



Times Staff Photo/Isaac Menashe

# Mural mural on the wall

The City of Los Angeles, 1988

## scenes on walls of pool

BY DUSTY SMITH  
Times Staff Writer

A walk around Wakefield Recreation Center's pool is much like a walk around any indoor pool. The warm, humid air is heavy with the smell of chlorine as the high-pitched tweet of the swim coach's whistle screeches out.

But this pool in the Springfield area is a just a bit different, thanks to artist Tim Grant.

Grant, 42, has painted a mural of marine life amid the ruins of Atlantis on one of the giant walls in the pool area, a feat he completed alone in only eight days.

And, now he's working on another one.

"It's been my goal to be a mural painter, especially a public mural painter," Grant said while taking a break next to Wakefield's pool.

"I like the idea of painting for the public," he added. "Painting for the public has more meaning for me than any other kind of painting. It's gratifying. I can't tell you."

Grant said that he used to live in Germany and painted as a volunteer for the theater department of a nearby military base.

"That's when I was exposed to the scale of this kind of painting," he said.

When he came back to the United States, he moved to the Washington, D.C., area and began working as a freelance artist.

Then he said he discovered that large-scale painting appealed to more people than just those looking for theater props.

Grant's painting evolved into his present business, Britten-Grant Event Design, based in Loudoun County.

The company can provide anything from a single painted backdrop to an entire room decked out in myriad themes including space, the beach, the Old West, Paris, ski slopes and sporting events, to name a few. There's a mural from his company at the entrance of Ballston Common, a shopping mall in Arlington.

While working on an idea for the Wakefield mural, he brought up the idea of Atlantis because he'd already worked with that theme and it was aquatic, but ideas developed throughout the painting process.

"A scuba diver came up to me and said 'Hey, on the next painting can you put a hammerhead shark in there?'" Grant said.

After he painted it, the same man told him that those sharks swim in pairs. Now Wakefield has a pair of hammerheads.

Grant has lived all over Northern Virginia and now resides in Arlington with his second wife, Debbie, and his 7-year-old daughter, Carolyn, from his first marriage.

Carolyn painted a starfish on the first mural at Wakefield's pool and recently helped out with the second mural along with Megan Newman, 8, of the Annandale area.

"I love it," Carolyn said. "I'm already done with it," pointing to a blue shell she had just finished, while her father showed Newman some painting techniques to use for her starfish.

When asked about the orange spots she was painting, Newman explained: "They're tentacles on the starfish."

Grant said he is glad his daughter paints with him and that he wanted to instill a sense of "pride and purposefulness" in her.

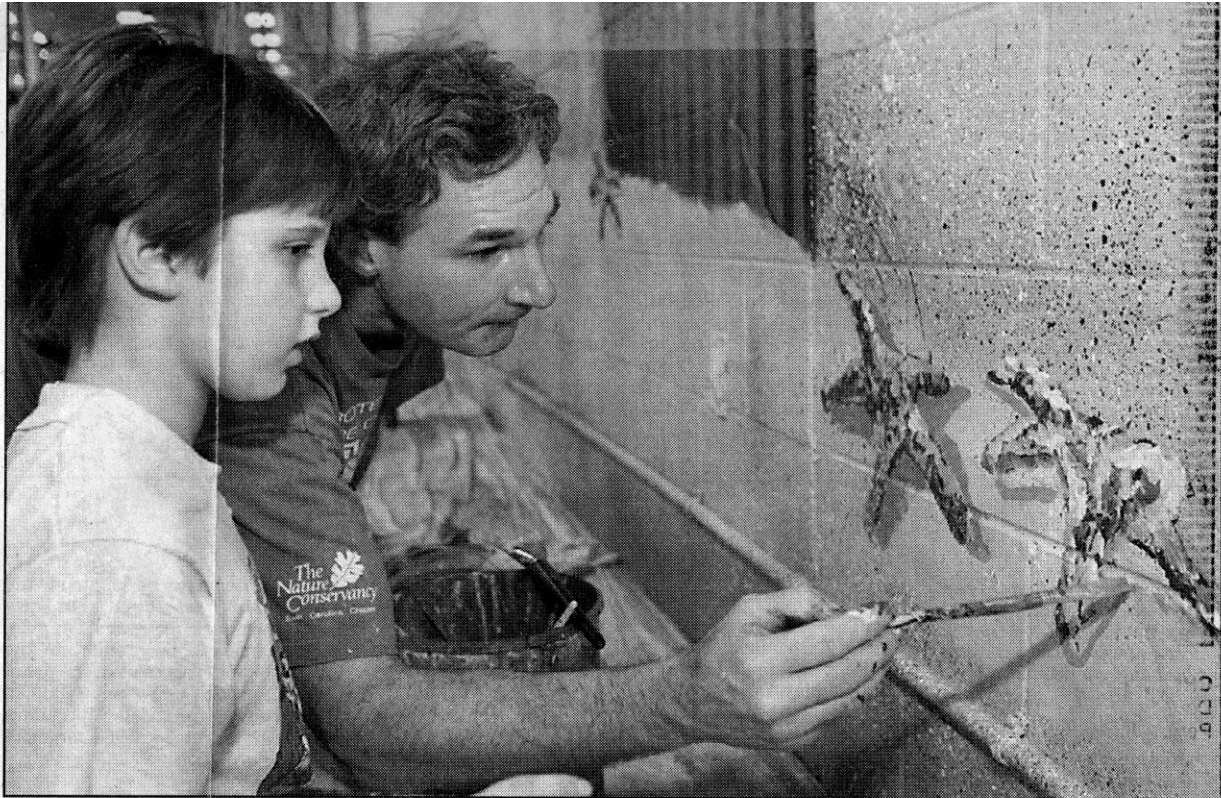
"It really means a lot to me

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I like the idea of painting for the public.

Tim Grant  
Mural artist

for her to paint a starfish or something in all of my paintings," he said, adding that he took caution not to force it on



Times Staff Photos/Issac Menashe

**BRUSH STROKE:** Megan Newman, 8, left, watches as Tim Grant puts the final touch on the starfish she painted in his mural.

her. "I don't want to shove art down her throat."

Work on the second mural recently was delayed when Grant's father died about two weeks ago.

"It stopped progress on this," he said. "I don't think I'm working at full speed."

Although Grant didn't develop a serious interest for art until his adult years, he credits his parents with influencing him in that direction.

"My dad was a musician," Grant said, added that his father played piano. "He never thought of himself as an artist, but he was."

He said his mother dabbled in painting.

"I'm sure the reason I had any interest [in painting] is because of my mother's painting," he added. "She always had

a love for it."

The mural that Grant is working on now should be finished by Dec. 11 and he said he hopes to be able to paint a third wall at the pool.

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## Tim Grant

**AGE:** 42

**FAMILY:** Wife, Debbie; daughter, Carolyn

**EDUCATION:** Associate's degree in visual communication from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh; bachelor's degree in design from Point Park College; master's degree in art history from the University of Pittsburgh.

**OCCUPATION:** Painter/artist; founded Britten-Grant Event Design, which produces themed settings for all occasions.

**LATEST WORK:** Second 2,600-square-foot mural at Wakefield Recreation Center's pool.



**SHINING STAR:** Carolyn Grant, 7, paints a starfish on the second mural her father, Tim, is working on, just like she did on the first mural.