

History of the San Juan Island Public Library

Back in 1922, the first library, Friday Harbor Public Library, opened on February 4th on Spring Street next to the drug store. Books were donated by the local citizens and the Bellingham American Legion. The Legion's Save-N-Auxiliary began contributing \$100 a year starting in 1924 to buy new books and continued this annual donation for fifty-nine years.

Then, in 1935, concerns about the safety of the building prompted a search for new quarters. The community constructed a one-story, concrete block building with funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a depression-era program established to provide work for the unemployed. The 30' x 85' structure, owned by the Town of Friday Harbor, cost less than \$7,000 to build and was divided into two rooms. One room served as the Town Council meeting room and the other room served as the library for which the town provided free rent and utilities.

By the late 1970's, the island's population had grown substantially and financial pressure spurred the creation of a **Friends of the Library** group to help support the library's needs. Even with *Friends*' support, continuing financial and space problems prompted the creation of an island-wide library district in 1982. The Board immediately began looking for larger accommodations for the library's growing needs.

The library district purchased the present site, a 4,500 square-foot former restaurant, in 1983 and installed the library with minimal remodeling. The first alteration of the building was undertaken from April to September of 1988, during which the library occupied temporary quarters in the Moose Lodge. The renovated building was dedicated in October 1988.

In 1992, the Library Board initiated a long-range planning process with one of the goals being a facility expansion. In 1994 construction began on the library addition/renovation, which doubled the size of the library to approximately 9,600 square - feet. The expanded library reopened in February 1995. The first volunteer Art Committee provided art exhibits from 1996-2005.

The present layout came in 2005, adding shelf space, a quiet area for study, an enlarged community room, and improved space for the children's and teen's books.



"It is so much fun to come into work and find a whole new collection to enjoy."
"We love that we can bring our art here for people to enjoy."
"Having her drawing here makes her feel so grown up."
"The art works make the library feel so cozy."
*"Can I bring something for the next show?" **YES!***
Please pick up a list of the upcoming dates and themes at the checkout desk.

Brochure created by the SJI Library Art Committee 2012
Text by: Diane Martindale, Art Committee

Photos by: DiCristina Photography
Layout by: Sam Connery and Kathy Cope



ART IN OUR

By San Juan Island Public L

Since 1996, artists and art patrons have been sharing their work with the library. Usually, once a year, new art collections are put on display. This includes pieces that are always on view in addition to those that rotate in and out.

Several times a year, the library displays art by local artists-professional and amateur-in addition to national and international art. Examples of past shows are *People, Wonderland, Sea and Shoreline, Art and Pets*. The Art committee has scheduled

On your way into the library, you passed a **Birdbath** created by sculptor Tom Small and donated to the library by Valena Dismukes in 1997. The piece was dedicated on October 11, 1997 to the memory of Mary and Clobert Broussard.





Over the entry you'll find brightly colored hand-painted blooms on silk donated by the artist Mary Sly.



In the director's office you can enjoy a watercolor by Pat Froelich named ***Going Fishing***.

Commanding the large wall in that office, is an antique Chinese silk embroidery donated by Patsi Daugherty. She bought it in Xi'an China while visiting the terra cotta army.



In the Children's section look for the charming small rock Cat by Arctis Cry



Mason to Fry when they were roommates during a 1996. Barbara wanted it represented in the mural Virginia Mason. Among the other items painted are playful: written by our Island's own Ernie Gann is a children's book, ***Charlott's Web*** by E.B. White, a r Bryant, and a tribute to a friend of Rebecca Barnard Edvard Munch. In a snow globe dances a Winnie deal with San Juan Island's Pig War and Pacific N such as weaving and painting. There were original at the end of the room had a portrait in memory of had a portrait of an unknown woman to balance the television screen covered the one mural, so artist Bryn Barnard painted Kaski's portrait into the the charming credits in the lower right corner that i and Lee Bryant of I Foolum & Howe.



In the restrooms a ***Winter Path***, a photograph from a Robert Hares Stav and abstract floral print by Susan Ve Gantner, donated Diane Martindale 2010



Mural in Community Room

In 1997, Barbara Fry was given \$1000 by Virginia Mason to be used in memory of Barbara's sister, Mary Helen Kaski, who had died the previous July. The library director and Barbara came up with the idea to use the money to enhance the bare community room and make it more inviting. They worked with Rebecca Barnard on the design. Lee Bryant and Rebecca created the faux finish and trim marbling. Lanny Little painted the trompe l'oeil murals. The *Polar Bear* book by Nikita Ovsyanikov was a gift from Virginia

At the end of a wall in the central library is an eight-foot tall sculpture, *Starlight* by artist Tom Small, contributed by

In the Young Adult Section you can find a Small Totem Pole of carved wood depicting a Thunderbird on top and a bear below, donated by Clayton Burrell.



The following pieces usually reside near the magazine racks, but do g

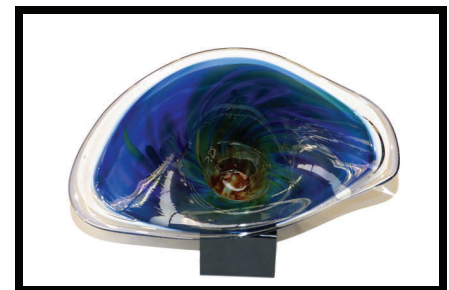


Multi-colored
tall, by artis
collections

Three-dimensional
glass Lotus flowers
by Jennifer Holmes



Shell-shaped
glass, dona



Blue
Glass
an un
North
donat
Burto

Fluted Standing Vase of glass, donated
by the artist, John Walsh, in 1996.

Our most-asked-about art piece is the dominant set of carved wooden panels by Ruth Byers. Carved in 1995, they are a tribute to the Spanish folk tale, *El Sombrero de Tres Picos* (*The Three-Cornered Hat*). The artist made a special effort to use Cuban mahogany for this project. Ruth carved a little angel in the clock tower. The sculpture was donated to the library in 1995 by James and Lilian Byers.

The Three-Cornered Hat by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón first appeared in 1874. His version was so richly colored that it was the first to give world currency to the oft-told Spanish story.



A guide to the panels is inscribed on the back in Spanish*. Here is the English translation by Juan Lopez. The guide describes the panels as follows:



No inscription - priest with old man and dog.
 Uncle Lucas and Pinona by the grapevines.
 Frasquita Liviana
 No inscription - grapes.
 The illustrious Magistrate - Mr. Eugenio de Zuniga y Ponce de Leon and Sheriff Gardunia and two laborers.
 "The Three-Cornered Hat" (1874) - by Pedro Antonio de Alarcon (1833-1891). Designed and carved in wood by Ruth Byers.
 Madame Mercedes and children (wife of the Magistrate). Mr. Juan Lopes -Town Mayor.
 Montserrat - in Cataluna near Barcelona. 9th Century. Destroyed by fire, 1811. Center of resistance during the Peninsular War.
 The current date is 1827
 Alhambra (a castle) Granada. Built 1248-1354. 13 towers, 35 acres. Last stronghold of the Moors 1492.
 Bridge of San Martin -Toledo. "Repository of all that is oldest - proudest and most private in the national culture of Spain."
 Alcazar (Segovia). Built for Alfonso the 11th. Destroyed by fire 1862, Currently (German Romantic Gothic Revival style). Isabel quelled mob there
 Monastery of Jeronimos de Guadalupe (city) Pueblo (Franciscan)
 The priests or clergymen - you also like Mrs. Frasquita!....and the truth is - added after a moment - that she is the only woman in the story who is not a woman.
 * as translated.