ART

JULY 23 - 30

Female focus

Exhibit, events will pay tribute to role models

BY COLIN DABKOWSKI News Arts Writer

f you're in Lockport on Saturday and happen to see a woman parading around in 19th century dress and claiming to be one of the first female lawyers in the United States, don't be alarmed.

That's just Edna Stubbs, a local actor who specializes in historical re-enactments. She's honoring the life and work of Belva Ann Lockwood, the writer, activist and presidential candidate who was born in Royalton in 1830 and served an important role in the women's suffrage movement.

That movement realized its goal 90 years ago, when the United States finally amended its constitution to allow women to vote. In honor of that anniversary, Lockport's Market Street Art Center is mounting a series of lectures, exhibitions and events to call attention to the progress that's been made in the past nine decades.

The whole affair is the brainchild of artist and curator Jennifer Kursten. She was inspired to mark the anniversary after a visit to Seneca Falls, where a legendary women's rights convention was held in the summer of 1848.

There, Kursten said, she picked up a pair of books on women's rights — a subject that had always interested her — and renewed her fascination with the issue.

Before she knew it, Kursten was enlisting a handful of female artists in an effort to promote, as she put it, "an awareness of the struggles and accomplishments of historical and contemporary women."

The exhibition, which opens tonight in the Market Street Art Center's gallery, features a range of media from the oil paintings of Carol Carreno and Coni Minneci and the airbrush art of Sandra Wilde to video work by Buffalo artists Meg Knowles and Holly Johnson, sculpture by Lynda Juel and assemblage by Toronto's Patti Harris.

Knowles and Johnson teamed up to create a documentary on the Seneca Falls convention of 1848, focusing on the story of activist, orator and convention organizer Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

The exhibition will also provide an opportunity to view Minneci's particularly apt work, a series of small oil paintings exploring the lives and struggles of contemporary and historical female artists.

During the course of the exhibition, the Market Street Art Center will host a series of events to celebrate its theme.

At 7 p.m. Aug. 4, Nancy E. McGlen, dean of Niagara University's College of Arts and Sciences, will deliver a lecture titled "Women and Politics: 90 Years of Progress." Artists featured in the exhibition will give talks at 7 p.m. Aug. 19. From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 25, photographer Debra Sammarco will shoot portraits of people with their female role models (be they teachers, relatives or coworkers), for \$10.

At 2 p.m. Aug. 7 at Murphy Orchards, Nancy McClew will talk about her family's involvement in the Underground Railroad and in the women's rights movement. Tea will be served along with the presentation. The cost is \$11.

The exhibition opens with a reception starting at 5 p.m. today, featuring music by harpist Donna Aiken, a wine tasting and Stubbs' re-enactment of Belva Ann Lock-

For Kursten, the show provides an opportunity to explore the lives and works of women that may have been overlooked in typical high school history classes.

"Women have spent 12 years of their lives learning about the wonders of men in school," Kursten said, referring to a flier she printed up to advertise the exhibition. "Now's your opportunity to learn about the wonders of women."

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