

# Here I Stand

by Lynne Belluscio

LeRoy's Lady Liberty has been restored to her place on the creek bank. She stands on a new plinth, set within the symbolic original eleven point star. The new landscape gives her the prominence that she deserves. Once again this community has demonstrated that if it chooses, it can do wonderful things. It is not without great effort. It is not without generosity. It is not without commitment. It is not without knowledge of the past. All these things have to be in alignment in order for the job to be successful.

This project was a long time in the making. Several years ago, a woman came to town and wanted to showcase the Statue of Liberty in a photo presentation for the Oatka Festival. She admonished us for not taking care of the statue, but the time was not right. It would be several years later, that while doing a walking tour for the second grade classes, that they asked what happened to the face of Lady Liberty and it became very evident that the time had come for work to begin.

The list is long - - as it should be - - of people who have made this project successful. The list is not in any particular order and for those of you who I miss, it is not intentional nor is it to lessen the importance of what you have done to help.

To all the people who reached in their pockets to donate money - - the alumni classes, the Chamber of Commerce, The Loyal Order of Moose, the second graders, the descendants of immigrants, - - the list is long - - none of this would have been possible without the donations.

To Heidi Miksch from the New York State Historic Preservation Office at Peebles Island who steered me in the right direction to chose a sculpture conservationist that was right for the job and for Thomas Podnar of McKay Lodge Fine Arts Conservation Laboratory in Oberlin, Ohio, for taking care of Lady Liberty.

To Randy Vink and Richard Flanagan and the skilled workmen at Orcon Industries on Lake Road, who designed and built the cushioned container for transporting Lady Liberty to Ohio and back.

To the Board of the Historical Society who agreed to take this project on, not knowing if we could raise enough money, and who were willing to take on the crazy not-for-profit financial reports that were necessary to make this work.

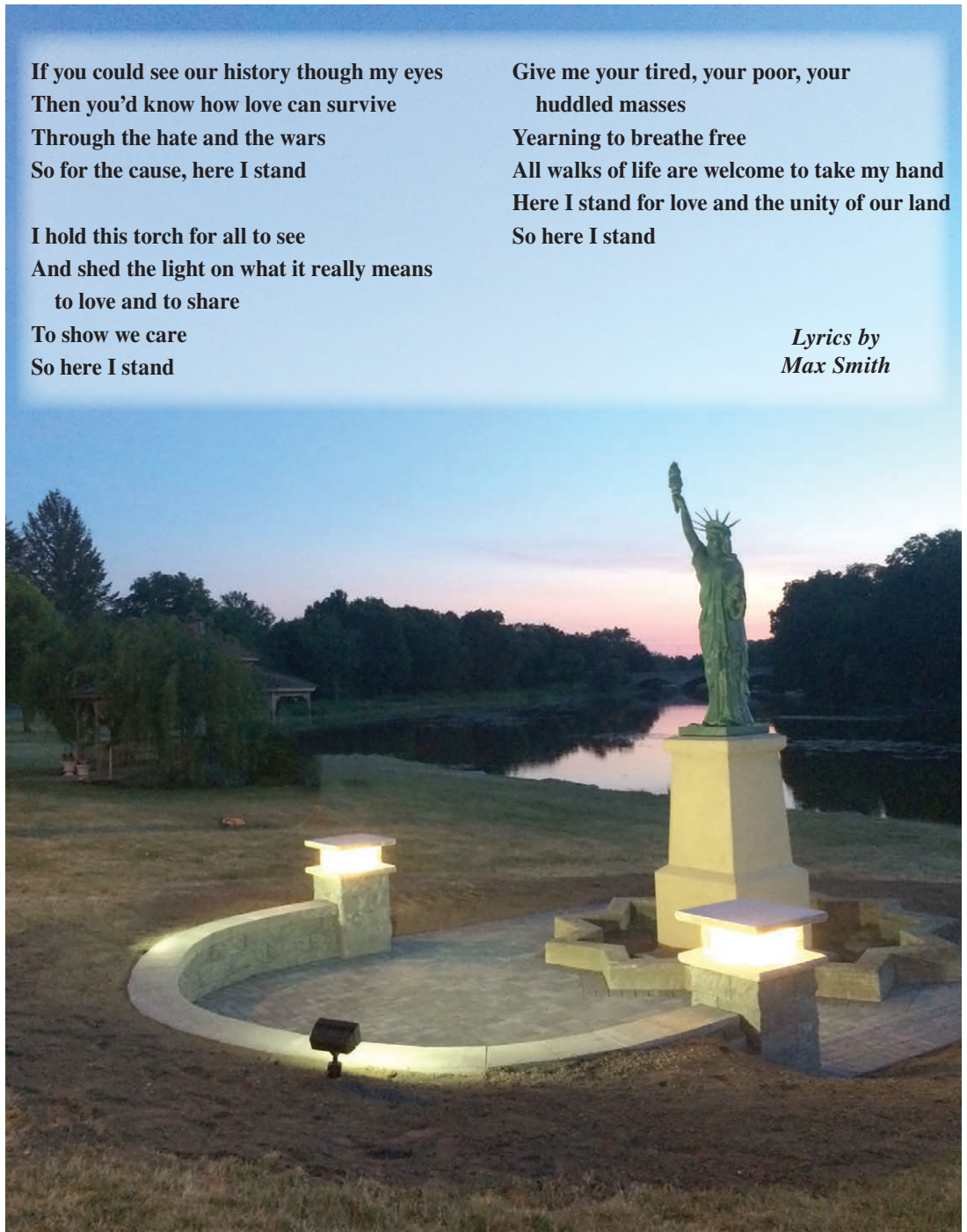
If you could see our history though my eyes  
Then you'd know how love can survive  
Through the hate and the wars  
So for the cause, here I stand

I hold this torch for all to see  
And shed the light on what it really means  
to love and to share

To show we care  
So here I stand

Give me your tired, your poor, your  
huddled masses  
Yearning to breathe free  
All walks of life are welcome to take my hand  
Here I stand for love and the unity of our land  
So here I stand

Lyrics by  
Max Smith



To Bobby Lathan who wasn't fazed when I asked him to unfasten Lady Liberty from the plinth - - then pull the old plinth - - then pour a new foundation - - then arrange to put the new plinth in place - - and then "danced" with Lady Liberty to get her back on her plinth - - and who never once laughed at me when I insisted that the word for the cement thing was a "plinth".

To Rob McQuillen who put together measured drawings of the plinth so we could send the job out for quotes. And to Lindsay Yoder, from Bero Associates in Rochester, who volunteered to help with the architectural needs for the design of the plinth.

To Andrew Lathan for having the right machinery for the job!! We needed some pretty heavy

equipment to place the 3 ton plinth and to lift Lady Liberty into place. No mean feat for the faint of heart. It was a ballet - although I'm sure that Andrew would not call it that.

To Southside Concrete in Buffalo, who put up with my incessant phone calls about having the plinth done in time for the dedication - - and who did a remarkable job and came in at the lowest bid.

To Scott Heatherman and Joe Jaszko of Bubba's Landscaping whose craftsmanship and detail produced a remarkable hardscape around Lady Liberty and to John Morrell who bought into the project and made sure it was done right - - even insisting on lights and rose bushes - - you were right John, they are just what was needed.

To Humphrey Electric and Bill

Humphrey for making sure the electric installation was done correctly and as they said "We'll eat the bill."

To Cheryl Williams at the *LeRoy Pennysaver* for putting up with me to design the logo for the Strengthen the Arm T-shirt and banner.

And one more thank you to Pully's Farm Market for the pots of petunias.

To all the folks who agreed to participate in the dedication on Sunday - - your enthusiasm is greatly appreciated. To Michelle Panepento and her daughter Anna for agreeing to once again be our Lady Liberty.