

# Main Street's Sojourner Truth project coming to completion

## Lighting was the final touch for sculpture

BY MIKE MARTURELLO

mmarturello@kpcmedia.com

ANGOLA — Lighting is now in place to keep the Sojourner Truth sculpture shining for all to see no matter what the time of day.

The Downtown Angola Coalition, now Angola Main Street, recently secured a donation to pay for the lighting, which is solar powered, and installed it.

The lighting includes some purple lights. Purple was the color of suffrage movement in the United States.

The life-size bronze statue of Sojourner Truth was made possible by a \$40,000 Preserving Women's Legacy Grant from Indiana Humanities and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, and a \$15,000 pledge from First Federal Savings Bank of Angola that was granted to the Downtown Angola Coalition.

The land was made available by the Steuben County Board of Commissioners.

"The celebration of women in our community needs to continue. Everyday, everywhere women are caring, raising children, working, and volunteering to make our community the best place to be," said Colleen Everage, president of Angola Main Street.

Main Street chose to honor Sojourner Truth because she defied laws at the time and spoke on the porch of the Steuben County Courthouse in June 1861. She was believed to have spoken as many as five times on abolition and women's rights in Steuben County.

Projects celebrating women have continued beyond the commissioning and installation of the Sojourner Truth sculpture.

"Every year our Main Street, along with other community partners plan to have projects that celebrate women. The Sojourner Truth sculpture is a constant reminder that all of us can choose to overcome, and be vigilant in the face of adversity. Her story is one I am glad to share with my own daughter," Everage said. "This years Main Street women's



CONTRIBUTED

**Sojourner Truth is shown at night after lighting was installed at the downtown Angola sculpture. The lighting includes some purple lights. This was the color of the suffragette movement in**

project is an 8 foot mural that over 60 women worked on with Janelle Slone at Relic Emporium. It will soon be displayed at the Steuben Community Center."

Main Street is involved in other projects, but the annual celebration of Women's Week in May has been enduring.

"These projects help build community and have a ripple effect," Everage said. "Now is a great time to mobilize and enrich our community as much as possible for our children and all who live here. We look forward to many more projects."

If you want to get involved with Main Street or want to champion a project or event, contact the group at info@downtownangola.org or call 668-2643.

## Community Calendar

### Sunday, Nov. 20

- New Beginnings for Narcotics Anonymous, First Congregational United Church of Christ, 314 W. Maumee St., Angola, 6 p.m.

### Monday, Nov. 21

- Little River Chapter of the Sweet Adelines, Fairview Missionary Church, 525 E C.R. 200N., Angola, 6-9 p.m.
- Essential Oils Class, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 6:30 p.m.
- Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Pizza Hut, 1411 N. Wayne St., Angola, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, Nov. 22

- ImagiKnit, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 9 a.m. to noon.
- Well Child Clinic, Steuben Community Center, 317 S. Wayne St, Angola, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 101 Lakes Duplicate Bridge Club, Angola Moose Lodge, 108 N. Martha St., Angola, 12:15 p.m.

### Wednesday, Nov. 23

- Knit@Night, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 4-6 p.m.
- VFW Auxiliary meeting, VFW Post 7205, 2013 N. Wayne St., Angola, 7 p.m.

### Thursday, Nov. 24

Happy Thanksgiving!

### Friday, Nov. 25

- Santa and Mrs. Claus come to town, Sutton's 160 Event Center, 160 Public Square, Angola, 5:30 p.m.

### Sunday, Nov. 27

- New Beginnings for Narcotics Anonymous, First Congregational United Church of Christ, 314 W. Maumee St., Angola, 6 p.m.

### Monday, Nov. 28

- Little River Chapter of the Sweet Adelines, Fairview Missionary Church, 525 E C.R. 200N., Angola, 6-9 p.m.
- Essential Oils Class, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 6:30 p.m.
- Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Pizza Hut, 1411 N. Wayne St., Angola, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, Nov. 29

- ImagiKnit, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 9 a.m. to noon.
- Well Child Clinic, Steuben Community Center, 317 S. Wayne St, Angola, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 101 Lakes Duplicate Bridge Club, Angola Moose Lodge, 108 N. Martha St., Angola, 12:15 p.m.

### Wednesday, Nov. 30

- Knit@Night, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 4-6 p.m.

The Downtown Angola Coalition was one of three organizations in the state to receive a Preserving Women's Legacy Grant from the state in 2020, the 100th year anniversary of Women's Suffrage in the United States. The other two grants were made to organizations in Peru and Michigan City.

Meanwhile, a documentary featuring interviews with people involved with the Angola project is being produced by Tear Drop Pictures, Indianapolis. There will be short videos on each project and one with Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, who oversees OCRA, and a feature-length documentary that focuses on all Women's Legacy projects.

The documentaries are expected to be released in January.

- VFW Auxiliary meeting, VFW Post 7205, 2013 N. Wayne St., Angola, 7 p.m.

### Sunday, Dec. 4

- New Beginnings for Narcotics Anonymous, First Congregational United Church of Christ, 314 W. Maumee St., Angola, 6 p.m.

### Monday, Dec. 5

- Little River Chapter of the Sweet Adelines, Fairview Missionary Church, 525 E C.R. 200N., Angola, 6-9 p.m.
- Essential Oils Class, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 6:30 p.m.
- Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Pizza Hut, 1411 N. Wayne St., Angola, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, Dec. 6

- ImagiKnit, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 9 a.m. to noon.
- Well Child Clinic, Steuben Community Center, 317 S. Wayne St, Angola, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 101 Lakes Duplicate Bridge Club, Angola Moose Lodge, 108 N. Martha St., Angola, 12:15 p.m.

### Wednesday, Dec. 7

- Knit@Night, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, 322 S. Wayne St., Angola, 4-6 p.m.
- VFW Auxiliary meeting, VFW Post 7205, 2013 N. Wayne St., Angola, 7 p.m.

## Essay contest winners

FROM STAFF REPORTS

ANGOLA — As work on the Sojourner Truth project by Angola Main Street concludes, and in celebration of what would have been Truth's 225th birthday on Friday, essays penned for Sojourner Truth Week in Angola in 2021 are being published.

The two winning essays were written by Ava Budak, a ninth-grader at the time, and her

father, Robert Budak, a teacher at Angola Middle School.

The two were provided cash prizes for their efforts.

A life-size sculpture of Sojourner Truth is located in front of the Steuben County Courthouse, 55 S. Public Square, Angola.

The sculpture was created by James Haire of Colorado. It was dedicated on June 6, 2021.

## A woman willing to fight

BY AVA BOUDAK

We go about our days not realizing what we have. We have roofs over our heads and

floors under our feet. We have food to eat and a place to rest when the day is done. Not recognizing it, these are privileges. We have the privilege to be in control of our own lives and make decisions for ourselves. One hundred and fifty years ago, things were not the same. Some people were underprivileged and were treated like animals. Slaves don't remain, but this wouldn't be without a few influential people in history, who stood up for what they knew was right. One of these people was a black woman by the name of Sojourner Truth.

Sojourner Truth was born in 1797 in Ulster County, New York and she went by the name of Isabella Baumfree. Around age 9, she was sold in an auction with a flock of sheep. She worked through tough conditions like beatings and hard labor, typical for a slave. Her owner compelled her to marry an older slave in her teens, and together they had 5 kids.

Her owner broke a promise to Sojourner to free her, and so she escaped with her daughter. After Truth escaped, she learned that her son was illegally sold to a master in Alabama. Truth went to court fighting for her son, and she won! This was the first time in history that a black woman challenged a white man and succeeded. Isabella then changed her name to Sojourner Truth. She began believing in the Christian religion after she started working for a Christian evangelist. After working for another traumatic man, she turned her focus to the abolition of slavery.

Sojourner Truth became a woman's rights activist and took the challenge of changing the United States upon herself. Truth spoke to large crowds and became well known as an abolitionist leader. Truth attended the first National Women's Rights Convention. She talked about human equality and slavery. Here, Sojourner Truth gave her famous

speech.

Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I A Woman" speech that she delivered in 1851 is one of the most powerful speeches in the fight for women's rights. Truth said, "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?" This is extremely striking because she says how women are expected to be treated, but she isn't treated like that, and isn't she a woman? The treatment that she was getting wasn't meeting those requirements!

Human rights should be a given! We should all have the right to be educated, own property, vote, earn money, and live without violence and discrimination. Imagine living without one of these things. Life would be hard! It would not be easy to get by without a high school diploma. Imagine everybody going to a voting poll on election day and not getting to voice your opinion. Humans are not objects, and we all should have freedom. It would be harder for all people, men and women, black and white, to go about their lives without rights. We wouldn't be standing here today where we are in terms of rights without Sojourner Truth. She was an activist that was indispensable to us. Without Sojourner Truth, the world would not be as we know it today. She stood up for what was right and led many people to join with her and fight for women's rights. All women can now vote and are equal to men more than ever.

When you wake up tomorrow morning, think about the freedoms that you have, and what you can do. Compare your life to Sojourner Truth's and think about how vital she is to your daily life. I challenge you to start the day from a new perspective, thinking about where you are, and where your country is, and how we got here.

## A star speaks the Truth

BY ROBERT BUDAK

In 1797, a star was born. This person was a star to the idea of equality. This person believed in gender and race equality. This star was Isabella Baumfree.

Isabella was born in 1797 to enslaved parents in Ulster County, New York. She was first sold, around age nine for \$100. The sale included a flock of sheep. She was sold a few more times before she ended up being bought by a man named John Dumont.

If Isabella worked hard and did what he said, John promised to set her free on July 4th, 1826. That never happened. John went back on his word. After fulfilling what she thought was her obligation, Isabella walked away and was taken in by a couple. This is where the story of freedom began and after her conversion to Christianity, she changed her name to Sojourner Truth.

She traveled around the country, advocating for women and people of color. In May of 1861, Sojourner Truth spoke on the steps of our courthouse. Although she was not warmly welcomed, she stood her ground amongst ridicule and spoke for the ideas and rights that she thought were just. I have two daughters. My hope is that they turn out to be strong women. My hope is that they are not afraid to stand up and speak out for what they believe is right. One of my daughters is ironically named Isabella also.

Just down the road from our house in Pleasant Lake is the old property of a Steuben County abolitionist named Horatio Roby. Sojourner Truth stayed the night at his house before her speech in Angola. As a result of this he was arrested for "harboring a negro". Although there is no record that it was ever brought to trial, it causes me to get lost in thought while

on my evening runs. As I pass the plots of land owned by Horatio, I feel a sense of pride of how far we have come. It also makes me realize how far we still have to go. Regardless, that piece of land just down the road causes reflection during the warm summers evenings as I run by. Horatio invited and sheltered her during her visit. Just like her, he was not afraid to take a stand with a strong opinion in a respectful manner. It reminds me of how far we have come, but yet how far we still have to go. It reminds me that we still need people who are not afraid to take a stand and do what they feel is right yet today.

It is fitting that we will place a statue just steps away from where she spoke on our courthouse steps. It is there that she can stand and look at the monument that commemorates the Civil War, a war where she actively recruited black soldiers to serve. A war that fought for the freedoms that everyone deserves. Atop our Civil War monument stands Columbia, the goddess of liberty. She faces east so that she can watch the sun rise on our nation. Out of the corner of her right eye she will be able to see a real life goddess. She will be able to see someone who is adored. She will be able to see a star in OUR story of liberty.

Our monument is the centerpiece of our Fourth of July Parade. On July 4th, 1861 Sojourner Truth was promised freedom, it seems just that we give her a great view of our parade every year. She will be watching our celebration of liberty all while standing in front of our courthouse that protects our rights as citizens of the United States of America.