in various brochures created and printed by the Festival of Arts and on the website wellandmurals.ca.

³ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, pp 65-67.

“Thermwall” was chosen as a base because it had been subjected to various Federal performance tests for weathering, impact resistance and bond strength with good results. The artists were provided with safety masks and goggles and were working outside but several complained of dizziness, nausea and red eyes while working with the acrythane paint. This was complicated by record high temperatures during the summer of 1988.

⁴ Lyndsay Barrett, “Artist down to work at library mural, Welland Tribune, July 26, 1988.

⁵ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, p 78

⁶ Website, <http://www.basdegroot.net/> “Bas Degroot”, “Bio”; Bas Degroot, Visual Artist. Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, p 78

⁷ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, pp 7, 36.

⁸ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, pp.5, 83,84.

⁹ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, pp. 5-8.

¹⁰ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, p. 87.

Full page ad, “Capture the Spirit” Welland Tribune June 26, 1987, pg. 10.

Another full page ad in the Welland Tribune on Jan 2, 1988 laid out a request for donations ranging from \$5.00 (mural booster) through \$100.00 “Patron of the Arts” and unlimited “Festival Sponsor”. The ad stated that the project would provide job opportunities, boost the economy and improve Welland’s lifestyle.

“Festival of Arts wants to meet with community groups, clubs”, Tribune, Feb. 11, 1988, p. 3.

“Festival \$15,000.00 richer thanks to John Deere”, Tribune, April 28, 1988, p. 1.

“15,000 more for festival; painting to start Monday” Tribune, June 30, 1988, p. 1.
GenCorp Canada Incorporated donated.

Ernie Allen, president of Doral Holdings (owner of Seaway Mall) provided office space worth \$17,000.00 over two years. “Office space free, says Woodward”, Tribune, Aug. 11, 1988 p. 3.

“Good for business: Marando. Downtown merchants urge arts fest support”, Tribune Aug. 26, 1988, p. 3.

“Exciting evening caps off an energetic campaign” Tribune Dec. 15, 1988. Dream Home draw; Royal Bank donated \$15,000.00

“Boosting arts fest”, Tribune Dec. 13, 1988 – Bell Canada donates \$1500.00.

“Stelpipe makes \$15,000.00 Commitment. Company a pipeline of arts fest funds”. Tribune, Mar. 28, 1989

“Slovaks support festival” Canadian Slovak League Branch 23 donates \$1000.00. Tribune, Mar. 14, 1989.

During 1988 and 1989 there were 15 more similar articles in the Tribune announcing donations from local individuals, businesses and organizations.

¹¹ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, p. 87.

Martin Pokol, “Spinoff effect immeasurable Roy says of festival potential”, Welland Tribune Feb. 2, 1988.

Ken Avey, \$81,000 boost for Arts '88", Tribune Feb. 2, 1988. Member of Parliament Allan Pietz announced an \$81,435.00 grant, \$57,810 to employ six people and \$23,625 for equipment and materials.

"City OK's arts festival funding" Tribune Mar. 16, 1988. \$15,000 grant + \$1 for every \$2 raised privately to a maximum of \$15,000.

"Pietz passes the buck, feds give arts fest \$20,000." Tribune Dec. 2, 1988. Total of \$106,000.00 donated to Festival by Federal Government through Pietz.

"332,000 for Festival of Arts", Tribune Mar. 9, 1989. A federal grant under the Community Initiative Fund to support 10 murals.

¹² Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, pp. 5-7.

Monograph, "Chosen Themes" Welland Festival of Arts, 1988.

Joop Gerritsma, article, The Welland Tribune, July 1988.

¹³ Paul Bagnell, "A Clear View of the Future", Tribune, Jan. 19, 1988

"Praise Heaped on Arts Festival", Welland Tribune, March 15, 1988, p. 1.

¹⁴ "Welland's walls tell great tales on TV newscast", Welland Tribune Aug. 2, 1990.

Article about CFTO (Toronto) news film with reporter Glenn Cochrane.

"We asked for a translation and we got it", Welland Tribune, July 24, 1989 Article about a feature article in a Japanese publication on the Festival of Arts.

"Case of the mystery festival story solved" Welland Tribune, June 20, 1990, p. 6. Article about Welland's murals appears in Latvian magazine AVOTS.

"Buffalo newspaper tells the story of Welland's murals", Tribune, Aug. 21, 1989.

"Murals could make Welland the world's largest art gallery", Toronto Star Nov. 14, 1988.

¹⁵ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, p. 5

¹⁶ Mark Tayti, "New committee aims to save the murals" Welland Tribune, May 22, 1997.

¹⁷ Joe Barkovich, "Arts festival plan to save murals?" Welland Tribune April 24, 1996

¹⁸ Joe Barkovich, "Task force searches for group to keep up city murals", Welland Tribune April 20, 1996

¹⁹ Brian Price, "Mural Repairs \$10,000", Welland Tribune, May 27, 1996.
"Saving Giant Murals Purpose of Meeting", Welland Tribune May 28, 1996.

²⁰ Joop Gerritsma, "Degroot heads new arts fest" Welland Tribune Aug. 20, 1997

Tayti, "New committee aims to save the murals"

²¹ "A Clearer Vision", photo, Welland Tribune, September 24, 1997 shows Tannis Koskela working on restoration of The Cordage Community mural.

"Tour Welland murals during Festival of the Arts", Welland Tribune, Aug. 19, 1997.

Brad Moscato, "'Mors awareness is needed' for arts" and "Murals are 'more than just giant postcards'", Welland Tribune, August 25, 1997.

Bernd Franke, "Arts fest fading into history?", Welland Tribune, June 6, 1998.

"Arts festival will focus on downtown", Welland Tribune, Feb. 25, 1998

²² Bernd Franke, "City's murals are a work in progress, official says" Tribune, June 6, 1998.

Franke, "Arts fest fading into history?"

²³ "Festival gets \$45,000", Tribune, June 19, 2000.

A website with links to photos of the murals is still online at <http://wellandmurals.ca> courtesy of local artist James Takeo.

Various videos from the Festival of Arts (Welland Murals) from 1988 and 1989 are also available on youtube. Includes us artist interviews, news footage, and promotional videos from various sources. English and French. Published by James Takeo on YouTube Nov. 6, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moK51QpHzgY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Fm6wxzMAF8>

²⁴Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, p. 86.

²⁵ See "The Welland Public Library", research report for Heritage Welland (L.A.C.A.C.) by Nora A. Reid, M.A., completed in July 2003; pp 3, 13-14.

²⁶ Gibb, A Festival of Canadian Art, p. 6

²⁷ "Festival of the Arts after artist's nation-wide", Tribune, Jan. 7, 1988, p.1

²⁸ "Mural Damage: It'll cost less than \$100 to fix, Woodward says", Tribune, Dec. 10, 1988.

²⁹ Pat Barevich and Joop Gerritsma, "Tempers flare at mural meeting", Tribune, April 15, 1989, p1.

Ken Avey, "Not to blame for any deterioration: experts. Mural material the best" Tribune, April 14, 1989.

³⁰ Brian Price, "Mural repairs \$10,000", Tribune May 7, 1996.

³¹ Joe Barkovich, "Task force searches for group to keep up city murals"

³² Barkovich, "Task force searches for group to keep up city murals"

³³ From Nora Reid. This was repaired during the last five years when Ms. Reid was Executive Director of the Welland Museum.

Canal Construction Mural Recommendation for Designation:

Criteria for Designation (from the Heritage Toolkit)

Property should have

Design or Physical Value

- Rare or unique
- High degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit
- High degree of technical/scientific achievement

Historical or Associative Value

- Direct associations with a theme, event, person, activity, organization etc. significant in the community
- Information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture
- Reflects work of an architect, artist or builder significant to the community

Contextual Value

- Important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area
- Physically, functionally or historically linked to its surroundings
- Is a landmark

This mural meets all these criteria –

Design – it is one of a kind and high degree of artistic merit

Historical/Associative Value – direct association with major community project, the “Festival of Arts”; provides understanding of community aspirations and values during that time; work of a local artist who completed several major projects in Welland.

Contextual Value – part of the character of the neighbourhood; directly part of and enhances the heritage designated building (Carnegie Building) where it is located