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Art at the Library

New Milford's public library
collaborates to create
sculpture garden

Focus:
Infrastructure





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EDITOR

Michael F. Cerra

MANAGING EDITOR

Amy Spiezio aspiezio@njlm.org

DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING, AND TECHNOLOGY

Taran B. Samhammer tsamhammer@njlm.org

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR

Tasneem Kapadia tkapadia@njlm.org

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Lori Buckelew

Benjamin Dworkin, Ph.D.

Andrew LaFevre

Frank Marshall, Esq.

Paul A. Penna

Matthew U. Watkins

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Dawn Becan, White Eagle Printing Company

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER

Thomas Fratticcioli tfratticcioli@njlm.org

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Infrastructure



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Building and Rebuilding

In the past, infrastructure often meant keeping the roads paved and the telephone poles up. Much has changed and evolved—our concept of infrastructure now includes not only transportation, both public and private, but also energy, broadband, utilities, water, sewer, and more.

The challenge of these (sometimes) competing priorities can seem like an insurmountable obstacle for local governments. But we are entering a once-in-a-generation opportunity for local governments to build for tomorrow with support from the federal government.

The passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), intends to rebuild roads, bridges, and rails, expand access to clean drinking water, ensure every American has access to high-speed internet, take on the climate crisis, advance environmental justice, and “invest in communities that have too often been left behind,” notes the White House’s commentary on the bill.

Wondering what opportunities are out there for your municipality? Please visit the League’s condensed version of the BIL Guidebook (www.njlm.org/muniBIL), which pertains exclusively to municipalities. Also, review the separate spreadsheet with the programs broken down by category, type of projected, and next milestone. They can be found in the Federal Issues of Municipal Interest Section of www.njlm.org.

In the meantime, please dig into the May issue, which looks at how the NJ Infrastructure Bank, the Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Transportation have worked municipalities on the Water Bank and the Transportation Bank (p. 24).

As streets are updated, it may be time to review what the impacts of COVID and climate concerns have had in bringing pedestrian and bike safety to the forefront, and the importance of planning to protect the most vulnerable road users (p. 30).

While governments have often struggled to keep up—New Jersey’s bridges, according to the National Bridge Inventory, 7.1% of the state’s bridges are classified a structurally deficient—there are new options for updates and upgrades. For a look at the latest in bridge-building technology, Accelerated Bridge Construction that improved a bridge between Keansburg and Hazlet (p. 34).

Also, please review the 2021 Environmental Legislation report from John M. Scagnelli, Esq., Environmental Counsel for the League, which provides insights on how the State’s continued emphasis and advancement of environmental directives will impact municipalities (p. 54).

With the most significant federal commitment since the Eisenhower Administration, there has never been a better opportunity to build, rebuild, and renew our aging infrastructure for generations to come. 🚧

Michael Cerra

PS: please register for the League’s Mini-Conference 2022, scheduled for June 15 at the Conference Center at Mercer in West Windsor, marking another return to in-person events. For more information, visit www.njlm.org/miniconf.

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Art at the Library

New Milford's public library collaborates to create sculpture garden

Hedy Grant, Councilwoman, New Milford

New Milford, a borough of about 16,000 residents in Bergen County, long known for its outstanding sports teams and programs, can now claim to be a renaissance magnet as it expands into and publicly supports the arts.

Everything has a beginning. For the Sculpture Garden at the New Milford Public Library, it started with a visit from Ulla Novina, the head of the Sculptors Affiliate of the Art Center of Northern New Jersey (located in New Milford), to a meeting of the Library Board of Trustees about five years ago. The collaboration between the two entities resulted in the creation of a Sculpture Garden on the expansive grounds of the library.

There are 10 sculptures from five sculptors: Ulla Novina, Natalie Frier, Myra Grosinger, Catherine Schmitt, and Herrat Smomerhoff. And the Library and Art Center look forward to expanding the Sculpture Garden in the coming years.



"Leading the Way" - Catherine Schmitt



"Butterfly" - Herrat Sommerhoff



"Rune Stone/Odin Stone" - Ulla Novina



"Stellar Star" - Myra Grosinger



"Goddess" - Catherine Schmitt



“From Within” - Natalie Frier



“Soaring” - Ulla Novina



“Inspirational Beginnings” - Myra Grosinger



“Flight of Fancy” - Herrat Sommerhoff

The proposal

Artist Ulla Novina’s enthusiastic presentation to the Library Board of Trustees and Library Director Terrie McColl included images of several sculptures that she hoped would be included in the Sculpture Garden pending Board approval. It took several meetings between the Board and Novina to select the final 10 sculptures.

One of Catherine Schmitt’s pieces had been sent to Texas to be bronzed and the sculptor had no idea when it would be completed as the pandemic had created major delays. So we selected a different piece of hers and it turned out to be one of the most popular. It’s entitled “Leading the Way.”

Due diligence

As excited as the Board was at Novina’s proposal and as hopeful as it was that we could pursue the project, the Board first needed to do its due diligence. It needed to review the proposal with the Borough attorney and the Borough risk manager. Insurance questions needed to be addressed, as did the costs of creating the Sculpture Garden.

Several conversations were held with these professionals and it was determined that the sculptures would become the property of the Borough of New Milford and would be covered by its insurance policy. Releases were drafted and sent to the artists.

The New Milford Department of Public Works (DPW),

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*Dan Mason will continue to support the new Leadership Team, will remain as Chief Municipal Recruiter, and will become Chairman of the New Board of Professional Municipal Advisors.

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which has exemplary knowledge and skills, offered to create the pedestals and collect and mount the sculptures, which they did. They also ordered and mounted a plaque on each pedestal indicating the name of the sculptor, the name of the piece and the materials used. The day before the opening, they groomed the grounds.

Novina, Library Director Terrie McColl and I met several times with members of the DPW to place stakes where the pedestals and sculptures would be installed. This had to be done several times as there were weather problems which often displaced the stakes and, of course, the pandemic delayed the entire project by about 1.5 years.



“Windows in Time” - Natalie Frier

While all this was taking place, Novina and the Board met to discuss which sculptures would be accepted, the types of pedestals that would be used and the placement of the pieces. The Board was pleased at the variety of designs and materials used in the sculptures. Herrat Sommerhoff’s sculpture, Flights of Fancy, was the first to be mounted. It was the easiest as it was affixed to a wall and did not need a pedestal. The piece was colorful and unusual and generated a lot of discussion.

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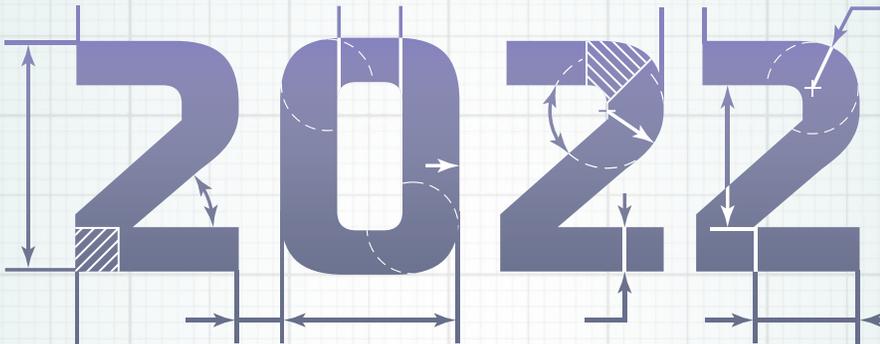
Once the sculptures were mounted by the DPW, we needed to plan a grand unveiling and dedication. First, photos and a brochure were needed. I happened to be discussing the progress of the Sculpture Garden with Janet Dengel, a member of the Friends of the New Milford Public Library, and mentioned that I was looking for a professional photographer. She mentioned that her daughter, Linda Pordon, was a professional photographer. I contacted Linda and she was delighted to offer her services. On the day the photos were taken, she brought her eldest son, 7-year-old Liam, who was her very able assistant and charmed everyone.

At about the same time I received a brochure that the New Milford Historical Preservation Commission

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The sculpture garden.



Mayor and Council members posing on the pedestals prior to the installation of the sculptures.

had created about New Milford's French Huguenot Cemetery (which dates back to the 1600s). I thought it was extremely well done and professional and decided to contact Lisa Purcell who had created it. She was a member of the Commission and did this type of work professionally. She very generously offered her services and created an absolutely gorgeous brochure that includes photos of every sculpture, the location of each and information about the sculptors.

For fun, in November 2020 after the pedestals were in place and shortly

before Linda Pordon took the photos, the New Milford mayor and council members posed on the pedestals.

The opening

We decided on Saturday September 18, 2021, for the opening dedication. It turned out to be a beautiful day; however, since we could not depend on the weather, we ordered a tent in case it rained or was hot. The Friends of the New Milford Public Library generously covered this cost. A local restaurant, Bambino's Deli, donated refreshments.

The opening dedication was well attended. It was particularly delightful that the New Jersey State Librarian, Jennifer Nelson, and the head of the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS), David Hanson, attended. Also attending were the Library Board of Trustees, Mayor Michael Putrino, and all the council members, Assemblywoman Lisa Swain, Assemblyman Chris Tully, Commissioners Tracy Silna Zur and Mary Amoroso, County Executive John Hogan and many residents.



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Art at the Library



Herrat Sommerhoff, Councilwoman Hedy Grant, Catherine Schmitt, Natalie Frier and (seated) Ulla Novina. This was taken at the opening festivities.

The only thing left to do is to design a plaque to be affixed to the Library celebrating those who participated in making the Sculpture Garden the

beautiful, relaxing, intriguing place it is. The Sculpture Garden gets a lot of attention partly because New Milford's Library is well used and because of the

soccer field next to it. The responses have been positive and many people have been seen wandering around the Sculpture Garden and reading the information plaque on each pedestal, which include the name of the piece, the name of the sculptor and the medium used. 📖

A History of Arts Cooperation

This is the second collaboration between the Borough and the Art Center. About seven years ago, I started an "Art in Borough Hall" project. This entailed the showcasing of two pieces of art for three months at a time in the entry hall of New Milford's Borough Hall.

The art, on loan from the Art Center, beautified a wall that until then had been bare and rather bland. This project was warmly welcomed by the community.

The Art Center, located in the former St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was built in 1895, offers art classes for all ages and skills in a variety of media including painting, photography, drawing and sculpting. It boasts a magnificent art gallery with a high, arched ceiling where it holds regular juried shows and other events.

In addition, this year, it will be participating in the 2nd annual Arts Amble for the first time. The countywide arts festival is a three-day event where artists and performers can showcase their work. For more information, visit <https://artsamble.org>.



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NJLM on the Move

This spring the League's officials were busy around the state and in Washington, D.C., advancing municipal priorities. Their efforts include the following.

Budget Address

NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine attended Gov. Phil Murphy's 2023 budget address at the Statehouse.

Testimony and Panels

NJLM Past President Janice Kovach of Clinton Town represented the League in testimony to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Cannabis Regulatory Commission. For the Environment and Energy Committee testimony, please visit www.njlm.org/testimony.

NJLM Executive Director Mike Cerra represented municipal interests on the Warehousing issue at a NJ Spotlight webinar.

NJLM Past President and Elizabeth Mayor, Christian Bollwage, testified on brownfields funding before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change.

Meet & Greets

Mayor Pikolycky met with local, state, and federal officials to advance municipal priorities. Including:

- Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen
- NJ Department of Transportation Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti
- U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew
- U.S. Rep Tom Malinowsk

In the Capitol

NJLM leadership attended the NLC Congressional City Conference, which featured speakers including U.S. President Joe Biden, U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, Susan Rice, Director, Domestic Policy Council and Ambassador, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Castillo, and well as representatives from around the nation and NLC leadership. 🇺🇸



NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky, NJLM Past President Janice Kovach, and U.S. Rep Tom Malinowski.



NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky under the Gold Dome.



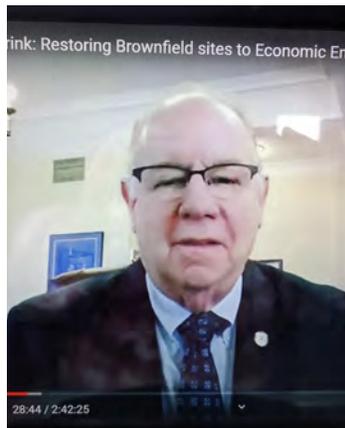
NJLM Executive Director Mike Cerra, NJLM President, Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine, and NJLM Past President, Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton Town.



NJLM President Mayor Pikolycky and NJDOT Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti.



Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen and Pikolycky.



NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky and U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew.

Mayor Bollwage speaking on Brownfield funding to the House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Environment & Climate Change.

League Legislative Committee Returns to In-Person Meetings

The League's Legislative Committee (LLC) met in Plainsboro last month for the first time in two years, marking the return to in-person events from virtual meetings.

NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine and LLC co-chairs NJLM Past President Mayor Colleen Mahr of Fanwood and League General Counsel Bill Kearns were on hand to welcome the committee members back, as were the League's executives and members of the legislative team.

The League Legislative Committee consists of more than 100 members, representing municipal interests around the state. Every bill pending before the Legislature that might affect localities is evaluated by the LLC.

Subcommittees include the General Committee, Intra Municipal Affairs Committee, Tax & Finance Committee, and the Land Use, Environment, & Community Development Committee. These groups review bills that have potential municipal impacts and suggest action for the legislative team. The group as a whole then votes on these suggestions, establishing the League's positions NJLM's legislative team moves ahead, advancing the League's stance on upcoming issues. 🗳️



From top: NJLM Executive Director Mike Cerra addresses the gathered LLC committee with NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine, League General Counsel Bill Kearns, and NJLM Past President Mayor Colleen Mahr of Fanwood.

The Intra Municipal Affairs Committee is informed about cyber security by Twp. of Franklin's Director of IT Bob McQueen.

Past President Mahr leads the pledge of allegiance. Councilwoman Kieona Miller presents the findings of the General Committee.

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