

Portrait of a city

Artist paints historic landmark series

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DANVILLE — Although Amy Chrisman was born in Connecticut and lived in Vermont for many years, she feels a real connection to the history of Vermilion County.

“I want to draw attention to the positives,” Chrisman said. “There’s a lot of good here.”

Chrisman and her family moved to Danville about 15 years ago. They live in a century-old farmhouse that’s the former home of her husband Stephen’s grandparents. Like his wife, Stephen is an artist, too.

While Stephen’s work is primarily three-dimensional and abstract, his wife’s renderings are realistic watercolors. Amy studied with noted watercolor artist Lawrence Goldsmith, but credits her mother as her first teacher.

“I think I had a genetic predisposition to become a painter,” she said.

Before she devoted herself full-time to her art, Chrisman worked as a massage therapist.

“I enjoy making people feel better,” she said. “It makes me feel better to make somebody happy.”

Now, she’s found a way to do that through painting.

Chrisman plans to combine her love of history with her artistic talent in a series of painting of Vermilion County landmarks.

According to the artist, “Buildings of historical and architectural value will be especially targeted for inclusion in this series.”

She invites organizations with a special interest in these buildings to sponsor a limited edition series of prints of the building portraits she paints.

The Red Mask Players will soon become one of the first organizations to make the prints available to its patrons.

Red Mask board member and historian Leslie Boedicker learned of Chrisman’s project and presented it to the rest of the board.

Members decided to commission the artist to paint its home, the historic Kathryn Randolph Theater on North Vermilion Street. Then they will sell prints of the painting.

“I’m a big fan of watercolors,” Boedicker said. “I’ve painted with them myself, and it’s hard to do.

“Amy’s work is so meticulous, so accurate,” she said. “It’s beautifully detailed.”

Red Mask will offer high quality prints of Chrisman’s original painting to its members at the group’s annual Katy Awards in early June.

Plans are for the prints to be available to members and the general public through August including at Arts in the Park.

Chrisman said the prints will be reproduced using the giclee



Amy Chrisman works on a watercolor in her studio.

Matt Huber/CommercialNews

printing process. Archival quality watercolor paper and pigment-based inks make these virtually indistinguishable from the original painting, she said.

Only a limited number of the prints will be signed by the artist. The quantity of the pre-paid orders will determine the size of the edition.

The business model is for the artist to collect a percentage of the sales of the group. The sponsoring organization receives the balance.

Plans are for Red Mask’s historian fund to benefit from the sale, according to Boedicker.

The historian committee is involved in many projects that document the group’s past, including scrapbooks for each season. Older seasons are sometimes combined due to a shortage of artifacts.

“Acid-free archival materials for those scrapbooks cost about \$100 each,” she said. “We will have about 30 scrapbooks when we’re done.”

Chrisman already has completed portraits of the Lamon House and the Masonic Center. She hopes to paint other buildings and scenes in the area including the Fischer Theatre, St. Paul’s Church, the Heron Park Boardwalk and the Danville city skyline.

FYI

To contact Amy Chrisman, e-mail her at chrismanstudio@aol.com. To view examples of her work, log on to <http://www.chrismanstudio.com>.