

## Fayette Courthouse law library display features local artisans

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Upon entering the law library in the Fayette County Courthouse, visitors are greeted with works of art and original literature. Focusing on the history and the talent of the area, assistant law librarian Barbara Pasqua integrates the two, showcasing art and works of historical significance. "I hope to tie the artwork with the history of places and events in Fayette County," Pasqua said. "There are a lot of wonderfully talented artists in our area."

The display opened this summer with a display of artwork created by Connellsville resident Helen Alt. Alt, who is well known in the area for her paintings, had art work and a biography displayed for approximately four weeks.

The next artist was Connellsville author Ceane O'Hanlon Lincoln, whose award-winning "County Chronicles" book series features dozens of stories based in Fayette County.

"The displays have worked out nicely," Pasqua said. "People seem to like seeing the different items that we have featured." The third in the series displays the history and the development of the Sheepskin Trail and features the wood carvings of Peter Pasqua, whose statues and walking sticks dot the interior and walls of the library. "We wanted to display art that would relate to the trail," Peter Pasqua said. Peter Pasqua, who has been carving for only eight years, took up the hobby as a means to pass time, and now finds himself working daily on his new-found passion. "I try to work a few hours every day if I can," he said of the woodcarving that he does at home. Pasqua works with his carvings when he has free time. "I generally use bass or butternut, but I have used cherry and walnut in the past," he said. "I'll really try about any wood that is conducive to carving."

Admiring the creativity of other artists was the spark that led Peter Pasqua to try his hand at carving. "I always admired the way that an artist could take a piece of marble or a block of wood and eventually make something out of it," he said. Finding that he had a knack for the art, Pasqua has won awards for his creations and continues to carve, transforming wood into wonders. "My first piece was a little relief carving that I did of a tomahawk," he said. "I drew the pattern on the wood and carved it out. When I was done, I looked at it and said 'I think I can do this.'" Pasqua has moved on to create commissioned pieces, carves pencils and key chains and makes walking sticks, featuring whimsical woodland spirits. Self-taught, Pasqua still works at his trade as he studies books, researches techniques and searches the Internet for information and ideas. Pasqua once had a buyer donate to charity in lieu of commission. "I didn't know what to ask, so I told him to make a donation to the Salvation Army," he said. "I like to think that now, every time he passes a Salvation Army that he still gives." Peter Pasqua's work will be displayed throughout the month of September.

Another artist, a patron of the library, will have his watercolors displayed in October.

"We'd like to feature one new artist every month," Barbara Pasqua said. "We want to support the local arts and showcase the history here. There is so much rich history and talent right here in the county, and we'd like to help to bring some of that talent to the attention of the public." The public may view the artwork and visit the library any time during regular courthouse hours.

