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"Soaring Eagle"  
by Coupeville artist  
Greg Neal
Welcome from the Editor

Welcome to the fourteenth issue of Whidbey Life Magazine in which we explore art in its many forms as a presence in our daily lives.

◊ We start off with a walk through the wonderland of Price Sculpture Park. To come upon art in a forest setting, where it appears unannounced—peeking from the foliage or floating among the tree tops—is to be surprised and delighted.

◊ Salish Sea swimmers know that the open water—cold and wild—offers a chance to invigorate the body and wake up the senses. These intrepid folks, outfitted with the right gear and accompanied by the right companions, daily practice the art of taking the plunge.

◊ What’s more basic than bread? Anyone who’s ever tried making it knows there’s as much art as science involved in pulling a fragrant, crusty, risen loaf from the oven. Some of the island’s most artistic bakers share their stories about bread.

◊ Keeping a legacy alive for a farm that’s been in a family for generations involves the art of bringing strangers into the ancestral circle of family. And if story telling is an art, it’s one the youngest member of the Anderson family does well as she welcomes guests to the farm with a cup of coffee and bouquets of dahlias.

◊ Whether it’s a canoe or a ferry, there’s an art to building a boat. At Nichols Brother’s boatyard, the “woman’s touch” becomes the “woman’s torch” as female team members weld, paint, and outfit every vessel launched into Holmes Harbor.

◊ Mention “birds” in combination with “dots,” and one island artist immediately comes to mind. Meredith MacLeod’s adornments elevate functional, ordinary items—backpacks, sweaters, coasters—to distinctive, extraordinary items.

◊ Matching a family in need of a house with a house in need of a family is an art that Habitat for Humanity has perfected over its 23 years in Island County.

◊ The art made by the owners of Hierophant Meadery can be found in a bottle of fermented honey infused with plant buds, leaves, and/or flowers. The art and craft of making mead is surprisingly nuanced, affected by the kinds of nectar on which bees feed, the season of the year, and the type of botanicals used.

Dianna MacLeod, Editor & Publisher

This issue of Whidbey Life Magazine is dedicated to Lynn Murray Willeford (1/31/48-1/31/21), who used her considerable talents to make Whidbey life what it is by founding several community-based non-profits...so many that she laughingly referred to herself as “a serial social entrepreneur.” Lynn practiced that most fundamental and yet most elevated art of all: the art of a life well lived.
A Walk in Wonderland

By Lea Cramer

Walking through the arches of the enchanting sculpture forest near Coupeville is to be captivated by the vision of a man who never lost his sense of wonder. Inspired by his love for travel and nature, Scott Price conceptualized and cultivated the 16-acre wood to create the Price Sculpture Forest, a modern Wonderland experience.

When Price shared his vision with various artists in 2020, their response strengthened his sense of purpose. The experience was overwhelmingly positive, forcing Price to limit the number of sculptures per artist to two. The resulting collection of donated, loaned, and commissioned pieces includes the work of over 20 internationally renowned national and local artists.

The curated collaboration supplies a refreshing dose of nature and culture for those caught in the clutches of pandemic chaos and bleary-eyed screen time. It also encourages children to find art in an environment that embodies discovery—a world where things are, in the words of Lewis Carroll, “curiouser and curiouser.”

While meandering well-groomed
and clearly-marked trails, an invitation to reconnect with the primordial forest is deeply felt. Peeks through the trees yield glimpses of dappled sunlight sparkling off Saratoga Passage. Flora and fauna are well established in this woodland. The forest trail is a six-tenths of a mile double loop that encompasses two themes, “Nature Nurtured” and “Whimsy Way,” in which contemporary sculpture has been installed with an eye to each specific themed trail.

All sculptures are carefully selected to surprise, delight, and complement the immediate surroundings. Some installations appear in small clearings; some hide in foliage; some are suspended in trees. A placard placed discreetly on the opposite side of the trail identifies the art while steering clear of its visual lines. The curious are coaxed along in wide-eyed wonder by a gentle path abundant with possibilities and a QR code that allows for a self-guided tour, including commentary by individual artists.

A magnificent 14-foot aluminum and stainless-steel kinetic sculpture mesmerizingly fingers the breeze.

From a concatenation of metal fabrication and found objects blooms a towering bouquet, harkening us back to our childhood when our unfettered imaginations could conceive flowers made of anything, including glitter.

*Tyrannosaurus Rex* by Joe Treat, an artist who specializes in bark and driftwood sculpture.
colorful construction paper, and popsicle sticks.

A mash-up of engineering and art hatches Soaring Eagle. Stretching its wings 110 inches, it captures in steel what we so often see mounting the cerulean skies overhead on Whidbey Island.

From old-growth trees and snags emerges a driftwood and bark Tyrannosaurus Rex. The exclamations of explorers echo through the woodland as each comes face to face with the silently roaring incarnation of the prehistoric beast.

Even mythological leaves its mark on the sculpture forest. Larger than life, hand-carved iridescent feathers float down in Icarus Was Here, while a wired twisted Pegasus soars amongst the treetops on his 17-foot wingspan.

Some of the art is realistic and recognizable (a mischievous otter slinking through leafy vegetation), some is abstract (a thrusting rocket). Compared to the unusual and wonderful art in the Price Sculpture Park, a Cheshire cat perched on a tree limb, like the one in Alice in Wonderland, might be considered conventional.

The playful and experimental installations invite us to appreciate a visual culture within the context of nature. Some even offer a thought-provoking commentary on the complicated relationship between man and nature. A single chair perilously perched atop spindly branches is a nod to how we mine the natural world to create “unnatural” modern conveniences. “It’s a reminder that the further we, as a race, try to distance ourselves from nature, the more precarious we become,” said Price. A trunkless pair of legs made of oak logs, beeswax, and mycelium illustrate our connectedness to the earth while providing a home for botany and bugs.

But, like nature itself, the installations are ever-evolving; they are changed by the elements, by time, or by the artists. Former Burning Man
installation, *Pentillium*, is an example. The artist has grown his piece in stages, treating the viewer to a new experience over time.

Thanks to the Price family in partnership with the Whidbey Camano Land Trust and US Navy, this magical parcel of land—once eyed for development—is now classified as a Conservation Easement, preserving it permanently.

Whether you are a child or a child at heart, the Price Sculpture Forest enchants. It’s the perfect place to explore, with over 28 installations to tease out curiosity, ignite creativity, and foster divergent thinking. It returns us to a place of reflection and wondering. After all, as Lewis Carroll’s Cheshire cat quipped, “Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality.”

For more information, visit https://sculptureforest.org

Lea Cramer is a blogger, writing about her travels and life in a tiny house on wheels. She and her daughter recently became certified death doula.

Marsha Morgan is a retired real estate developer from California. She is now a Langley based fine art photographer who has served as WLM’s photo editor and contributed photos for over 50 stories for the magazine.

Joe Treat’s Gorilla was designed to be placed at this exact location.

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From top: Three children enter their names at the exit kiosk created by Michael Hauser and Ken Price. More than forty pieces of laminated cedar were used to make the arcs at the matching entry and exit kiosks. Artists Linda and Michael Hauser of Langley hand cut and painted the Whimsy Way trail sign. The Hausers collaborated with Ken Price to create signage for the Nature Nurtured trail.