

MURAL:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

Once called little Canada, Petit Canada, the neighbourhood was full of factory workers and well known Quebecers.

Jean Gilbert, came to see the life-size image of his grandmother, Marguerite Morisset-Leclaire, waving to the people below with a baby in her arms.

Better known as Tante Margot, who for five years in the early 1960s hosted a television song and dance show for children on CHLT-TV, she opened the province's first preschool in Sherbrooke where she taught Sherbrooke Mayor Jean Perreault and actor Jean Besré. She was still working at 85.

"She devoted her life to promoting Sherbrooke's culture," Gilbert said. "When I heard the city wanted to put her image on the wall I thought it was a great idea. She knew this part of the city very well."

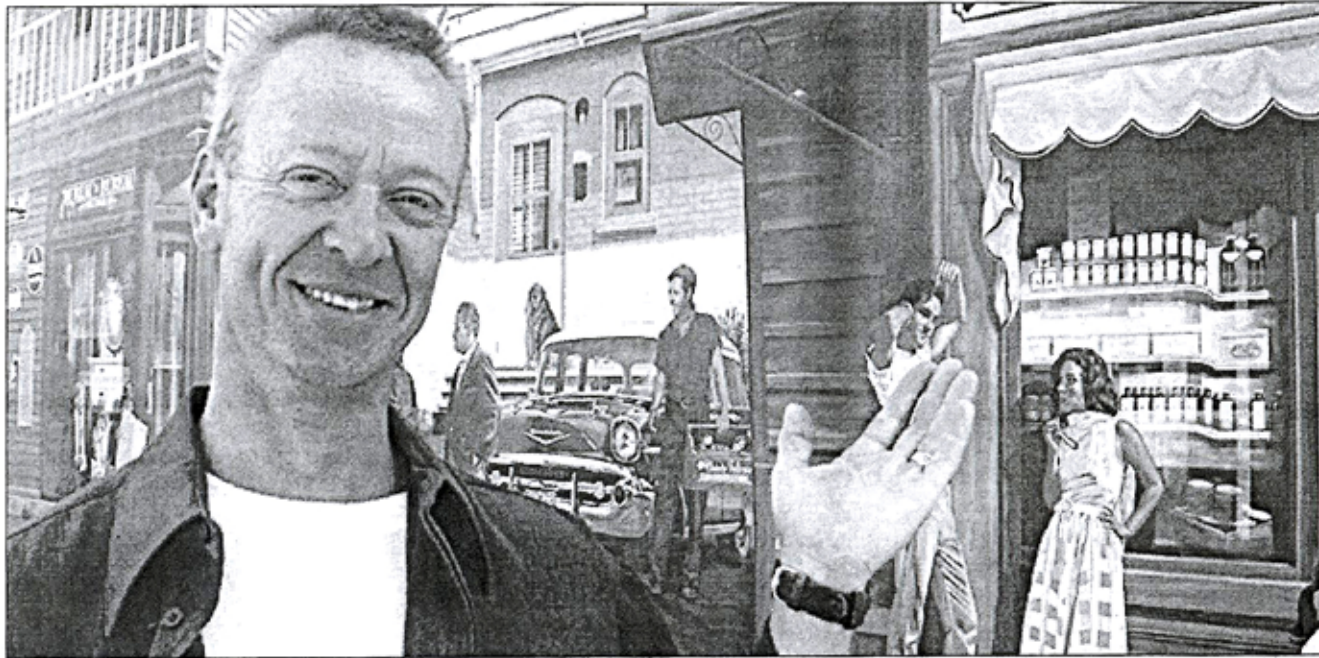
Other well known people included Yvon Ellyson, the barber and baseball fan who served as manager of the Alouettes baseball team and president of the provincial baseball league in the 60s and 70s.

In 2001 he was honoured in Quebec's baseball hall of fame.

Now 77, he showed up at the opening to see a younger version of himself dressed to play ball.

The mural also pays tribute to some of the city's prominent businesses.

For almost 60 years, hockey stick manufacturer, Sherwood Drolet, has been supplying sticks for road hockey games, minor league teams and National Hockey League (NHL) players all over



PERRY BEATON/SPECIAL

Serge Malenfant, the project coordinator for the group MURIRS, said his parents once lived on Alexandre Street.

North America.

On the mural, Léo P. Drolet, the company's founder and president, smiles as he watches three young NHL hopefuls jostle for a street ball while playing road hockey. His sons still manage the business.

Vico, the chocolate milk brand made popular by Sherbrooke Pure Milk (SPM) is represented by a jolly milk man holding a crate of milk bottles.

Starting in 1911 the company produced milk, ice cream and butter before closing in 1974.

The mural, which took about nine weeks to complete with involved the work of about 12 artists.

Annie Bilodeau, one of the artists who painted the faces, said this summer was exceptional for working outside.

"We had super nice weather with lots of sun," she said, adding the wall had a cover in case it started to rain.

Bilodeau, who asked her father to pose for the painting with a group of men sitting on a bench, said each artist added their own touch.

The 50s have a special meaning for every generation with the popularity of Elvis and the beginning of "Boogie-Woogie," she said.

Serge Malenfant the project coordinator for the group MURIRS, whose parents moved to Sherbrooke and settled on Alexandre, said people in those days were looking forward to a future with less work and more holidays.

He also said he developed a passion

for art while living here.

"My older sister was born here and she taught me how to paint," he said.

The mural project calls for at least seven murals with two others left to complete.

The mural cost about \$170,000. Almost half was funded by the city. Tourisme Cantons-de-l'est, Emploi-Québec and other work programs funded the rest.

Malenfant, who alluded to the upcoming municipal election, said there are plans for new murals but there's no guarantee they'll see the light of day.

"Jean Perreault supports our project," he said. "Things could be different without him."

Four other murals have been completed on the sides of buildings around the city's downtown.

For more information about MURIRS, check out their Web site at www.murirs.com.

brobinson@sherbrookerecord.com