

# off the front page

## 'Celebration of Motion' develops close to students



Sandy Brooke

Kids at Heppner Elementary School got more than just a glimpse of the fine arts during the past two weeks while Artist in Residence Sandy Brooke of Sisters was working with them to create "A Celebration of Motion," a mural in four parts which now is part of the wall on both sides of the stage in the school's multi purpose room.

Brooke, a graphic artist who has served residencies in Oregon schools since 1978, was brought to the school in Heppner through the efforts of the Morrow County Creative Arts and Crafts Association. Members have organized fundraisers over the last several months to donate two-thirds of the artist's salary. The other one-third was provided by the Eastern Oregon Regional Arts Council. The artist in residence program has been developed over the past several years with the co-operation and participation of the school district. This year, however, no school district funds were available to support the program, so local artists put out the extra effort to fund the program so that fine arts could be kept close to the students.

Close to the students is how the project turned out. A 20-minute assembly on Friday afternoon, March 22, the final day of Brooke's residency at Heppner, organized by Heppner art teacher Ron Forrar and elementary school principal Don Cole, was an elaborate "good-bye" and thank you for Brooke and a tribute to all the students because, as both Forrar and Brooke pointed out, "the mural was the combined work of all the students, although only a small group was selected for the final work everyone participated in the total project."

The project, Forrar explained to students, teachers, guests, Supt. Doyle McCaslin, Asst. Supt. John Edmundson, and members of the Morrow County Arts and Crafts Association; that the mural was part of a push to get back to basics in education because it required all the basics; English, Math, and Science to create the finished project.

Forrar originated the theme for the mural and arranged for aerobics Joyce Hughes, Pam Piper and HHS Dance team members Michelle Miles, and Cindy Piper to "model" for the students. They began the project by watching the movement of the aerobics, then talking about movement and finally drawing the forms. Many pencil, charcoal, and pastel works by the students which have been on display in the multi-purpose room throughout the last two weeks illustrate individual student perceptions of the figures dancing.

Brooke admits that she had reservations at the beginning of the project because "the human form is so difficult to draw," but emphasizes that she is "really pleased with the result. All of the figures on the mural were drawn without help by the kids." Brooke orchestrated the placement of the figures and everyone worked together. She decided on the diagonal layout so that the

and drawing of figures, Brooke with Forrar's help, selected several fifth through eighth grade students who each worked on the project for an hour a day for the week. The hour was "borrowed" from their regular class time, she explained, and they had to make up the work which they missed. Still, there were no negative outbursts through the whole time, only positive effort. They were willing to do whatever they were asked to do.

At the beginning, Brooke contends, a project is only an idea and each person's input is important. Students must communicate to express their ideas and work together. The outcome is always a surprise to us all.

"Everybody has a sense of color they like. You can give two people the same two tubes of paint and they will mix them differently. It's part of their individuality. The kids really cared about the project. They would argue with me about the choice of the color for their figure. They were a good group of kids, the difficult part was choosing a few because there were many others we could have used for the project and still accomplished the same thing."

"Work on mural is an excellent way to put kids together who would never come together in a social situation. Their work is related to their talent and interest. Brooke has been serving in residencies in Eastern Oregon schools since 1978. She may do one or 15 a year, she says, depending on which districts invite her, it's all contract work. She has an elementary school teacher and an instructor at Annie Painter & Assoc. in Portland and the Central Oregon College, community education pro-

gram. She says that she likes the artist in residence program because it's not the regular routine of teaching, but it allows her to "take one special thing and work together with the students to express their ideas."

She earned a Bachelor of the Arts degree at the University of Oregon in 1972 and a secondary teaching certificate in 1976. She has exhibited work in many group and one-man shows since 1972. She has owned and operated an art gallery and has worked as a self-employed graphic designer. She admits that she used to do some advertising work for the Bon, but doesn't do much of that type work anymore. Most artists, she says, do odd jobs in order to paint on the side. Her daughter, Christen, 19, a freshman at the University of Oregon plans to major in Interior Design, because that's where the money is. Her husband, Jim is a chemist.

She explains that the project "Celebration of Motion" fits well with what she has been doing for the past two and a half years because she has concentrated on figure work and motion drawings.

Principal Cole concluded the assembly with a presentation of a basket of fruit and a copy of "Homesteads and Heritages," because he explained, Brooke, during the two week residency, did not just teach and share her talents with students but was giving of herself and the Homesteads and Heritages was a way to share a small part of the county's heritage with her.

Was the project worthwhile? Stop by the multipurpose room and see for yourself the acrylic or masonic mural Cole described as "something which the kids created themselves, a

fine work which will make an impact, a statement to the community, for years to come.

More than becoming involved with creation of a piece of art, students hugs and goodbyes attest to their personal involvement through their interests and talents, with a genuine person who became close to the students. More than a finished piece of art, the residency brought stu-

dents together with a genuine, caring individual who was close to tears congratulating them on their fine work, "because now it's over and I have to leave." Sadness that the project is complete, however, can eclipse neither the project itself, nor the love and talent of the students and their teacher who for a short time, was the special spark which brought all their effort together in its final form.

motion would not only be shown in the figures but be carried through the work from one to another. The spacing between the two 4' x 8' pieces, she explains, increases the motion. The same interval is used in a dark blue border which also helps increase the vibrancy and balance of the composition.

After the original study of motion



Joyce Hughes (left) and Pam Piper



Sandy Brooke with fifth graders



Celebration of Motion



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