

# Angel in our midst

## A fitting capstone to the Community of Jesus' tower

**T**he silhouette is striking. Perched atop a structure that reaches 100 feet in the air, the winged figure gazes down to the entrance of the Church of the Transfiguration in Orleans, an angel that is a fitting and welcome capstone to the Community of Jesus' bell tower at Rock Harbor.

### EDITORIAL

The bell tower was a long time in the making, and not without controversy. When it was first proposed, officials in Orleans and Eastham objected to the height of the church and tower and asked the Cape Cod Commission to get involved.

The Rock Harbor location is also within the jurisdiction of the Old King's Highway Regional Historic District, which conducted its own review.

And as often happens in building disputes, the matter landed in court, but the Community of Jesus reached a settlement with the commission in 1993 and was set to build a 75-foot tower when they changed their minds and asked for an additional 25 feet, arguing the tower and church were out of proportion. After some more wrangling, the commission approved the 100-foot height.

Today it is hard to be critical of the aesthetics of the bell tower. It is tall, to be sure, but it is not incongruous to the surrounding landscape, peeking just slightly over the tree tops.

And the angel is the perfect touch. Standing 13 feet tall, the youthful and muscular male looks as though it just touched down on the church, artistic and symbolic in appearance.

The 1,000-pound sculpture was the work of Daphne du Barry, a Dutch artist whose pieces are displayed throughout the world, including the Vatican. Du Barry did considerable research in scaling the model for the tower before sculpting the work in her studio in Italy and shipping it to Orleans for installation.

And now, the angel is in place, perched atop the tower a week before today's 10th anniversary celebration of the church's dedication in 2000.

"It was really the goal to have all of the art installed by the 10th anniversary, and with one small exception, we are there," community counsel and project manager Chris Kanaga explained to Times reporter Doug Fraser.

It is interesting to note that Orleans has few public sculptures and most church towers on the Cape feature modest vanes or crucifixes. The angel at Rock Harbor is a welcome addition that gives the stately bell tower a rich personality.

Kanaga explained that was always the plan: "I would say the tower was unfinished. It was always intended to have a religious symbol on the tower, but the subject matter was undecided."

The angel is sure to be a conversation starter for the many visitors to Rock Harbor and people will assign their own meaning and symbolism. That will come with time. For now, the Community of Jesus should be applauded for the welcome addition to the waterfront.