

Where giants tread

Hamden has first public art commission

There's a new giant in the Land of the Sleeping Giant.
In what has been a giant community effort, the town of Hamden will soon dedicate its first public art commission.

Attached to the front wall of the Hamden Library, "The Land of the Sleeping Giant" is a stainless steel and aluminum sculpture selected from a pool of 39 submissions.



MAN OF LEISURE

John D. Allen

"My concept has a lot of imagery behind it," said David Boyajian, the New Fairfield creator of the work. "What I saw was central to Hamden was all of the nature surrounding it - the mountain, the springs that fed the different communities, mills, farms and homes."

Boyajian's design includes four arched windows - representing the four neighborhoods Mount Carmel, Whitneyville, Highwood and State Street - with leaves cascading down to an open book on a podium with a giant pen and two acorns.

"The leaves spoke specifically to nature and the arched windows are reminiscent of the observation tower [on top of Sleeping Giant State Park]," said Boyajian. "It's a strong, powerful piece whether you are 6 feet or 60 feet away. It picks up the ambient light and glows both day and night."

The \$40,000 commission including the cost for installation, was the final component of a three-year state arts grant secured by Woodbridge Democratic State Senator Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.

The grant came to the Hamden Arts Commission, who assembled a committee of 20 community members from such diverse backgrounds as the arts, library staff, elderly services, business people and town representatives.

Hamden Arts Commissioner, Mimsie Coleman, said the work was selected from a final presentation of three concepts.

"David's piece was selected since the committee liked his work and it was the most exciting piece for its purpose," said Coleman. "We also had a public opinion box with the three proposals displayed and David's proposal was the public favorite by over two to one."

Both Coleman and Boyajian spoke of the mighty oak trees throughout the town, which are indigenous to the area.

"The acorn and the oak leaves symbolize birth and growth, and from a small acorn, great things can grow. That's true with the mighty oak and true of towns and individuals," said Coleman, who noted there is no narrative in the open book. "We are all open books and we can expand our mind and spirit."

Boyajian is an established sculptor who has been teaching and working on commissions for fifteen years. His other local work includes "Harvest Gate," a free standing gate installed in 1994 along Main Street in Hartford and last week he installed "a fire hydrant with attitude" called "Hero" at New Haven's Morris Cove fire station.

"What's exciting [about Sleeping Giant] is the dramatic way it greets people as they enter the



Photo by John D. Allen

Land of the Sleeping Giant is Hamden's first public arts commission. Created by David Boyajian, a New Fairfield sculptor, pieces of the work are attached to the wall of the library complex with help from former arts commissioner and architect Marvin Michalsen.

library complex," said Coleman. "From young children to senior citizens, it's provocative and pleasing."

For information on "Land of the Sleeping Giant," contact Mimsie Coleman, Hamden Arts Commissioner, 203-287-2546.

Calling youth musicians

The Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra at Neighbor Music School still has openings for double bass, trumpet, euphonium, saxophone, trombone and tuba players. Call 203-624-5189, Michelle Maitland to arrange an audition.

How much does a giant weigh?

The Land of the Sleeping Giant, Hamden's first public art commission, weighs in with some giant proportions. The whole thing is larger than life. Hamden has a sleeping giant, so this also had to be giant:

Lectern and book - 400 pounds
Leaf sections - 80 pounds each

Pen - 40 pounds
Acorns - 10 pounds each