Sandusky Register
WORTH READING EVERY DAY
THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2000
WWW.SANDUSKYREGISTER.COM

BARN STORMING

■ Bicentennial painter takes a giant step back to see his work.

By ALAN GUY
alanguy@sanduskyregister.com

HURON TWP.

Scott Hagan is painting the state of Ohio's bicentennial symbol on a large scale, all across Ohio.

A barn in every Ohio county is being painted in honor of the state's 200th birthday in 2003, and it's Hagan's job to see that the work gets done.

So the 23-year-old is repeating, in painstaking detail, the white silhouette of the state with the word "Ohio" emblazoned in blue above a red, white and blue streamer.

The canvas for Hagan's work in Erie County is the side of a large red barn on Perkins Avenue, owned by Bonnie and Gilbert Steinen. Located just across from Osborn Park, the barn's visibility from busy Cleveland Road was part of the reason why the Ohio Bicentennial Commission picked it to bear the design.

Hagan is the sole painter of the designs across the state.

The freehand paintings are often several yards tall and can consume more than 10 gallons of paint. A single work can take several days to complete.

Hagan began his large works four years ago. Without any training, he decided to paint the side of his family's barn in Belmont County in southeast Ohio.

"I just wanted to see how big I could work," he said. "I'm a sports fan so I did a few logos on the side of a barn."

After an early work featuring the Ohio State University logo was noticed by the commission, Hagan got the opportunity to work statewide.

Since beginning the work he has purchased a special scaffold and now brings along a relative or friend to lend a hand. His father, Rick Hagan, is assisting him in Erie County.

Although the owners of the barn were contacted by the state, many barn owners have competed to have the design placed on their barn.

"One man practically begged to have (the design) done," Hagan said. He expects that by the time he finishes the bicentennial project, some owners may have convinced the state to commission a few more barns.

For the owners of the barn, the commission's offer came as a pleasant surprise.

"My grandmother's farm had a great big Mail Pouch Tobacco (painting) on one side of her barn. I thought it was kind of neat," Bonnie Steinen said.

The paintings often attract the notice of passing drivers and inquisitive livestock.

"It's rare that I'm alone anymore. It's popular, but that's the way we like it," said Hagan.

Hagan expects each logo to last for about 20 years.

"They'll be up as long as the owners," he said.

Hagan hopes that with the exposure his work is getting, he will be able to keep painting for just as long.

Register photos/JASON WERLING

Scott Hagan checks on his work after painting a map of Ohio on Gilbert and Bonnie Steinen's Perkins Avenue barn in Huron. Hagan is painting the logo that is on the back of his shirt, which includes the words "Ohio Bicentennial, 1803-2003" on barns across the state.

Hagan uses a foot-operated crank to adjust his scaffold while adding the word "Ohio" to the logo on the Steinen barn.

"It's rare that I'm alone anymore. (The logo's) popular, but that's the way we like it."

— Scott Hagan, bicentennial barn painter

G05OH001809_08.08_0502_a