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VOLUNTEERS COMPLETE 1946 MURAL RESTORATION IN HISTORIC RAIL CAR

Peninsula, OH, May 16, 2019 – A group of 12 Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad volunteers have completed the restoration of a historic mural in a 1940's train car. The restoration of the 1946 mural has taken 1,494 volunteer hours to complete over the course of more than two years.

The mural was discovered in 2014 after maintenance workers began stripping away carpet on the bar of the Saint Lucie Sound Lounge Car during a complete restoration. The vibrant piece of artwork painted onto linoleum depicts daily life of a group of Seminole Indians. CVSR made the decision to restore the mural to its original state, thus making restoration of the St. Lucie Sound Lounge Car complete. It was found that the mural was original to the car when it was first built in 1946. After being fully stripped of the carpet covering, much of the mural remained; however, layers of glue damaged the piece.

CVSR volunteer Carol Schroeder was tasked to lead the mural restoration and assemble a group of volunteers to assist in the work. Schroeder recruited 11 volunteers and connected with Andrea Chevalier, Senior Paintings Conservator of Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA) in 2016 to evaluate the piece. After researching and planning, Chevalier assisted the group of 12 volunteers in restoring the mural. In January 2017, Chevalier began training sessions to show the volunteers how to use tools to safely remove layers of glue from the artwork and restoration work officially began on January 26, 2017.

“Upon examination, it quickly became apparent that any chemical means would damage the mural, so they had to manually scrape it,” said Chevalier. “I was very impressed with the group of volunteers. They were very careful; they did a great job. They were meticulous in scraping off the glue and being careful not to damage the surface”.

“It was a labor-intensive project,” Schroeder said. “Each volunteer could only work a couple of hours at a time.” The group of volunteers spent 1,494 hours combined removing glue from the linoleum. Kathy Eitel, one of the volunteers working on the restoration, named the volunteer group the “Scrappy Scrapers,” and it stuck.

In 2018, the last of the glue was removed from the mural. Volunteer, Regis Schilling, was recruited for his expertise in restoring art works and to complete a part of the mural that was damaged during restoration. In early 2019, Schilling worked to carve the linoleum replacement piece and paint the piece

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to exact detail matching the mural. Schilling completed the painting of the replacement piece ahead of schedule on April 21, 2019.

On April 28, the mural was officially completed when the group of volunteers gathered one last time to complete the varnish on the mural.

“The completion of this mural is a tremendous accomplishment for our volunteers and CVSR,” said CVSR President and CEO Joe Mazur. “We’re dedicated and committed to preserving and renovating historic railcars so that they may be enjoyed by future generations. We can’t thank the volunteers enough for their help in preserving this historic train car.”

The group of “Scrappy Scrapers” includes: Polly Bowman; Kathy Eitel; Joe Grzelak; Martha Grzelak; Dave Harris; Cherie Harris; Roy More; Carol Schroeder; Gary Spencer; Mary Spencer; Eileen Strauss; and Regis Schilling.

About Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) is a private sector, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer supported organization operating in partnership with Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) and is dedicated to the preservation of passenger rail transportation in Cuyahoga Valley and the historic Ohio & Erie Canalway. CVSR has been providing excursion rail service for more than 40 years. For more information about the railroad, visit CVSR.org.

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