

Angola's Sojourner Truth statue almost complete

“

I think you're going to like this sculpture a lot”

— Sculptor Jim Haire

BY MIKE MARTURELLO

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ANGOLA — Jim Haire has gotten to know quite a bit about Sojourner Truth while working on his commission for the Downtown Angola Coalition.

Haire, an Indiana native who now hails from Fort Collins, Colorado, has spent much time researching the abolitionist and suffragette who spent about a month in Steuben County surrounding the time she gave a speech on June 2, 1861, at the Steuben County Courthouse.

In August, the Downtown Coalition was awarded a \$40,000 Women's Legacy grant from Indiana Humanities and the Office of Community Rural Affairs in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote to commission a statue of Truth. In addition to in-kind contributions, First Federal Savings Bank of Angola provided a \$15,000 donation to the project.

Grant money is also being spent on educational programs about Truth that will include schools, Trine University and a community read. Dedication of the Truth statue will be held on June 6, 2021.

“This piece has been a lot of fun to work on. Historic pieces, you get to do a lot of work learning about the person,” Haire said. “When you're working on a piece, you disassociate yourself from it. On Sojourner, I stand back and I look at it and I say, ‘yea, I kind of like this.’”

As he should. After all, his wife, Patricia, served as the model for the piece, wearing an old-fashioned dress and other garb that could have been period from the day when Sojourner Truth spent time lecturing around the country and eventually settled in the Battle Creek, Michigan, area, where she still has descendants.

The sculpture resembles many of the historic photos of Sojourner Truth that can be found on the internet. Truth has very strong features and wears simple clothing. One of the old photos shows Truth wearing a shawl with tassels, something that Haire is going to incorporate in his piece, though doing so in a fashion that will try to prevent vandalism.

“I'm going to do a little vandalism control, as much as I can,” Haire said.

The project started with a wire stick figure. Next came use of insulating foam to start building the form of Truth, followed by

molding of clay to form what will be used to make a mold for the eventual pouring of bronze to make the statue. To create the statue, Haire uses up to 200 photos of the various details of his model.

The statue, which will be life-size, some 6-feet tall, will be cast in 25-30 pieces that get welded together. The welds will be finished so they disappear into the work. After that, Haire will apply patina — a process of giving the sculpture a variety of hues before it would actually oxidize. This is done by using chemicals that mimic oxidation.

The creation of the clay model for the statue is all but complete. The entire process takes about three months.

“The sculpture is coming along well. Hopefully I will finish the body this week,” Haire said in a Nov. 18 phone interview. “I'm pretty much finished.”

When Haire packs up Sojourner Truth and heads to Angola in June, it will not be an unfamiliar ride. Each year he participates Decatur Sculpture Walk that draws dozens of works to the Adams County community. The drive takes him along Interstate 80-90 to Interstate 69, passing through Steuben County en route to Decatur.

Haire is used to his work being displayed in public places; Sojourner Truth will be on the northwest corner of the Steuben County Courtyard.

“Most of my work is for parks, libraries, city halls, that sort of thing,” he said.

He has done various golf pieces and tennis players. His 2020 entry in Decatur was a woman tennis player sitting on a bench.

“A lot of children early in my career. Libraries like kids,” he said. There is a Boy Scout on permanent display in Decatur.

As far as the Sojourner Truth sculpture that's heading to Angola, it will come with a guarantee.

“I guarantee this piece a thousand years or you get your money back. If you melt it down for a cannon, well, that won't work,” Haire quipped.

When all's said and done, he thinks the community will enjoy this new piece of permanent, public art that's coming to Angola to commemorate an important time in history, not only in 1861 but in 1920, when women won the right to vote.

“I think,” he said, “you're going to like this sculpture a lot.”



Sculptor Jim Haire works on the shawl of the Sojourner Truth statue that is being created for an installation in downtown Angola. Haire will be bringing the statue to Angola in time for the June 6, 2021, dedication.

PATRICIA HAIRE/



This is the head of the Sojourner Truth statue that's being created for a permanent installation in downtown Angola. The life-sized statue will be cast in several pieces then welded together to complete it.

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Noble County Jail Bookings

Several booked into Noble County Jail

ALBION — Several people were booked into the Noble County Jail from the morning of Monday, Nov. 23, through the morning of Monday, Nov. 30, according to jail records.

Randy L. Heltzel 27, of the 4500 block of Willard Drive, Fort Wayne, was arrested at 1:50 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, by Kendallville police on a charge of false informing/reporting, a Class B misdemeanor. Heltzel was also held on a warrant for which no charging information was provided. Heltzel was held without bond.

Cameron O. Wade, 26, of the 900 block of Villa Terrace, Kendallville, was arrested at 1:27 a.m. Tuesday by Kendallville police on charges of operating a vehicle while intoxicated with a prior conviction for that offense, a Level 6 felony; and invasion of privacy, a Class B misdemeanor. Wade was held on \$2,500 bond.

Jacqueline L. DeBoard, 50, of the 200 block of West C.R. 1050N, Rome City, was arrested at 2:56 p.m. Tuesday by Noble County police on a warrant charging a Level 6 felony. No further charging information provided. DeBoard was held on \$2,500 bond.

Kyle J. Ferrell, 27, of the 8600 block of East C.R. 500S, Wolcottville, was arrested at 9:11 a.m. Tuesday by Noble County police on a warrant charging a Level 6 felony. No further charging information provided. Ferrell was held without bond.

Tori A. Hensinger, 18, of the 1000 block of Babybu

Road, Coldwater, Michigan, was arrested at 11:21 p.m. Tuesday by Kendallville police on a charge of possession of methamphetamine. Hensinger was held on \$2,500 bond.

Dallas P. Hicks III, 32, of the 300 block of Red Oak Drive, Kendallville, was arrested at 11:21 p.m. Tuesday by Kendallville police on charges of theft-motor vehicle, resisting law enforcement, a Class A misdemeanor; and four warrants for which no charging information was provided. Hicks was held on \$2,500 bond.

Brandon L. Mable, 24, of the 300 block of Willowbrook Drive, Kendallville, was arrested at 4:21 p.m. Tuesday by Noble County police on a warrant charging a Level 6 felony. No further charging information provided. Mable was held without bond.

Jeremy N. Church, 35, of the 1800 block of Maple Lane, Garrett, was arrested at 6:07 p.m. Wednesday by Kendallville police on charges of possession of methamphetamine and possession of paraphernalia, and two warrants charging failure to appear for court, a Level 6 felony. Church was held without bond.

Whitney D. Tackett, 29, of the Serenity House, Albion, was arrested at 1:55 p.m. Wednesday by Noble County police on a warrant. Tackett was held on \$1,000 bond.

Lance S. Norton, 45, of the 200 block of South Albany Street, Wolcottville, was arrested at 5:20 p.m. Thursday on a warrant. No charging information

provided. Norton was held on \$2,500 bond.

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