

Post Office Mural Gets Bicentennial Brush-Up

BY DENISE WALKER
STAFF WRITER

Fifty years of hanging quietly on the wall of the Franklin Street Post Office really can take its toll on a painting.

So the Chapel Hill Bicentennial Committee has commissioned Janet Hessling, painting conservator of the N.C. Museum of Art, to renovate "The Laying of the Cornerstone" for the town's bicentennial celebration Oct. 12.

The governor of North Carolina commissioned Dean Cornwell to paint "The Laying of the Cornerstone" in 1941.

Cornwell painted the 17-foot-by-6-foot mural in New York City. He then rolled the canvas, transported it to Chapel Hill and mounted it on the post office wall with a lead and varnish mixture.

The painting depicts the laying of the cornerstone of Old East, the first building to be erected at the University.

"The mural represents an historical event," said Sonia Lowenthal of the town's bicentennial committee.

When Chapel Hill purchased the Franklin Street Post Office building from the United States, it was agreed that the mural would remain in the possession of the people of the United States, but that the town would be responsible for its maintenance.

Kirk Metcalf, Chapel Hill buildings program supervisor, said that when the town began looking for someone to complete the renovation, U.S. Postal Service officials recommended the Smithsonian Institute.

"But the N.C. Museum of Art gave us a lower bid, and we were able to use a local person, which was an added bonus," Metcalf said.

Hessling, a nine-year employee of the museum, will renovate the painting throughout this week.

"The painting is in good condition —



DTH/JONATHAN RADCLIFFE

Janet Hessling, a painting conservator for the N.C. Museum of Art, cleans the mural in the Chapel Hill Post Office with distilled water and cotton swabs.

it's just a little dirty," she said. Because the painting cannot be removed from the wall, Hessling must stand on scaffolding to complete the renovation. "This is the first painting that I have ever renovated in the field; all others have been brought into the lab," she said. Usually, a painting that needs renovation is transported to the museum, where restorers examine it and make the necessary repairs in a renovation lab. To remove the dirt from the painting, Hessling will use only distilled water and cotton swabs. "Basically, what I'm doing

is just a simple cleaning," she said. The town will feature two paintings in a ceremony Oct. 12 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the laying of Old East's cornerstone, said Betty Caldwell of the bicentennial committee. At the noon ceremony, "The Laying of the Cornerstone" will be rededicated along with the dedication of a new painting, "Auctioning of the Village Lots," by local artist Michael Brown. Appearing at the bicentennial celebration will be Richard McCormick, provost of UNC; poet Charles Eaton; Joseph Sloan, former director of the Ackland Art Museum; artist Michael Brown; and Chapel Hill native Frances Hargraves.

Fantasy Enthusiasts Enjoy Games, Form Friendships in Sci-Fi Club

BY ANGELIQUE BARTLETT
STAFF WRITER

About 25 people were in Phillips Hall when the building was blown up by terrorists. Fortunately, the explosion was just part of Chimera's role-playing game Saturday night.

Chimera, the UNC science-fiction/fantasy club, presented the game as part of their activities to begin the year. The club is for anyone interested in science fiction, fantasy, strategy games and horror as well as role-playing games.

"It's a really good place to meet people," said Rob Martinek, the club's president.

Chimera, named for a monster in Greek mythology, sponsors presentations by authors such as Paul Thompson—who writes for the Dragonstone Chronicles—film viewing and discussions on games, books and movies.

"(Chimera) is an organization that caters to my fantastic interests," said Isaac Rockoff, a junior from Highland Park, N.J.

Although approximately two-thirds of the club is male, female members said they did not feel uncomfortable.

"We try very hard to make everyone welcome," said Tara Forcier, a sophomore from Satellite Beach, Fla.

Graduate student Shannon Wikle said she had met many wonderful people in the

club. "They're a lot of fun to be around." Wikle also said she learned about different aspects of science fiction and fantasy after joining Chimera. The club introduced her to role-playing games.

"Gaming," as members call it, is a form of interactive story-telling, said Martinek, a senior from Dallas.

It can be thought of as a cross between reading a "Pick-a-Path" book, in which readers' choices can direct the story's outcome, and playing a murder mystery game, in which participants play characters who are somehow involved with the murder.

In a role-playing game, someone creates a situation and setting as the story's foundation. Game participants are given characters to play. Each character has certain strengths, weaknesses and skills.

The players must react, or improvise, according to their characters' capabilities in each situation while trying to achieve the set goal. The game ends either when the players accomplish the game's goal or the given time for playing has elapsed.

Members enjoy gaming for several reasons. "It's like an alternate reality," said freshman Jeremy Greene from Statesville. "(It's) a chance to take another personality and try to do something with it."

Scott Synowicz, Chimera's vice president from Easton, Md., said gaming was a medium in which introverts could express themselves without feeling vulnerable.

Sophomore Chris Kirkman from Randleman said, "It allows you to explore aspects of your life that you normally wouldn't be able to."

Melinda Simmons, a sophomore from Durham, added, "It's a way to get real life experience without having to go through the experience yourself. It also helps you to see things from other perspectives."

Kirkman said a lot of people had misconceptions about gaming. Most people play in a constructive and positive manner, he said. "It actually helps you take care of aggressions," he said.

Martinek said gaming taught social skills. "It helps you to deal with people," he said. "Some of my strongest friendships I've had have been through the game."

Synowicz said there was more to Chimera than role-playing games. The club tries to address the whole science fiction/fantasy genre, he said.

Martinek said he would like to focus more on the "Star Trek phenomenon" because many students had expressed interest in it. Wikle said members also enjoy Japanimation, an adult form of animated feature films.

The club will sponsor a one-day convention Oct. 16, which will involve many forms of strategy and board games. The day will end with a role-playing game.

Chimera will show the movie "Metropolis" at 8:30 p.m. today in 303 Dey Hall.

Campus Calendar

The Presbyterian Student Center invites students to dinner and a program at the center.

6:30 p.m. N.C. Hillel will present "A Guided Tour to the High Holidays: Yom Kippur."

7 p.m. Sangam will meet in 209 Manning Hall.

The UNC Outing Club will meet to discuss the rock-climbing trip and environmentally sound camping.

Phi Sigma Pi, national co-ed honor fraternity, will hold an information session in Carmichael Ballroom.

Afro II dance class will meet in Women's Gym, Studio B.

7:30 p.m. Phi Sigma Pi will hold an interest session in Kenan Residence Hall lobby.

The Office of the Student Body President Environmental Issues Committee will meet in the Union second-floor lounge.

The BSM Gospel Choir will have rehearsal in the Chase Hall Upendo Lounge. The Raleigh engagement is canceled.

The Student Government Academic Affairs Committee will meet in 206 Dey Hall.

8 p.m. The Marine Action Coalition will meet in the Campus Y Lounge.

The UNC Women's Forum will meet in 108 Bingham Hall.

For the Record

In Wednesday's article, "Students Honor Stone As Her Dream Nears Fruition in New BCC," Professor Sonja Haynes Stone should not have been identified as the founder of the Black Student Movement Gospel Choir. Stone was involved in getting funding for the choir, but UNC student Francine Randolph Cummings founded

the group in 1971. In "KASA, Sangam Push for Language Classes," Sangam should have been identified as an association for students of South Asian descent. The group is raising money to set up a South Asian Studies Expendable Fund. The DTH regrets the errors.

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