



Out of this world

Call Photo/George N. Beaubien Jr.

Michael Tracy, a senior at Uxbridge High School, stands in front of the mural he designed and painted in the principal's office. At the request of Principal Jack Roberts, the mural incorporates a space scene.

Student mural puts principal in another office dimension

By GINA A. SANTORO
Written for The Call

UXBRIDGE — When asked to describe the floor-to-ceiling mural which covers the back wall in his office, Jack Roberts, principal of Uxbridge High School, says one word: Spectacular.

The mural, which measures 11' x 11' feet, was designed and painted by Michael Tracy, a senior at the high school.

He has — figuratively — broken through the walls, ceiling and floor, and given the room an illusion of depth, says Roberts.

Planets, a savage hunter and an eagle that turns into a fish are some of the elements of the mural.

The idea to paint a mural in the office came about at the principal's request last year.

"My office has no windows," said Roberts. "It's like a tomb."

Since murals have been painted throughout the school, Roberts decided to ask the art teacher if a student could paint a scene in his office.

Tracy wasn't available at the time; he was in Australia as an exchange student from February to June.

When school started last fall, though, Tracy immedi-

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Mural

ately began working on the concept.

The principal asked him to incorporate a space scene into the picture. Tracy granted the request and made a design in which half the scene fades into a normal earth scene. Shadows of clouds add to the design.

Tracy spent about an hour and a half every day working on the mural. He began by marking the wall in a grid spaced every six inches. Then he reduced this grid, transferring it from the wall to paper. The design came next.

This paper was copied onto a transparency, which he projected onto the wall. He traced the design onto the wall, then filled it in with paint. He used mostly latex paints left over from touch-up work the janitors had completed throughout the school.

Tracy says he hopes to continue developing his artistic skills after graduating in June. He has applied to five art schools, with the Rhode

Island School of Design, Massachusetts College of Art and Cooper Union being his top three choices.

"I'll go to whichever one asks for the least amount of money," he says.

His goal is to illustrate comic books, something he's collected comics for years. He also plans to learn about mosaics in March from an art teacher who will be visiting the school. Yet, he still enjoys painting murals.

He is now working on a mural in a historic home in Whitinsville, recreating historic Uxbridge using some old photos as his guide. The mural was to cover five walls in a dining room, starting at hip level and extending upward.

While Tracy is preserving Uxbridge's past through his art, Roberts is enjoying his office.

"The mural is great. It's like I have this other world behind me. When things get too bad, I can head into this world," he said, laughing.