

# Help Strengthen The Arm Of Liberty

by Lynne Belluscio

LeRoy's Statue of Liberty needs our help. Thirty years ago, she was repaired, but now it's time for professional restoration. As you can see in the photographs, several seams are coming apart and someone has vandalized her face.



slides and pins were issued. The US Post office also issued stamps to commemorate the project. Today, only half of the statues survive. An inventory is maintained by Boy Scout Troop101 in Cheyenne, Wyoming [www.cheyennetroop101.org/liberty](http://www.cheyennetroop101.org/liberty). There are five other statues in New York State: Niagara Falls near the Rainbow Bridge; Olean; Schenectady; Oneonta, and Utica.

The statues are approximately 8 1/2 feet tall, without the base and are constructed of 40 sheets of copper. They weigh about 290 pounds and some of them were supported on the inside with wooden braces. They were manufactured by the Friedley-Voshardt Company of Chicago

and were purchased through the Kansas City Boy Scout Office at a cost of \$350 plus freight.

On September 17, 1950 when the LeRoy statue was dedicated, it was estimated that nearly 5,000 people witnessed the parade and

The LeRoy statue was dedicated on September 17, 1950. It was purchased by the LeRoy Lodge #1132 Loyal Order of Moose and was given to the LeRoy Boy Scouts. The pedestal for the LeRoy statue was designed by



LeRoy architect, Ivan Cromwell.

Between 1949 and 1954 over 200 similar statues were erected in 39 states and several territories. The project was started as a way to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts in America. It was the idea of Kansas City businessman, J.P. Whitaker who was the Scout Commissioner of the Kansas City Area Scout Council.

The Boy Scout program was called "Strengthen the Arm of Liberty" and special scout tie

the ceremonies. There were 2,300 Boy Scouts and five area high school bands in the parade. Wallace Knickerbocker, secretary of the LeRoy Moose Lodge officially presented the statue to the Boy Scouts, who were represented by George Coburn of Perry, President of the Boy Scout Council.

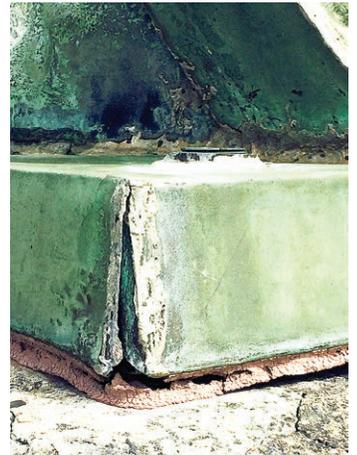
In tribute to the event a squadron of P-47 Thunderbolts from the 136th Fighter Bomber Squadron of the NYS Air National Guard stationed in Niagara Falls under the leadership of Capt. Richard

L. Steifvater of Batavia flew over the creekbank in a special salute. A reception for dignitaries was held at the Red Osier.

In 1985-1986 LeRoy's statue was refurbished. Money was raised through the Genesee Community College's celebration of the centennial of the Statue of Liberty in New York City. Additional funds were raised by the Avon Co. The DPW removed the statue and took it to LeRoy Plastics where Cordyn Durney soldered new spikes on the crown and repaired the arm. Kermit Arrington removed the brass plaque and cleaned it. The statue was rededicated in the summer of 1986.

I contacted the State Historic Preservation Office to find places that would do the necessary work, and I talked with three that were within a day's drive of LeRoy and I am confident that the McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory near Oberlin, Ohio is the place the Lady will be taken for restoration. I sent photographs of the damage and they estimate that it will cost \$5,000 to \$7,000 to complete the work. We will need to crate her and transport her to Oberlin and then bring her back. And it would be good to do some landscaping and update the electrical lighting. So with all that said, it looks like we will need \$10,000.

The Historical Society has agreed to be the lead agency on this project and has set up a special fund designated for the restoration. All donations are tax deductible. Checks may be made out to the Strengthen the Arm of Liberty Fund, c/o the LeRoy Historical Society, PO Box 176,



LeRoy NY 14482.

The story of the Statue of Liberty is also a story of the millions of people who have immigrated to the United States, so it only seems fitting to rededicate the LeRoy Lady to LeRoy's immigrants. If you want to include the names of your family, we will include them in the time capsule that will be placed inside the statue. Soon you will find donations boxes and envelopes at various places in LeRoy. As they say - "Let's get 'er done."



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

to place Memorial Day Flags at Machpelah Cemetery  
(note change in date!)

**Thursday, May 21 - 6 pm**

Meet at the south entrance.