

Recycled art exhibit and silent auction to be featured

It started with a shed full of unwanted metal school desks and chairs leftover from a recent updating at Victoria School. Dozens of old desks were sitting there taking up space, and the school administrators, not wanting to simply throw away perfectly sound yet well-worn desks, started looking for a good home.

Enter the fundraising committee for Kamsack's downtown revitalization.

Looking for a creative and innovative fundraising event for homecoming weekend, organizer Nikki Lachambre proposed that the committee "rescue" these desks and put them into the hands of artists with the talent, ingenuity and community spirit necessary to recycle them into works of art.

Within a week of announcing the project, more than 25 artists from Kamsack, and four from Langenburg, had signed up to each restore a desk or two. In the case of the Langenburg artists, a group of four artists ended up hand-painting 10 desks and eight chairs.

"The way people came together on this project blew me away," Lachambre said. "Every artist I approached suggested several others, and the event evolved into



Brenda Kondratoff, one of several district artists who took on the challenge of creating a work of art from an old Victoria School desk, used a Spider-Man theme. Her desk, which took at least 50 hours to make, as well as the others will be available for sale as a downtown revitalization fundraiser during the 2010 homecoming

something even grander than I had originally envisioned.

"The sheer number of artists in the area amazed me, but more impressive than that is their deep pride in our community and their willingness to share their time and talent for a good cause," she said. "The desks were in rough shape, and each one had to be cleaned and sanded down, primed and painted, and redesigned to fit the theme of the specific artist.

"These artists devoted hours and hours to get to their final masterpieces."

The artists who donated their time and materials in restoring the desks were: Aimee Sterzer, AnnaLee Parnetta, Brenda Kondratoff, Dustin Wilson, Eileen Pohlka, Howie Fehrenbach, Isaac Thomas, Jessica Pennell, Joan Veal, John Berezowski, Kaitlyn Stenhouse, Linda Scobie, Linda Todosichuk, Mabel Mund, Marianne Francis, Marilyn Lachambre, Marina Wishevetski, Mel Novitsky, Mildred Kotzer and Myrna Dey.

The results of their hard work are an eclectic mix of themes, colours and styles, Lachambre said. Some artists chose to replace the Formica desktops with handcrafted wooden ones of varying shapes. Others painted the desks solid black and intricately hand-painted the desktops. One used chrome bumper paint and treated the desk as though it were a classic car in need of restoration. One painted over everything except the inside of the desk to allow the ghosts of Victoria School students past to live on in the carvings of their names.

The exhibit of the final results will be an extraordinary example of how time-worn items can be transformed into works of art that celebrate rather than destroy the history that lives within them, she said. Intrigued by the concept of the recycled art show, yet unable to adopt a desk, other artists, including former residents Steve Dutcheshen and Bud Moore, currently of Calgary, Doug Welykholowa of Regina, local residents, Jim Marsh and Kelsey Anderson, Mitch Hipsley of Yorkton and Crystal Thorburn and Mike Foley of Melville, have joined the project by donating collector-quality pieces of art which will form a complementary exhibit.

The desks and all other artwork will be available for purchase at a silent auction fundraiser to be held on July 31. Raffle tickets will also be sold for prizes, which include a two-night weekend getaway to Winnipeg at the luxurious Beechmount Bed and breakfast, a \$100 gift certificate to MADOCO Restaurant in Swan River, a one-night stay at Patrick Place Bed and Breakfast in Yorkton and a gentleman's gift basket from Safire Clothing in Yorkton.

All proceeds will be used to fund Kamsack's downtown

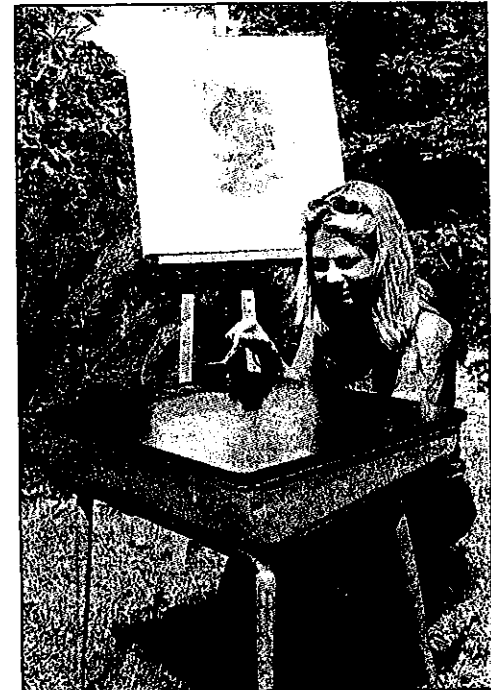
revitalization initiatives, Lachambre said, extending an invitation to everyone in town that night "to attend and expect to be surprised and inspired by the vision of our artists.

"Take home a one-of-a-kind gift or a "piece of Victoria," enjoy some good wine, enter to win some great prizes, support our downtown revitalization and most importantly, support our local artists.

"It'll be a night to rejoice in our arts community, our friends and our town."

The Piece of Victoria Recycled Art Auction is being held July 31 in the lobby of the Komplex. Bidding starts at 7 p.m. Winners will be announced at 9 p.m. Wine and light hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Persons wanting additional information may contact Lachambre by telephone or email clachambre@aol.com or may view the Facebook page: Piece of Victoria Silent Art Auction 2010.



Aimee Sterzer was photographed as she was working on her desk. In the background is a painting she is also donating to the auction.