





Karen Schevenius's lighthouse, inspired by the Milbridge Theatre, is one of 10 wooden lighthouses painted by local artists. ELLSWORTH AMERICAN PHOTOS BY JOHANNA S. BILLINGS

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Shining a light

August 15, 2019 by Johanna S. Billings on Arts & living, Lifestyle



MILBRIDGE — In July, Anthony Surratt of Milbridge spent a lot of time in his kitchen with a large wooden lighthouse. It had actually stood on a kitchen counter but, by late June, it had been moved to the floor.

About 7 feet tall, the tower's bottom was easier for the local artist to paint puffins on it while it sat on the counter. When he reached the top, the piece moved to the floor.

Surratt, who calls his lighthouse "101 Puffins," is one of 10 Downeast artists who have transformed same-sized wooden lighthouses into vibrant, beckoning beacons to catch the eye of motorists and visitors and distinguish their community.

Gateway Milbridge, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the eastern Washington County town's historic downtown, sponsored the art project. The group acquired the 10 undecorated lighthouses through grant funds.

The concept is to create "a high-impact, visual arts display that enhances the town's appearance and brings recognition to area artists" and benefit local businesses in the process.

The completed pieces are now displayed along Route 1 running through town.

"We wanted to do something that had been different that would bring people to the community," said Gateway Milbridge Chairman Richard Bondurant.

The lighthouses will remain on display until Aug. 23, when they will be moved to the Seaworthy Event Center for a public reception starting at 6 p.m. During the event, they will be sold via silent auction with the proceeds benefitting the ongoing Milbridge Theatre reconstruction.

For hers, Surratt's neighbor, Joanne Halpin attached small colored scraps of paper in several shades of blue to her lighthouse. Mixed in were fragments of a Maine map, with towns such as Milbridge, Ellsworth and Bangor visible.



Artists Joanne Halpin combined blue scraps of paper and fragments of a Maine map to adorn her lighthouse.

Halpin, known for creating multimedia pieces depicting sailboats and seascapes, calls her lighthouse “Out of the Blue.”

Maeve Perry decorated the third lighthouse, “A Sailor’s Tale,” which features two mermaids in an ocean scene.

“Growing Toward the Light” is the title of Ora Aselton’s lighthouse, which features irises in bloom.

Karen Schevenieus’s lighthouse honors the Milbridge Theatre and is painted accordingly with popcorn and other fitting elements. Her piece called “Theatre” is appropriately installed in front of the theater.

Janie Snider’s “The Views at McClellan Park” pays tribute to Milbridge’s McClellan Park summer programs. Driftwood and real rock cairns adorn the base.

Reneen Freeman’s “This Little Light of Mine” features striking white designs and lettering on a black background.

Jellyfish seem to climb the lighthouse by the same name, done by artist Ken Graslie, whose work can be found in many private collections throughout the country.

Heidi Beal has been a lifelong admirer of lighthouses, choosing them as the subject for her Milbridge lighthouse, “Bold Coast Beacons.”

Sculptor Ray Carbone and Nicole DeBarber teamed up to create the lighthouse titled “Flight,” which features the white outline of an owl on a blue background.

A Facebook platform will be set up soon so people can vote for their favorite lighthouses. The winning artist will receive a cash prize and a lighthouse pendant donated by Striking Gold in Ellsworth, Bondurant said. To learn more, visit milbridgetheatre.org.

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