

## Local/Regional

# Artist's departure shouldn't slow mural's completion

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GREENFIELD — The recent departure of the Brooklyn, N.Y., artist hired to design and supervise the painting of a downtown wall mural should not jeopardize the project's completion, according to the coordinator of the mural.

Local artist Nancy Baker of Lampblack Road will serve as "clerk of the works" in artist Janet Braun-Reinitz's absence.

The mural being painted on the eastern wall of the Borofsky block, overlooking the Veterans Memorial Mall, had been delayed when town officials questioned the appropriateness of the location and whether the mural would be subject to the town's zoning bylaws.

That delay created a scheduling

conflict for Braun-Reinitz, project coordinator Rebekka Tippens of Colrain said. Tippens said that Braun-Reinitz had to return to New York Tuesday to attend several meetings this week. Braun-Reinitz is preparing for a course on textile design that she will begin teaching Sept. 29, Tippens said.

The artist hopes to return to Greenfield before that time to continue work on the mural, Tippens said.

Baker, chief assistant for the mural project, has spent a great deal of time discussing the mural design and the artist's vision with Braun-Reinitz, Tippens said. Baker will oversee the project when Braun-Reinitz is not there.

Tippens said that Braun-Reinitz's scheduling conflict had been anticipated. Had the project started on

schedule early last month, the mural would have been near completion by now and Braun-Reinitz would not have had a problem, Tippens said. But because of objections raised by town officials and some others in the community, the project was delayed until the last weekend in August, which cut short the artist's availability.

The project was able to proceed when selectmen dropped their opposition and approved permits for the scaffolding.

It took longer than anticipated to erect the scaffolding, Tippens added.

But before Braun-Reinitz left, she was able to get most of her mural design drawn onto the wall, Tippens said. And the colors to be painted on the wall have already been mixed, she said.

Volunteers have been lined up to

help with the actual painting, including artists from Greenfield Community College and two professional muralists from Lake Pleasant who have experience with such projects, Tippens said.

The mural volunteers are still in touch with Braun-Reinitz, Tippens said. She has been accessible by telephone. They have even discussed aspects of the mural design with Braun-Reinitz by exchanging drawings over fax machines, Tippens said. "You can communicate design work over that distance," Tippens said of the "high-tech" means for collaborating on the design.

"She has left us with the whole design. She has said, 'Call me and let me know when you need me,'" Tippens said. "But we got the community taking over."

"We have most of the drawing

up," Tippens said. She said they hoped to have all of the drawing of the design done by late Friday and a lion's share of the painting done in a marathon session today and Sunday. She hoped the weather would cooperate.

The group, involving between 10 and 20 people at this point, hopes to have the mural completed by the end of September, Tippens said. If it gets delayed beyond that, the cooler temperatures may interfere with the mural's progress. The paint tends to dry too fast when the air is colder, she said. But the bigger problem is the uncomfortable conditions in which the painters will have to work, she said.

"What makes it hard is standing up there (on the scaffolding) in 50 degree weather ... It just makes it uncomfortable," Tippens said.

Braun-Reinitz was to be paid \$3,500 for the project. Tippens said that Baker will be paid from that amount for the times she steps in for the artist. The money comes from a contribution by the local Business Fund for the Arts and by donations from the community, which are funneled through financial sponsor the Traprock Peace Center of Deerfield.

The mural is intended to be a celebration of Greenfield's history. It will depict historical buildings, such as Poet's Seat Tower, scenes from the town's past, and pictures of items that were produced or manufactured in town over the years.

The mural is a project of Tippens' Institute for Cultural Understanding based in Colrain.

Volunteers to help with the painting and moving the scaffolding are still being sought, Tippens said.