

Connellsville artist's work first in series of courthouse displays

By Marilyn Forbes

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In an effort to showcase the talent of area artists, the Fayette County Courthouse Law Library will be hosting displays featuring the works and creations of local painters, sculpturer, and craftsman.

Every few months, a different area artist will be highlighted in the front library showcase.

Connellsville artist Helen Alt is the first artist selected for the ongoing display.

"We wanted to display artists from the area and for this display we decided to do Ms. Alt," assistant Law Librarian Barbara Pasqua said. "We hope to display a different artist every two months."

Alt has been painting for years and enjoys the freedom of expression and passion that she can capture on canvas.

"I love to paint and I'll continue as long as I am able," said Alt, 90.

Alt's work has graced the covers of the five volume's of "County Chronicles," historical works penned by author Ceane O'Hanlon Lincoln. It is a print of one of these covers that hangs in the library.

"We thought of her because of the picture of hers that we have had hanging here," Pasqua said of the print "The Courting Buggy" that is showcased on the cover of "County Chronicles Volume 3."

The display consists of Alt's print, a small biography of the artist and a copy of the book.

"We decided to do this and I just looked up on the wall and her painting was there so we thought she'd be perfect," Pasqua said.

Alt's work has been exhibited extensively in the area and throughout the state.

Her work was displayed in shows at the Westmoreland Museum of Art, The Capitol Rotunda, Pennsylvania State University, Eberly Campus, Alex Fletcher Memorial Art Center, Shippensburg State University, California University of Pennsylvania, RSVP in the North Hills, Gallery-Space in Monroeville and the Philip Dressler Center of the Arts in Somerset.

Alt received a fine arts scholarship from the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. She has also worked with local artists Sue Pollins and Joan Croft-Jones and has studied with Sybilla Spurgeon of Uniontown for seven years.

Alt attended art workshops with Nat Youngblood and Joseph Shepler and recently completed credited courses at Penn State Eberly Campus.

She is also active in both the Uniontown and Laurel Arts clubs.

Alt has received commissions for her work from several clients, including Joseph Hardy of 84 Lumber who enjoyed Alt's depiction of early life in Connellsville.

Alt works in numerous forms of media such as oils, pastels, charcoal and watercolors, and enjoys creating portraits.

"The display is colorful and beautiful and you can identify what it is that she painted," Fayette County Law Librarian Barry Blaine said.

Alt's work will be showcased now through June and is displayed in the Law Library of the Fayette County Courthouse, located on the second floor.

The library is open to the public.