

Mural depicting Sherbrooke's history unveiled

A gift for Sherbrooke's 200th anniversary - Paquin

By Rita Legault
SHERBROOKE

The mural on the Dufferin Terrace was officially inaugurated yesterday in front of a who's who of Sherbrooke.

The huge painted wall at the corner of Frontenac and Dufferin, which depicts Sherbrooke at the turn of the last century, was the result of a huge collaborative effort, said downtown councillor Serge Paquin, who noted it also required vision, planning and some daring.

Paquin said that devoting \$76,000 to an artistic project took some audacity on behalf of the last council and others who showed faith in the development for the downtown core.

"Mostly, this magnificent masterpiece is a gift that the citizens of Sherbrooke gave themselves for their 200th anniversary," he said.

Mayor Jean Perrault said the mural began with a vision by MURIRS president Serge Malenfant who came to see the city with a project to create a mural for the bicentennial.

Perrault said council was enthusiastic about the project which revitalized the heritage of the city and brought citizens together - which was particularly significant as the new city of Sherbrooke enters its first year of existence.

"Getting close to history will help us make better decision for the future," he noted, adding that the mural not only depicts the city's long history, it represents a new heritage located at the centre of the new city.

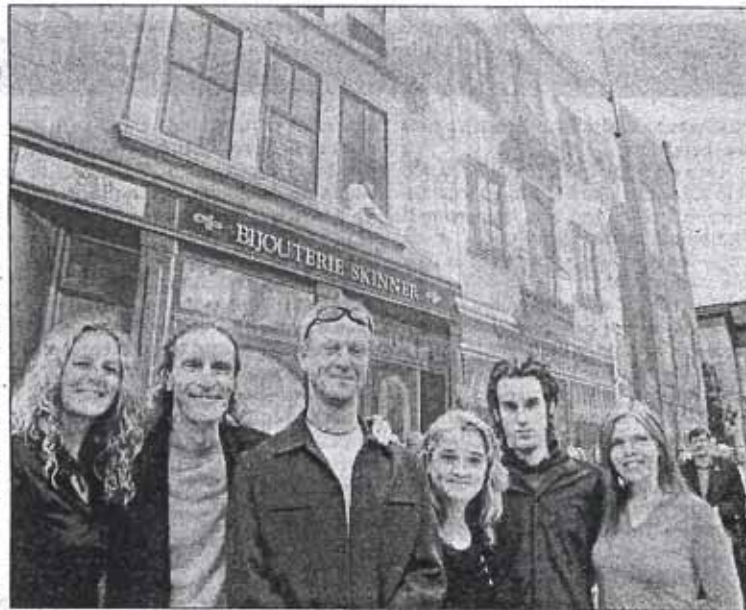
He also noted the mural is located at the core of the city's planned revitalization project near the Magog River gorge. He said he hopes the other end of the block of buildings can be painted once the city acquires and demolishes the Gabr building.

The artistic and historical work was funded mainly by the City of Sherbrooke with help from the provincial and federal governments and a handful of corporate and local sponsors who are immortalized on the wall.

The city paid or the lion's share of the budget with a \$76,500 grant. Emploi Québec provided two job creation grants totaling some \$16,000 while another \$11,000 came from the provincial fund to battle poverty.

Sponsors include Sherwin Williams paints, the Monty-Coulombe law firm, Roy, Côté and Perrault arpenteurs-géometre, the Groupe Teknika engineering firm as well as the dental office of Drs. Duquette, Faubert, Massicotte and Weldon.

Partners also include the downtown development corporation, which hosted



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On hand for the inauguration were mural brainchild Serge Malenfant (center) along with artists Annie Bilodeau, Raymond Laferrère, Ève Leblond, Simon Durocher and Geneviève Reesör.

the official inauguration as well as the City's bicentennial committee, the Commission des arts Visuels de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke's historical society.

The mural was executed by a team of five artists led by artistic director Hélène Fleury with some historical guidance from Sherbrooke historian

Jean-Pierre Kesterman.

With more funding from the provincial government, the City hopes to accomplish a series of six more murals. It hopes to find some local sponsors for the others.

In the mean-

time, the Société de développement du Centre-Ville downtown development corporation, in cooperation with the monthly arts newspaper Visages and its community radio station CFLX-FM, has launched a contest to help people get to know the mural. The September issue of the monthly arts magazine has a quiz about the mural which citizens can answer by listening to broadcasts on CFLX-FM from Monday to Friday between August 29 and September 20 at 12:20, 12:40 and 3 p.m.

Residents can also get the answer during a free one-man play by Jacques Quintin. The play, which will be performed in front on the mural on Dufferin Terrace this Labor Day weekend, discusses the people, businesses and history portrayed on the mural, including the Sherbrooke Daily Record paper boy who is selling copies of the region's one and only daily in 1902.

The play will be presented every hour on the hour this weekend starting on Friday between 5 and 9 p.m., as well as Saturday, Sunday and Monday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m.

The winner, who will take home some \$500 in products from downtown merchants, will be chosen at random from among all correctly answered entries. It will be drawn on September 21 at 2 p.m. under the supervision of the Société de développement du Centre-Ville.