

# Frenchtown has a pair of mules to show their colors

## Painting in progress behind shop on Bridge Street

**Bridget Wingert**

Alchemy Creative Clothing at 17 Bridge St.

Mule painters are busy this week in Frenchtown, N.J., as they have been in Bucks County, putting their colorful mark on two mules the town is hosting.

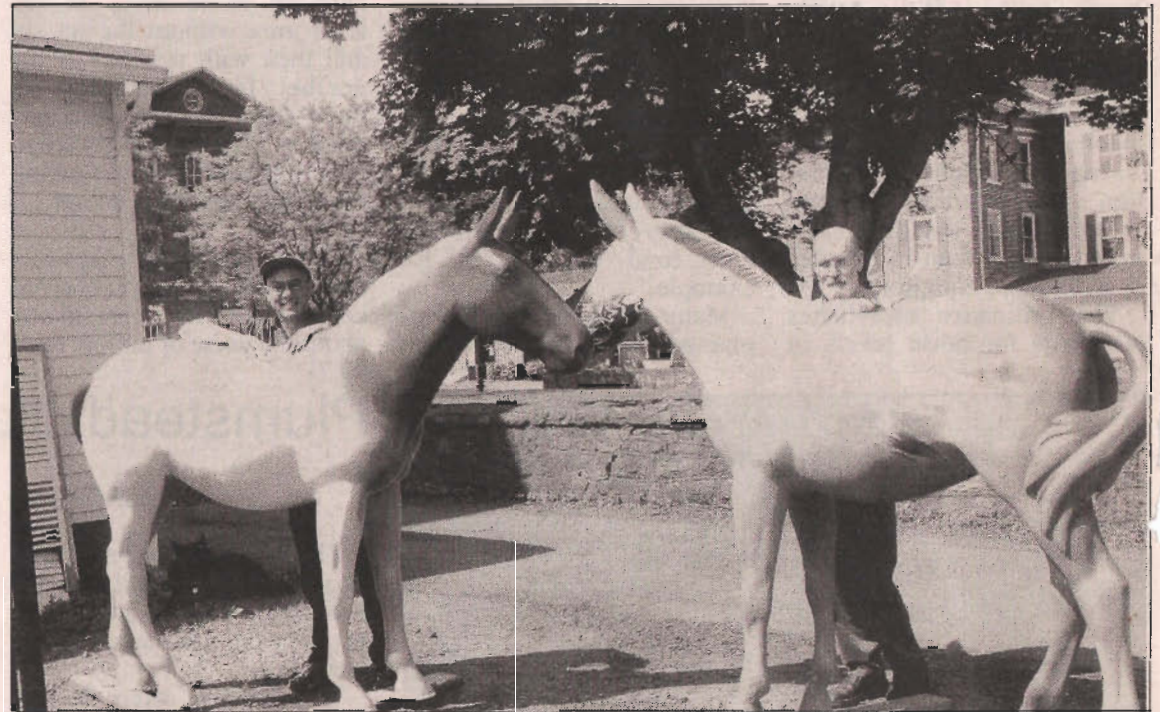
Barry Sharplin, an artist from New Zealand, is painting the mules with the help of some friends because time is short. Pat Burns, Roberto Padovano, Cleo Sharplin, Rosanne Hepburn and Hardy Allbritten are hoping to pick up their own brushes to move the mules along.

Sharplin has been working under a canopy behind the shop he owns with Cleo, his wife,

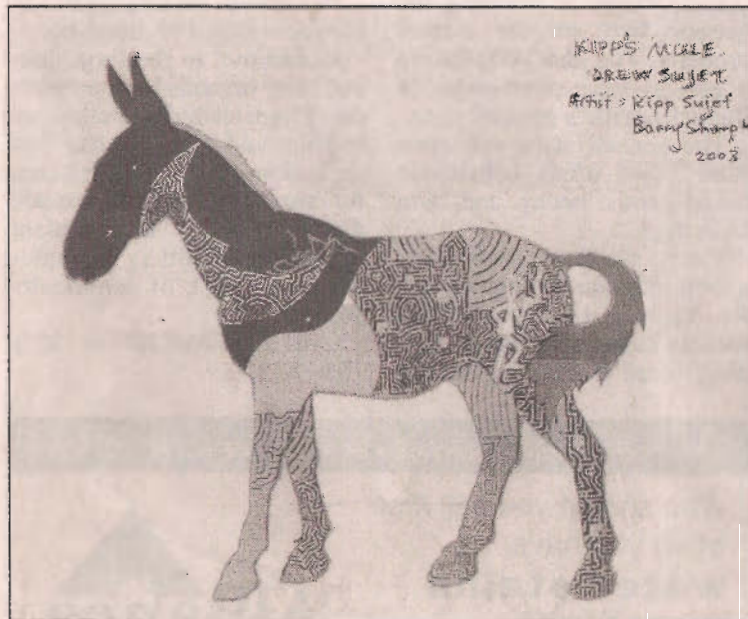
The Frenchtown Business and Professional Association solicited donations from businesses to raise the funds for the mule. "River Mule," their project depicts a river landscape scene. When River Mule is auctioned in the fall, a portion of the proceeds will go to River Union Stage, a not-for-profit local theater group.

River reflections, will cover the River Mule, abstract views looking into the depths and reflecting the light of the sun and the moon. Daylight is on one side, night on the other.

The other mule is sponsored



Barry Sharplin, left, and Hardy Allbritten line up Kipp's Mule, left, and the River Mule.



Kipp's Mule incorporates designs made by Kipp Sujet when he was

by the Kipp Sujet Memorial Scholarship Fund. "Kipp's Mule" is named for a Jutland, Hunterdon County youth who died in 1995 of leukemia at age 18.

Kipp's Mule will show the maze-like designs made by Kipp while he was hospitalized, undergoing a bone marrow transplant. Part of the proceeds from the sale of Kipp's Mule will go to the scholarship fund.

Sharplin is from New Zealand. He studied at the Ilam School of Fine Arts in Christchurch. He helped devel-

op Sphere Group, the Wangapeka Educational Trust, an organization devoted to the unfolding of all beings through meditation, the arts and the sciences.

In the 1980s he was one of seven artists in an arts council program in Manchester, England, and was visual director of the Tauranga Theater Company.

He met his wife, Cleo, an American, in New Zealand and they lived in Taos, N.M., for 10 years before relocating to Frenchtown and opening their second Alchemy shop.

The shop displays Barry's Sharplin's paintings and their bright, hand-dyed clothing designs.

Sharplin teaches courses in art and meditation, using one to support the other.

Creative ability exists in everyone, he believes. "It's just finding the right supportive circumstances, and it will naturally unfold," he says.

Visitors to Frenchtown can watch Sharplin's mule visions unfold as he and his friends work behind the Alchemy shop.