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The Wadsworth Area Historical Newsletter

Volume 8

DECEMBER 2022

Issue 9

Jhonattan Arango, the Story of a Muralist *By Roger L. Havens*

If you visited downtown Wadsworth over the past two months you may have spotted an artist on a portable scaffold brushing brilliant paints onto the side of a wall in the business district. His name, Jhonattan Arango, a visitor from West Palm Beach, Florida. He was the latest artist to be commissioned by Main Street Wadsworth to bring beauty and vibrance to the downtown area. The goal: to transform neglected and drab block walls into works of art. Jhonattan, or simply 'Jhon' to those who stopped and chatted with him, earned the mural project through competitive bids submitted to the Design Committee of Main Street Wadsworth. The mural program started several years ago when private citizens and corporations made financial donations to this cause. No taxpayer monies are used for these murals.

Jhonattan's story began early in life. He was born in Cuba and his family immigrated to the USA in 1995. This was one of those years when Castro allowed anyone who desired to leave Cuba to do so. In order to enter the USA, the individual or family had to have family members who were already citizens and would sponsor them. His family had the proper connections and his family settled in Union City, New Jersey across from Manhattan, New York. Jhonattan was twelve years old and was middle school age. He had a keen interest in art at school;

however, he was insecure of his blossoming talent during his teenage years. He stated that he had an art teacher that would not give up on him as she helped develop his talent.

Alas, after high school he joined the navy and served 5 years as a medic on a hospital ship during the years. He stated that the ship was the 7th largest floating hospital and equaled the length of three football fields!

He exited his military service and settled in Jacksonville and then on to West Palm Beach. His passion for art resurfaced and he went into the world of graphic design. He designed logos, hand painted signs and helped businesses find their identities through the designs he created for them. He now has his own studio in Florida and has branched out to create murals for businesses and communities. His wife, Samantha, trolls the internet looking for entities desiring large murals. She happened upon Main Street Wadsworth's request and submitted samples of Jhonattan's work. The Design Committee was fascinated by his unique artistic style: using triangles in his artwork that gives a 3-D impression of the characters.



His submitted artwork had a tropical look and did not fit into the Wadsworth scene; however, he did a mock up design that included a cardinal (Ohio's state bird) and the image of Albert Ayer, the Godfather of Free Jazz, who was born in Shaker Heights, Ohio. The Main Street Wadsworth approved of having him paint BOTH murals in two different locations: one in the renovated Watrusa Avenue parking lot and the other on the backside of the Bucher Building (Frontier Building). The mural can be viewed when visiting the Huntington Bank drive thru! The two different murals are actually one lengthy mural split in half. The words "Music is..." appears on the Watrusa mural and "...the Healing Force" on the Frontier Building. The Watrusa mural is 37' long and 14' tall; the Frontier wall is 53' long and 17' tall. Each mural took three weeks to paint.

Jhonattan left Wadsworth the day after Thanksgiving. This was his first mural that he has painted in Ohio and he delighted in the small town visit and all the friendly people he encountered. Previously, he painted murals in Texas, Colorado, Florida and Montana. He and his wife have a three-year-old son named Sagan. His wife and son stayed in the area while the first mural was being painted. Sagan totally enjoyed visiting the Kaleidoscope Playground on Grandview Avenue!



Jhonattan & Samantha Arango



Jhonattan Arango, Muralist



**Finished
Murals**



Wadsworth's Outdoor Art Gallery

As the 2022 year comes to a close, and two murals were painted on walls in downtown Wadsworth, it may be time to reflect on the 'art' that adorns the downtown streets. Let's start with the celebration of Wadsworth's Bicentennial in **2014**. A committee was formed to investigate the possibility of installing a Boy with a Leaky Boot statue and fountain that once existed in the North Park strip on High Street. It was placed there in the early 1900's and was taken down in the 1940's as its metal was needed for the war effort. The city of Sandusky was approached to see whether their statue could be borrowed so a mold of it could be made. A fundraising drive took place in which school children brought in pennies and other coins for the cause. Corporate sponsors and individuals donated money. Finally, there was enough money collected to have someone pour and cast the statue out of bronze. An artisan by the name of Jim Havens from the Sandusky area took on this project. The statue was dedicated on Memorial Day in 2014 during the annual parade.

The next piece of artwork was installed in **2018** at the corner of High and College Streets. A beautiful clock that emits wonderful classical songs is enjoyed by anyone walking in that vicinity. The clock was custom made with selected architectural details, shape, color, size, etc. Several Wadsworth families donated the money to add this prize at a highly traveled intersection.

2018, Paulette Grubb of Wadsworth had her artwork selected to appear on the wall in the alley on the west side of High Street. She painted a series of free-standing murals of old scenes that once existed in the downtown area in the late 1800's and early 1900's. These were on display during the bicentennial in 2014 and citizens were very impressed with their quality and realism. She modified these scenes and added several more. Photographs were taken of the originals and were printed on an adhesive film. The film was heat transferred to the block wall so it could adhere to the contour of the blocks. These were placed on the wall in **2019**. In 2019 she painted several more scenes to fill the length of the wall and they were installed in **2020**. The Paulette Grubb Art Gallery has been a popular location for locals and visitors alike to see scenes out of Wadsworth's past! There are 7 murals in her series.

The next murals were painted directly on neglected or barren walls starting in **2019**. To kick off the series, one of the largest walls in town was selected. The brick wall, located along Wright Drive next to CIS, was the first mural to be commissioned.

The winning entry focused on a couple of manufacturing companies that were located on or near Main Street that helped the prosperity of Wadsworth in the early 20th century. The companies were the Ohio Injector, the Ohio Match and the Wadsworth Salt Company. At one time in history these companies employed thousands of people! Many visitors have done selfies and photo ops in front of this immense piece of artwork!

During this same year in **2019**, a pop-up mural appeared in the south end next to Rainbow Street. The mural was painted in a couple of days and is in what is considered 'graffiti art'. The theme appears to be the Cleveland Browns with the skyline of Cleveland in the background. Brownie the Elf is pictured on an entrance door to the building. This mural was not commissioned by Main Street Wadsworth.



In the year **2021**, the alley located on the south side of Broad Street downtown was a selected site for a mural. A space theme was selected to commemorate Wadsworth's connection to the NASA space program via home-grown Astronaut Mike Foreman. He made several trips in the Shuttle to the International Space Station. Both sides of the alley were utilized. Mike Foreman visited Wadsworth during a dedication ceremony. The hope is that children of Wadsworth will be inspired to 'reach for the stars!'

Another crop-up mural appeared on North Pardee just north of the College Street intersection in **2022** when adults assisted local teenagers in painting a 'graffiti art' mural on the side of a building where they meet during the week.

The most recent murals were added over the past two months in **2022**. Muralists were asked to produce interpretive art that immerses the observer into the art so he/she can find their own meanings and interpretations. The Watrusa theme was to include a musical slant since this area MAY become a music events area in the future. Vibrant colors that exude a fun and exciting atmosphere were requirements. Jhonattan Arango's proposal met all the criteria!

The Wadsworth's Outdoor Art Gallery continues to grow each year! A visit to Woodlawn Cemetery, less than a block from downtown Wadsworth, enhances the Art Gallery experience with the display of various sculpted statues such as the Curtis Monument, John McGregor Monument, the bronze Civil War Soldier Monument, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Simon Elliott monument, the mausoleums and all the unique hand-carved tombstones that are truly works of art!



Boy with the Leaky Boot Statue



High Street Clock





**Paulette Grubb with Mural
Sub Station Wall**



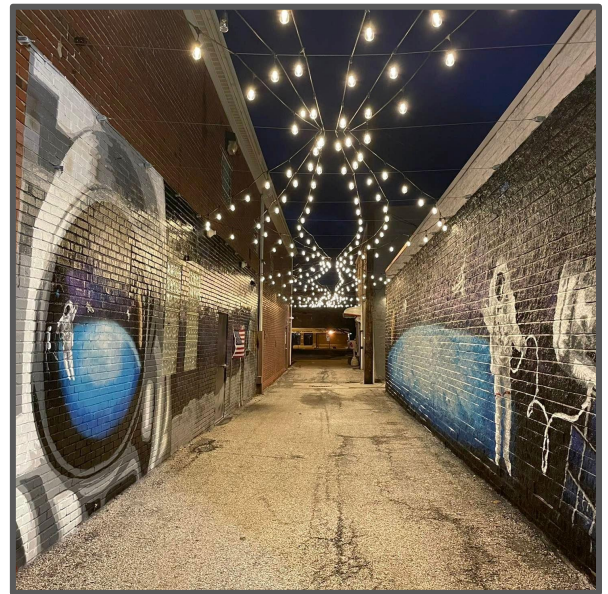
**Injector, Salt and Match Companies
on Main Street**



Browns South End Graffiti Mural



Teen Center, North Pardee Graffiti Art



A Tribute to Mike Foreman - Strand Alley

News and Updates

-This month's article was written by Roger Havens as we give Dr. Carrino the month off. He will be writing January's article and will reflect on the 50th anniversary of the old Centralized Township School which eventually was renamed Isham Memorial School.

- December's meeting will be held December 14th and the program is a presentation on a Victorian Christmas. Feel free to dress in your Victorian dress! The meeting begins at 7:30.

-A WAHS fundraiser will be held on Jan Mon., January 23 from 11 AM to 9:00 PM at Casa de Rio Restaurant located on High Street. All participants have to do is visit this restaurant and order food and drink! Either eat inside or get a take-away order and the owner of the restaurant will donate back to WAHS 25% of your total bill! Enjoy Casa food and it benefits WAHS- how easy is that! You must hand the cashier a flyer when paying your bill to identify yourself as being associated with WAHS. A flyer will be sent to you prior to this event. IF you forget a flier, one will be available at the restaurant.

-The WAHS sponsored a horse and carriage for Wadsworth's Candlelight Walk. Approximately 50 people experienced the ride that looped throughout the downtown. Main Street Wadsworth organized the Candlelight Walk. Close to 200 visited the museum and enjoyed fresh donuts as they observed the displays throughout the house.

-A big 'thank you' goes out to Dennis Roth and Tim Cole who set up a mini Polar Express model train in the museum for the Candlelight Walk Night and December's First Friday.

-There will be **NO** First Fridays in January, February and March that will involve the museum. These nights will be movie nights held at O. J. Work Auditorium for families. January's movie is **Frozen**. Please check out the details on Main Street Wadsworth's website or Facebook sites.

-There will be NO meeting and program in January! Historically, there is not a large turnout. February 8th meeting will begin at 7:30 pm at the Wadsworth Library and will be the History of the Buildings located in downtown Wadsworth. It is hoped that downtown Wadsworth will be officially on the National Register of Historic Districts.

-Are you looking for a unique gift for a friend or relative? There are a variety of history books available at the museum for a donation. Last year there was a run on the Wadsworth Homicides book and so far this year people are seeking out the Wadsworth Heritage book that was originally written in 1964 and updated in 1998. It is the most comprehensive history book of Wadsworth's early beginnings. Asking donation price: \$20 each.

-Roger Havens will be teaching Wadsworth history classes beginning February 23rd at the Wadsworth Library. Dates include Feb. 23, Mar. 9, Mar. 23, April 13, April 27, May 11 each held from 6-7:30 PM. The Wadsworth Heritage book will be the text used and participants will be encouraged to obtain a copy of it. It can be purchased at the museum or at the Book Shelf located on Main Street. There will be more details in the January newsletter. There is NO January General meeting!!!



Calendar of Events

- ★ **Fri., Dec. 2:** First Friday 5:30-8:30 PM. The theme is A Main Street Christmas. Homemade donuts available. Miniature Polar Express on display! Photo op with Olaf!
- ★ **Wed., Dec. 14:** General Meeting and program starts at 7:30 PM at the Wadsworth Library. Program: A Victorian Christmas.
- ★ **Sun., Dec. 25:** MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!
- ★ **Sun., Jan. 1:** HAPPY NEW YEAR'S DAY!
- ★ **Mon., Jan. 23:** Casa de Rio fundraiser 11 AM – 9 PM
- ★ **JANUARY:** NO FIRST FRIDAY at the museum AND NO GENERAL MEETING!
- ★ **FEBRUARY:** NO FIRST FRIDAY at the museum.
- ★ **Wed., Feb. 8:** General Meeting and program starts at 7:30 PM at the Wadsworth Library. Program: History of Downtown Wadsworth's Buildings by Roger L. Havens
- ★ **Thurs, Feb. 23:** Wadsworth History Class (Pt.1 of 6) 6 PM-7:30 PM at the Wadsworth Library.



Museum with Olaf - Christmas 2022

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

**The Wadsworth Area
Historical Society
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**Email: wadsworthareahistoricalociety@gmail.com
Join us on Facebook at [wadsworthareahistoricalociety](https://www.facebook.com/wadsworthareahistoricalociety)**

The Johnson House Historical Museum is open each Saturday morning from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

ADMINISTRATION

Officers

President	Roger L. Havens
Vice President	Bob DeLong
Secretary	Denise Uhler
Treasurer	Judy Hornoff Turner

Trustees (elected to serve for 3 years and no more than 5 trustees unless voted upon)

Micheala Johanson (2024)	Nate Heideman (2025)
Arlene Steinkerchner (2024)	
George Uhler (2024)	
Denise Uhler (2024)	

Committees

Programs:	Bob DeLong
Acquisitions/Collections:	Fran Wiedey
Museum & Preservation:	Fran Wiedey, Roger Havens, Betty Gairing, & Sue Osterland, Kathie Thompson, Ann Hudson
Outreach:	Micheala Johanson & Roger Havens
Finance/Fundraisers:	Judy Turner & Micheala Johanson
Membership:	Kathy and Jim Thompson
Monthly Newsletter:	Caesar Carrino & Roger Havens

THE WADSWORTH AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM 2022

If you have not already renewed your membership, you may do so by filling out the form below for 2022 Membership. Please mail the membership form and payment to the Wadsworth Area Historical Society, 161 High Street, Wadsworth, OH 44281. Checks payable to The Wadsworth Area Historical Society.

DUES

<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult Member (no email)	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult Member (with email)	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Membership	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime Membership	\$200.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Please check if information below is a change from previous years.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Please check if you are a NEW member.	

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Phone: _____ Email: _____