FAC Preps for April Cherry Blossom Festival

Members of the Ferndale Arts Commission and several volunteers planted 10 donated cherry trees (Prunus x yedoensis ‘Akebono’) along the trail at the southern edge of the Phillips 66 Sports Complex. The Elefson family, who own Triple E Tree Farm in Ferndale, generously volunteered their tree planting skills.

The first annual Cherry Blossom Festival is intended to nurture the relationship Ferndale shares with our Japanese Sister City, Minami Boso, to learn about and honor our cultural differences and commonalities, and to beautify Ferndale with iconic Japanese flowering cherry trees.

During the festival, participatory educational opportunities will be offered. On April 11, Shelley Thomas, who has studied tea ceremonies for 20 years, will present The Way of Tea at the Ferndale Public Library from 10 a.m. to noon. There is a $5 Fee for Japanese tea and sweets, and participants should bring a small bowl (approx. 5” wide x 2.5” deep) for the tea ceremony.

On April 18, Michael Dylan Welch, an internationally renowned Haiku expert, will teach a workshop on the Art of Writing Haiku from 10 a.m. – noon and 1 – 3 p.m. at the Tillicum House in Pioneer Park.

On April 25, Hans Wressnigg, of NIWA Japanese Inspired Landscape Design, will discuss Japanese Landscape Design from 10 a.m. to noon at the Ferndale Public Library.

The month-long festival is also supported by the City of Ferndale, Ferndale Chamber of Commerce, Ferndale Downtown Association, Ferndale Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board, Ferndale Tree Board, The Sister City Association, Allison Amy Jewelry, The Checkered Apron, Ferndale Country Store, Kent’s Garden and Nursery, and Portal Way Farm and Garden.

Save the Dates!
- March 17 (5 p.m.) – 2015 Free Verse Photo entries due at City Hall
- April – National Poetry Month
- April 11 (10-noon) - The Way of Tea @Ferndale Library
- April 18 (10-noon & 1-3) - Art of Writing Haiku @Tillicum House
- April 25 (10-noon) - Japanese Landscape Design @Ferndale Library
- April 30 – Poem in Your Pocket Day
- June 17 (5 p.m.) – 2015 Art in the Park artist applications due at City Hall
3rd Annual Free Verse Photo Project

In celebration of National Poetry Month, the Ferndale Arts Commission extends a Call to Artists for its 3rd annual Free Verse Photo Project. Just select a line or two from a poem and present it in a nontraditional, unexpected way. [See below or search http://www.poets.org/poetsorg]

When you've completed your creation, take a photo, mount it for display, and submit it to the FAC. [Note: photographs must be a minimum of 8”x10”].

Entry forms are available at City Hall or online at www.cityofferndale.org/arts.php. Entries will be accepted in person or by mail at Ferndale City Hall, 2095 Main Street, Ferndale, WA. 98248. The entry deadline is 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 17, and online entries cannot be accepted.

Prizes from local businesses will be awarded to three winning entries, but all entries will be displayed in participating businesses throughout Ferndale during April, National Poetry Month. All ages are encouraged to enter and join the celebration of the richness of the human experience so beautifully expressed through the visual and literary arts.

New Summer Children’s Community Theater

The FAC has been chosen to receive a $5000 grant from the Whatcom Community Foundation to produce a Ferndale Summer Children’s Community Theater. The free, four-week camp will provide 60 children aged 8-18 with the opportunity to produce a musical, including four live performances.

Children will work in small groups, led by paid staff and volunteers, to experience every aspect of producing a show, from learning about acting, singing, dancing and stage direction, to set design and stage/performer management.

In April, advertising will begin for paid camp staff positions, as well as for unpaid volunteers. In May, staff will hold auditions open to any child living in the Ferndale School District. Children may also apply to work on set design and/or the stage crew.

Rehearsals are scheduled to begin July 6 with performances on July 31 (7 p.m.), August 1 (2 and 7 p.m.), and August 2 (2 p.m.)

Art In The Park 2015

The Ferndale Arts Commission will host its 4th annual Art in the Park event Saturday, Sept. 12 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 13 from noon – 4 p.m. in the newly renovated Pioneer Pavilion Community Center next to Pioneer Park (former site of the Ferndale Public Library).

Art in the Park is open to all artists residing in Washington State and all types of art media. An application can be found at http://www.cityofferndale.org/arts.php or picked up at Ferndale City Hall. The application deadline for Art in the Park is 5 p.m. June 17, 2015.
FAC Artist Of The Quarter
By Sam Taylor

For his wonderful storytelling and artistry, children’s author, Paul Owen Lewis, has been named the Ferndale Arts Commission Artist of the Quarter for Spring 2015.

Lewis is most known for his native-inspired work “Storm Boy,” a book that earned him the American Book Award and a nomination for the Caldecott Medal – awarded to the top children’s book in America annually. It follows a young man thrown into the world of an unfamiliar orca “people” who teach him of their culture.

Arts Commission Chairperson Marla Morrow says the group recognized him for his eight books, but in particular those early triumphs of “Storm Boy” and “Frog Girl,” which recognize tribal cultures and stories.

“His books for children are a striking confluence of precise narrative and bold graphic design based on the rich lore of Northwest Coast Native Peoples,” Morrow says. “Paul Owen Lewis takes us on the journey of the hero which is the common mythology of all people. His art enlightens and unites us.”

Paul Owen Lewis with his a character from his “MotoMice Forever!” series. (Photo by Sam Taylor)

Though most noted for “Storm Boy,” Lewis hasn’t been idle. The proof is in his latest drawings, “MotoMice Forever!” a simple concept of mice on motorcycles coming together as a community of riders.

Paul Owen Lewis was once just a kid who liked to draw. He was born and raised in the suburban Seattle area. He attended Cornish Fine Arts School and earned his Fine Arts degree, then became a long-term substitute teacher in Kirkland. That was when Lewis begrudgingly went to a school assembly and saw children’s author Jasper Tomkins talking about his books.

“He proceeds to charm the pants off everybody,” Lewis remembers. “He’s doing his own art, he’s inspiring children, I think he’s getting paid, and he didn’t have to grade papers at the end of the day.” Lewis had found a calling.
Tomkins explained to him that writing children’s books was not a hobby. It was a job. So the substitute teacher proceeded to work on learning the craft of storytelling.

Inspiration for his first book came on an accidental trip to Friday Harbor, when he had meant to go to a different island to visit Tomkins and his wife.

Having to wait for another ferry, he wandered into The Whale Museum in Friday Harbor, and for the first time learned that orcas – back then commonly referred to “killer whales” – lived in Puget Sound.

Growing up in an urban environment, even literally on the banks of the ocean, he had never contemplated whales being there. “It was the ’60s and ’70s, man, it was rock ‘n’ roll. We didn’t care about wildlife.”

Soon after, he dreamed he was on a boat and whales swimming underneath suddenly came out of the water and swam up over the boat. “Davy’s Dream” was born. It’s the tale of a boy who ignores those who would scoff at his dream of sailing among the orcas that live around the San Juan Islands.

Lewis also took the path of becoming a presenter to school children, though with a new twist in teaching them how to develop story ideas and make them come to life.

Lewis has spent many years teaching children nationwide how to find inspiration and turn it into the reality of a good story.

Each year he spends time in Las Vegas second grade classrooms to write stories with groups of children. He has spoken in the Ferndale School District, too. Children love not only his stories, but learning how to develop their own.

“At my funeral, people will probably say, ‘Wow, he was a great presenter. He did some OK books, too.’”

Whether it be developing children’s stories or carving Native American art – something he learned from one of the seminal carvers and native scholars in the world, Bill Holm – Lewis sees his mission as going through life “wondering.”

“Who I really am and, I think, all artists are, is an explorer.”

Welcome New Ferndale Arts Commissioners!

Two new members have joined the FAC. Shane Weston, a Ferndale High School senior with a passion for the arts, was appointed in January. In March, Nicole Christiansen brought her many talents to the group.

Both new members are already hard at work on projects to bring more art and cultural events to Ferndale.

Ferndale Arts Commission

Our Mission and Objectives:
The Ferndale Arts Commission is established to provide leadership for the cultural enrichment of our community.

Promote Expand public art’s role in economic development and the growth of tourism.
Advocate Be a force that champions the arts and their importance in the cultural development of the community.
Educate Promote broad community awareness of the arts and education in the arts and the city’s historic resources.
Connect Promote opportunities and support to community artists and arts organizations by providing a bridge between artists and the community at large.
Adviser Review aesthetic and design issues regarding works of art, architecture, and landscape architecture on city-owned property and advise the city council and city administration.

Commissioners: Marta Morrow, Beth Buckland, Barbara Ingram, Ellen McAneny, Shane Weston, Kathleen Pate, Nicole Christiansen