



Downey was more than a saloon keeper **6D**

LIFE



Roger Clark's mural "Wishing Star Farm" is displayed in a private home in Columbus, N.J.

The big picture

A Bristol Borough artist requires sprawling surfaces for scaled-up scenes.

By GWEN SHRIFT
STAFF WRITER

Painter William Roger Clark's latest canvas is 52 feet wide, 30 feet high, and shaped like a triangle missing a rectangular chunk on one side.

Anything less would not show to advantage a towering snowy egret or a leopard frog perched on a lily pad the size of an area rug. A smaller field would give no scope for a six-foot hummingbird with a spiky, yard-long bill.

Clark, a muralist, illustrator and graphic artist, is painting these outsized creatures on the side of the Silver Lake Nature Center in a bid to advertise the real things that lurk in the woods and waterways behind the building on Bath Road.

"It's wonderfully designed by accident," said Clark of the surface — actually cinder blocks — on which he's applying his latest mural. "It draws your eye. It takes your eye right to here," he said, pointing to the high spot on the wall, where a pyramidal array of painted foliage serves as a background for the majestic white heron.

The nature center mural is not Clark's first. He painted a large field of athletes and sports scenes on the walls of the activity room at Graterford Prison in the 1990s. Another of his large-scale works is in a client's home in New Jersey.

If you've attended productions by the Langhorne Players, or hiked in a state park in New Jersey, chances are you've seen other works by Clark. He has painted scenery for the little theater, and as a graphic artist for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, designed and illustrated interpretive signs for use in state park nature trails.

Clark, 59, moved with his family from western Pennsylvania to



"Abandoned" is a watercolor by Clark.

Clark (below) works on one of his current projects, a mural at Silver Lake Nature Center.

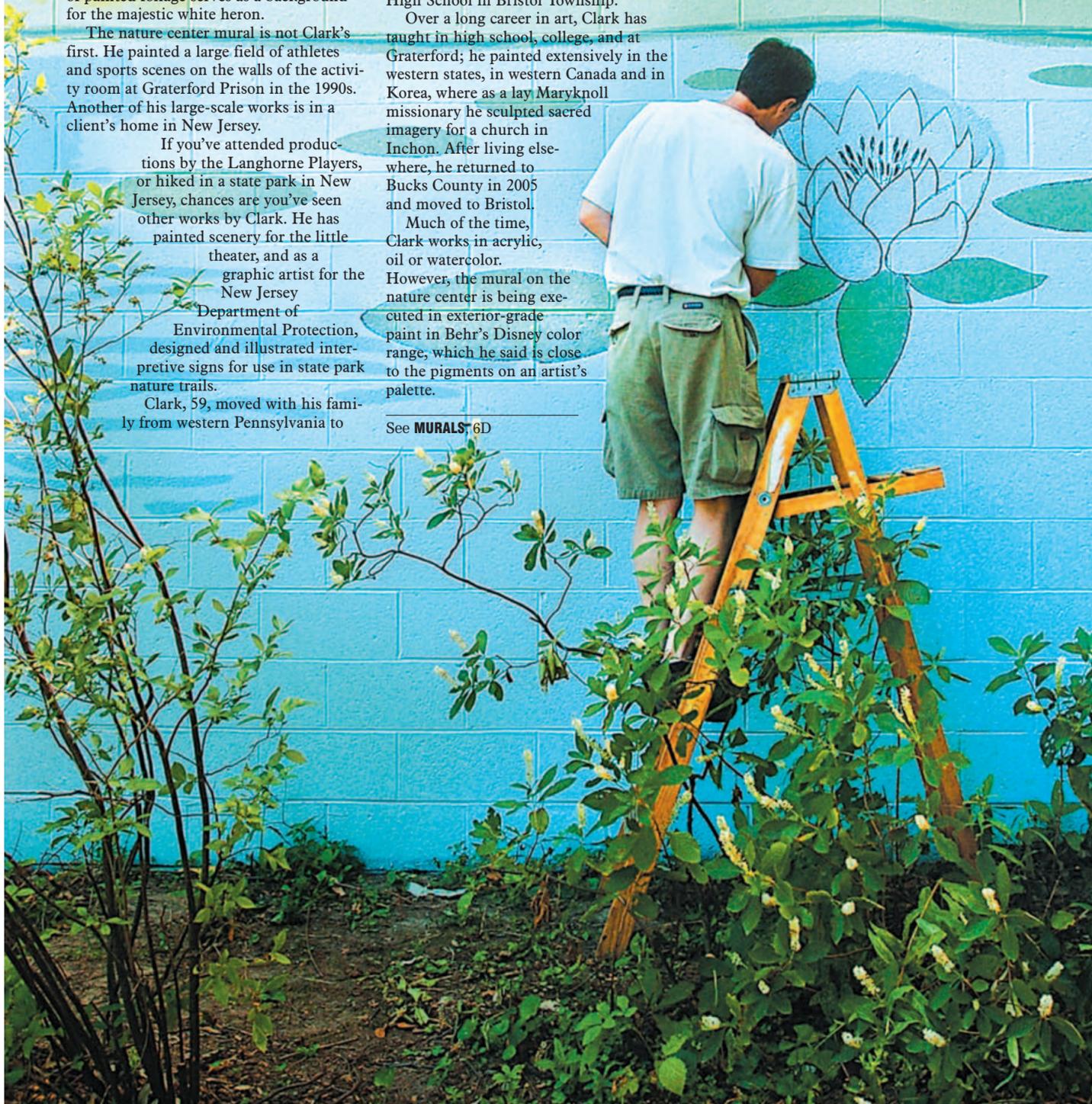
KIM WEIMER
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

this area as a child. He grew up in Levittown and graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School, now Harry S Truman High School in Bristol Township.

Over a long career in art, Clark has taught in high school, college, and at Graterford; he painted extensively in the western states, in western Canada and in Korea, where as a lay Maryknoll missionary he sculpted sacred imagery for a church in Inchon. After living elsewhere, he returned to Bucks County in 2005 and moved to Bristol.

Much of the time, Clark works in acrylic, oil or watercolor. However, the mural on the nature center is being executed in exterior-grade paint in Behr's Disney color range, which he said is close to the pigments on an artist's palette.

See **MURALS** 6D



F.Y.I.

Genuine Thing



Under federal regulations, 97 percent of caffeine must be removed from coffee for it to be labeled "decaffeinated."

Name Origins

Joseph Stalin was born Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili; he adopted the name Stalin, which means "man of steel," in 1913.



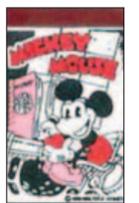
Quotable



"Ultimately nature heals because it reminds us that as humans we are nature ... The same cycles and rhythms that move the moon, drop the rain, and draw sap through tree veins operate inside us as well."

— Sue Monk Kidd, author

Famous Firsts



The first merchandise item to feature Mickey Mouse was a child's school tablet in 1929.

Slow to Birth



The female condor lays a single egg once every two years.

TV Tonight



"Z ROCK" IFC at 11:39

This comedy is the latest series to occupy that overcrowded TV limbo between reality and freely scripted fiction. Playing themselves (sort of), brothers Paulie Z and David Z as well as friend Joey Cassata comprise the actual Brooklyn-based rock band Z02, which on the series is struggling to make a name for itself, a record deal and money. These lovable TV characters share a hard-partying, libidinous streak that sometimes sabotages their musical pursuits.

Peak Distinction



Of the 25 highest mountains on Earth, 16 are in the Himalayas.

Call of the Wild

The blue whale is the loudest animal on Earth, its call reaching levels of up to 188 decibels,



which can be heard for hundreds of miles underwater. The loudest land animal is the howler monkey.

State Stats



Soybeans bring in the most cash for Missourians as a crop.

Today's Number

641 — the number of people arrested at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968.

