

ARTISTIC VISION

Times' owl sculptures designed to see the truth

Art is all around us. You just have to look to find it. This is the first in an occasional series of columns that will explore the art that is embedded in our communities. It's on buildings and bridges, and in public and private spaces. There has



KEVIN O'NEILL
Artistic Impression

been a boom in murals the last few years, but I'm going to focus on the three dimensional sculptures and ornamentation that add character to a place.

A good place to start is The Times Building where I work. Every morning I enter the building under the watchful gaze of a wise old owl. In 1925, The Scranton Times had outgrown its facilities. The owner, E.J. Lynett, decided it was time to expand. He hired Scranton architects Edward H. Davis and George M. D. Lewis to design a Classical/European Revival-style building that would not only be functional, but would also make an aesthetic statement of the paper's pride in the community. Times employees scoured the

country looking for the latest advances in newspaper publishing. The company spent lavishly to acquire the best technology available at the time.

Their quest for excellence was not limited to the equipment inside the building. The exterior also had to be a showcase. The Penn Avenue and Spruce Street sides of the building were given a white terra cotta facade. The two main doors on Penn Avenue were designed to be especially grand. Each one is framed by an arch decorated with tiles depicting symbols related to the newspaper publishing industry.

Above the doors, centered under each arch, is a large bronze owl. The owls were designed by Louis C. Tiffany's Studios in New York City. The owl is considered by many cultures, going as far back as ancient Greece, to be a symbol of wisdom, strategy and truth. At night their eyes are illuminated with green bulbs. Perched atop the newspaper's doors, the owls can see through the darkness to find the truth.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite local artistic wonders with him at koneill@timeshamrock.com.



These six symbols are repeated on the ceramic tiles that form arches over the two front doorways of The Times Building.

