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Hometown

■ Statue

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bronze, but it is cement, and it is breaking down."

Steve Kiedrowski of Trempealeau, who represents the Zimmerhagl family on the committee, agreed. "There are not many cities in Wisconsin that have colorful statues," he said. "I believe La Crosse is synonymous with that statue."

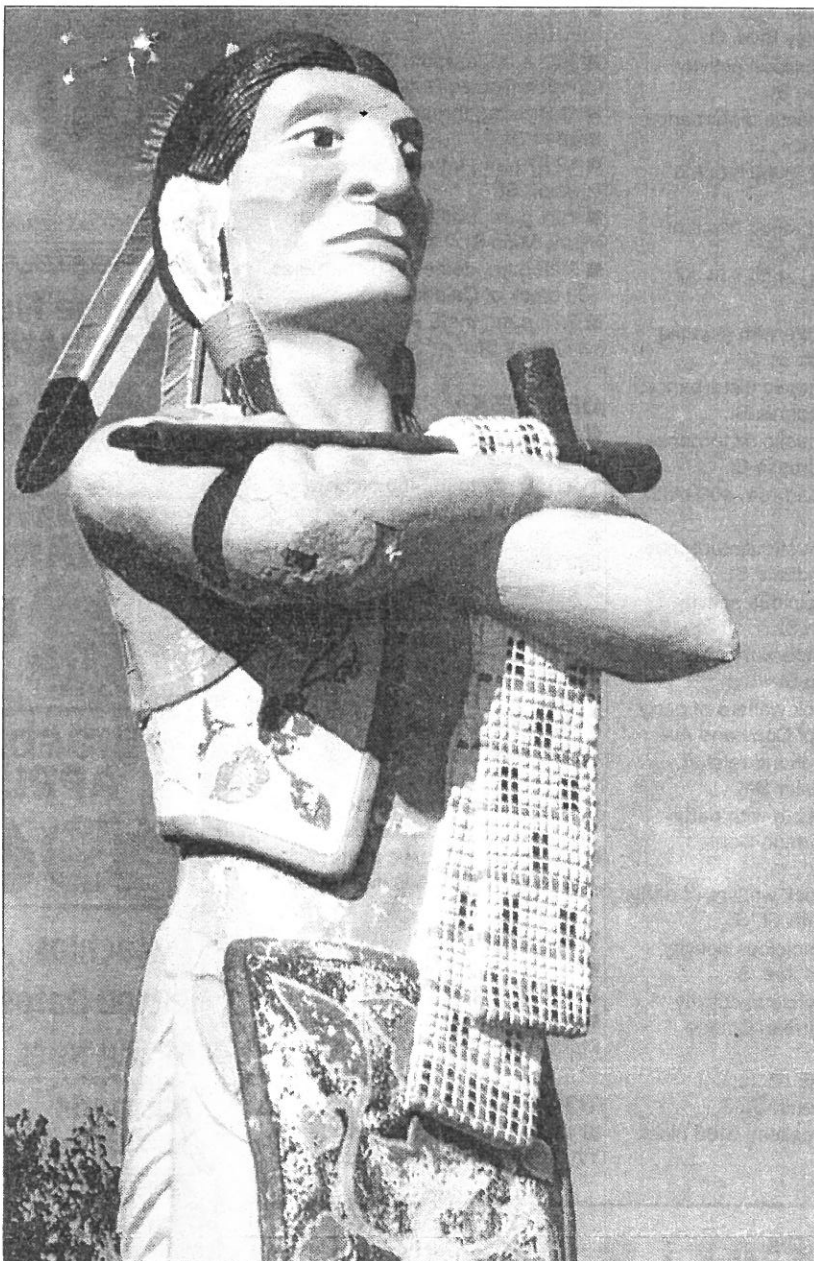
He distributed a letter from Stefan Jay Zimmerhagl, son of the artist. "The statue shows nothing but pride and strength, which can be nothing but positive in regards to a historical representation of the Winnebagoes that walked the hallowed grounds of the La Crosse County area," Zimmerhagl said in the letter. "Anyone who feels the Big Indian is offensive and is a stereotype is either ashamed of their ancestors and their past or are totally unaware of the true image of their roots."

But Stewart and Marian Blackdeer, a UW-L student and member of the Native American Student Association, argued that the statue hurts their people because it is a stereotype. Studies have shown that a large part of Native Americans' problems stem from the images they have of themselves, Blackdeer said. "It is saying to the younger generation, 'This is what we think of you.'"

No matter what the city does, people will be hurt, said Robert Boszhardt, regional archaeologist with the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center.

But the pain to those who will miss the statue will not be as strong, Stewart said, as the pain of "children I see crying that they are hurt by these kind of images."

The committee is expected to decide on a recommendation Dec. 4. The final decision will be up to the La Crosse Common Council.



Tribune file photo

The Committee to Consider the Future of the Statue Hiawatha were not able to agree Wednesday on the statue's fate.

Committee disagrees on fate of 'Hiawatha'

By **JOAN KENT**
Of the Tribune staff

The lines are drawn among some members of the Committee to Consider the Future of the Statue Hiawatha, but the group did not make a decision on the fate of the controversial statue at its Wednesday meeting.

The committee is charged with making a recommendation by the end of next month on what to do about the deteriorating statue at the north end of Riverside Park. Wednesday's meeting was the committee's first since a public hearing last month, during which residents voiced their opinions on whether the city should keep and repair the statue created 40 years ago by the late Anthony Zimmerhagl, a well-liked art teacher.

Members disagreed Wednesday on the opinions voiced at the hearing. "A majority of the people who spoke were in favor of getting rid of the statue," said Matt Stewart, president of the Native American Student Association at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. He wants the statue removed.

people who attended) would be 60 to 40 in favor of keeping it," countered Dean Morton, a retired cable television company executive who wants to retain the statue.

The committee gave short shrift to Mayor John Medinger's suggestion to replace the statue with one of either Chief Black Hawk or Cpl. Mitchell Red Cloud Jr. "I do not believe it is our charge to decide whether to put up another statue," Morton said.

Stewart suggested a memorial to Zimmerhagl be erected because people who want to keep the statue want to honor his legacy as a teacher.

Committee Chairman John Satory said he disagreed that the statue was offensive. "It has been here 40 years," he said. "It has been part of La Crosse. If it was warfaring, it could be taken as derogatory, but the statue has a peace pipe."

"If we destroy that, we do not have anything to go back and remember the past," Satory said. "I look at it as a preservationist. It would be nice if it had been

"I believe a count. (of the 11/16/00) See **STATUE**, D-3