

Danville Students Make Artistic Investment in their Community

Vermont artist Maggie Sherman will lead and coordinate "Danville: A Show of Hands" to students at the Danville School in September and October. The project is being produced in collaboration with Principal Meg Powden and teachers Sharon Biddle, Judy Clifford and Barb Hawley and uses art as the medium to examine and reinforce ties of community. The project will incorporate individual and school-sanctioned explorations of art, history, sociology, genealogy, environmental studies and civics.

Students will first trace their handprints onto sheets of clay and answer five questions to define their place in the commu-

nity. Take-home kits will allow students to create outlines of their parents' or neighbors' hands and 'interview' them as part of the project process.

Participants will be asked their name, age, occupation, their parents' names and occupations, and if any family members are artists or have ever worked for VTrans. The responses will be recorded and collated to demonstrate the web of connection between students and community, past and present, and art and science.

The clay handprints will be collected through September and on Sunday, October 3 will be pressed into the bark of a tree on the Danville Green as part of

Danville's "Autumn on the Green" festival in concert with the 40th Anniversary of the Vermont Arts Council.

As the prints air-dry, a range of color and shape emerge in response to natural weather processes, and as handprints are added, the complete surrounding of the tree by the "hands of the community" will offer an exceptional opportunity for reflection on nature, time and change within the environment. The project will conclude as the hands naturally biodegrade and complete their return to the earth at the base of the tree.

Since 1980, Vermont community artist Maggie Sherman has created art work in unexpect-

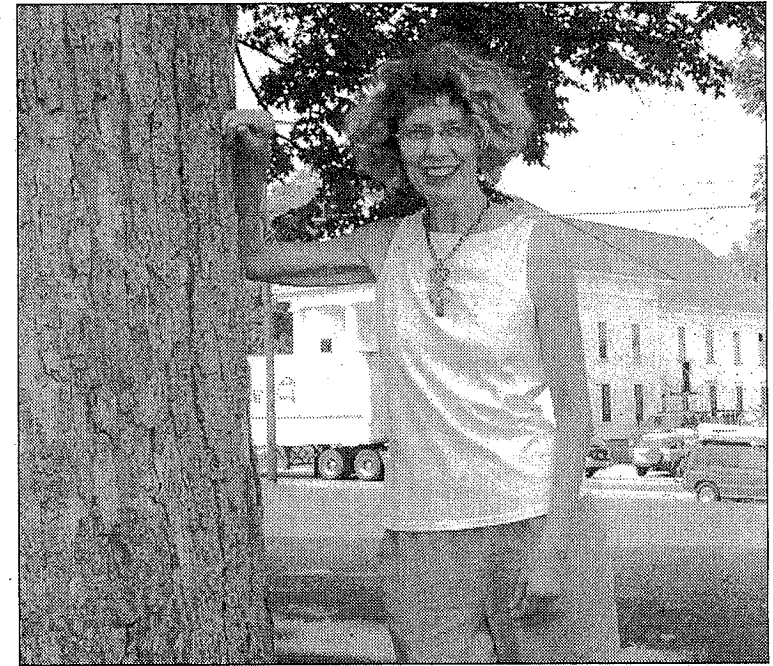


Photo By: North Star Monthly

Vermont artist Maggie Sherman will lead and coordinate a project with Danville School students this fall as a demonstration of the web between students and their community.

ed places and provoked people to think about their lives and values. Her company, Hands on Production, offers events and products that help people explore themselves and their relationship to community.

Sherman gained national attention for Masks from Montgomery, her 1981 community project in which citizens of Montgomery, VT portrayed themselves in plaster masks. She received recognition in *Smithsonian Magazine*, *The New Yorker* and *The Boston Globe*. Her clients include Smithson-

ian's 150th Birthday, Ford Motor Company, Ben & Jerry's Homemade and First Night Honolulu.

This project was developed as part of the Danville Transportation Enhancement Project, a partnership among the Vermont Arts Council, Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Town of Danville to reconstruct a portion of U.S. Highway Route 2 through the village center. Support has been provided by the Danville Select-board, the Village Improvement Society and the Danville School. ✪