

## New art piece part of BBIA's Street Art Project



By **Mike Riley**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Bancroft Business Improvement Association revealed in a posting on their Facebook page on Aug. 25 that there is a new art piece on the side wall of one of the town's local businesses, part of the BBIA's Street Art Project. The art piece, by Bancroft artist Mike van Roon, is a vividly coloured picture of a sparrow that is now proudly displayed on the north wall of local business Alice's Pantry.

This art piece called Sparrow by van Roon is part of the BBIA's Street Art Project. The piece was prepared for the outdoors and mounted on the wall by It Stix Signs and Graphics Inc. The BBIA's board of management executive director Jody Yantha says that the Street Art Project will include creating a page on their website, [www.DiscoverBancroft.com](http://www.DiscoverBancroft.com), that will catalogue all the existing street art, along with new pieces.

?The website will include information about the pieces and the artists. The BBIA feels that street art has many benefits such as; public art makes people happy and it adds vibrancy to the street. All at once it can be beautiful, clever and inspiring. It's an expression of culture and identity that fosters social connection. It is a way of introducing people to art and appreciating art. It is a great way to encourage both visitors and residents to explore streets and alleyways, which connect people to the environment and engages them in healthy outdoor activity. This also helps to create a safer community. A source of pride, inclusive and accessible, art transforms public space in unexpected ways,? she says.

Yantha says that van Roon responded to the call for submissions, which asked for a variety of works that expressed the heart, spirit and soul of Bancroft. She says it was an existing watercolour piece that was adapted for the project so it didn't take too long to have it ready.

The BBIA board's project committee has been actively seeking host locations for the artwork, according to Yantha, and the hosts were provided with renderings of the submissions that were approved by the committee to choose from.

?The owners at 99 Hastings St. [where Alice's Pantry is located] were delighted to have Mike's impressionistic sparrow for their wall and there was little doubt it was the perfect location,? she says.

Alice Martin, the owner of Alice's Pantry, confirms this, saying that her landlord had approached her about the art and they were both great with the idea. She also mentions It Stix Signs and Graphics Inc., who also did the graphics for the front windows of her business. She reveals they were easy to deal with, so supportive and very professional.

?It's great that [the BBIA] want to do small things to improve the downtown and the small businesses within it. That's what they're all about and it feels like they're doing that and that's really nice,? she says.

Accepted contributions to the Street Art Project will receive a minimum \$100 honorarium. For more information or to submit an entry, email [creativecoordinatorbancroft@gmail.com](mailto:creativecoordinatorbancroft@gmail.com).

Yantha says that the BBIA has had an outpouring of positive feedback about the pieces that have been installed so far, 20 pieces and counting, and they plan to place as many pieces as the budget will allow for the project. She says that the BBIA was able to obtain a grant for the public art and they'll be thrilled to announce the funder supporting it shortly.

?We invite and encourage artists of all ages and abilities to submit art for the project, however there is a tight deadline for completion of this project, the deadline is fast approaching and the weather will also become a factor,? she says.

Andrea Humeniuk has lived in Bancroft a couple of years and is the owner of Local Goods Bancroft.

?I either walk or drive past the art piece's location every morning. I noticed it right away and I'm happy to see some new public art downtown,? she says. ?It's a great way to brighten up a blank wall and our town.?