

Times

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A man of many artistic talents



Freda Glow
COMMUNITY
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH END

I first met James Culleton at the unveiling of a mural he painted in shades of blue and white, depicting special people and activities of the Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre at Syd Glow Place.

This non-profit organization has become a popular fixture in Winnipeg's North End and caters to the needs of the area's older population. Once called The Golden Age Club, it was organized in the 1940s and finally found its "forever home" in 1988, at the former tire store at Smithfield Avenue and Main Street.

Culleton, 47, says he and Gwen Sector program co-ordinator Dan Saidman put their heads together to create the design of the mural, a historic document that covers the south wall of the building. Saidman was well aware of the artist's skill, as Culleton was once artist-in-residence at an art gallery Saidman operated many years ago.

The talented painter's biggest mural was a 60x500-foot birch tree forest for Club Regent Casino. His latest work was a "snofa" for Festival du Voyageur, a snow sculpture of a sofa

with the head of a bison. He's also proud of a 25-foot tall moose of plywood, rope and LED lights that he made for the Zoo Lights festival at Assiniboine Park.

The multi-media artist described another sculpture of a galloping horse — a creation of rope and lights, which he says is a simple animation. The versatile artisan, who is much in demand, has also designed many unusual trophies for groups around the city.

A professional artist and master craftsman for the past 20 years, Culleton's art has been exhibited across Canada. He's also an award-winning furniture designer and has created works for Palliser and La-Z-Boy. A future project will encompass furniture designs for the *Property Brothers* of HGTV fame.

Culleton was born in Winnipeg and educated at the University of Manitoba, where he earned a fine arts degree. He's a family man with a teenage son and daughter and he's also a musician who writes his own songs, and just released an album called *Unusual Friendships*. Backed by a local band, he sings French translations of children's folk stories written by his aunt, Beatrice Mosionier, one of Canada's famous writers.

Presently, Culleton is teaching an online drawing class for Gwen Sector seniors. In the past, he has taught classes for the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Forum Art Centre and has done live painting at The Forks.

Culleton said he's been doing a lot of online activities during the COVID-19, which



Supplied photo

Multi-disciplinary artist, designer and musician James Culleton created the mural on the south wall of the Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre.

doesn't faze him one bit, as he says he usually spends a lot of time working on his own, but admits that he misses the social contacts.

Freda Glow is a community correspondent for the North End.

St. Johns women deserve a strong 'she-covery'



Nahanni Fontaine
ST. JOHNS MLA
CONSTITUENCY
REPORT

I commemorated International Women's Day, which was celebrated on March 8, by attending a vigil for 29-year-old Jana Williams along with my colleague Uzoma Asagwara, MLA for Union Station.

Jana was pregnant with her third child when she was murdered and her remains were left near the Red River. This heartbreaking loss is all too familiar for Indigenous families — in St. Johns and across the province — as our women, girls, and two-spirit people continue to be under attack.

International Women's Day isn't just about niceties or posting to social media, it's a day to commit to action and actually do something to tackle the myriad of issues women face. Women's rights is not just a St.

Johns issue. Around the world, women have been bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic and I've spoken to many St. Johns women who have been struggling this year in a variety of ways.

The statistics don't lie. Women were more likely to lose their jobs during the pandemic and remain more likely to be working in high-risk front-line jobs, like in health care, as teachers, as cleaners or as cashiers.

Women also deal with archaic gender roles that put the pressure of family responsibilities like home schooling, childcare, and caring for aging loved ones on their shoulders.

Unfortunately, the Pallister government has made it harder for women to weather this pandemic. They've cut health care and education year after year, they refuse to implement a living wage, and now they're trying to redirect public childcare funds towards for-profit facilities. On top of all this, we have a health minister who refuses to take responsibility for reproductive health,

which affects all Manitobans but especially women.

St. Johns women are strong and resilient, but they still need a government that is on their side and looking out for their best interests. So far, the Pallister government seems to have no plan to ensure women recover from this pandemic, so I'll offer a few suggestions I've heard from women in our community — establish universal childcare, institute a living wage for all Manitobans, or simply do the bare minimum of reversing your disastrous cuts of the last five years.

The NDP caucus will continue to stand up for the rights of Manitoban women and call on the Pallister government to develop a strong 'she-covery' plan.

If you'd like to reach out to me, please contact my 1763 Main St. office by calling 204-582-1550 or emailing nahanni.fontaine@yourmanitoba.ca