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## Sunken Park Mural

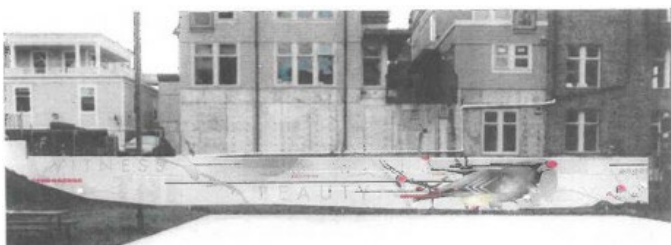


*Mural location at Sunken Park – Tim Dustrude photo*

### Artist to commence mural installation at Sunken Park beginning May 13th

The Town of Friday Harbor invites the public to view the installation of a mural in Sunken Park beginning May 13th. A celebration of the completed work will be held at 2 pm Sunday, May 22nd and will include chamber music courtesy of Sue Collado, Sasha von Dassow, Hanneke Klein-Robbenhaar, and Traci Wilson and a reading by the winner of the Friday Harbor Arts Commission (FHAC) Sunken Park poetry contest.

Kirkland artist Jake Wagoner's work was selected from several proposals submitted by professional local and northwest artists. In an October 2015 statement to the Town Council, the FHAC said they found Wagoner's piece, "*Witness the Beauty*," both sophisticated and intriguing, and that his subject choice of the waxwing bird as an indigenous but not over-represented animal was unexpected and appropriate for the park setting.



*Artist's depiction of the mural-to-be.*

The mural selection process included a review by an Art Selection Panel (ASP) composed of representatives of the Arts Commission, local art community, and neighbors of Sunken Park. According to the Arts Commission, the panel members expressed appreciation for the experience and skill of all of the artists and for the degree of research and careful thought that went into each of their concepts. The ASP independently reviewed the proposals then came to a consensus. The selection was discussed publicly at FHAC and Town Council meetings in late 2015. "Public input was critical to our art selection process," said Arts Commissioner Debbie Pigman, adding, "The commission wants the selection and installation of our projects to be an exciting and memorable process for the community."

This is the first public art project for the FHAC which was formed in 2015 to advise the Town Council on the cultivation, selection, acquisition, and placement of public art. The commission was asked by the Council to pursue mural art for Sunken Park as part of ongoing revitalization of the park that has included new landscaping, fencing, boardwalk, and playground equipment as well as refurbishment of the benches and basketball court. Additional improvements are planned for the near future. ###

## Witness the Beauty



*Mural artist Jake Wagoner – Tim Dustrude photo*

That's the theme of the mural currently being painted in town down at the Sunken Park. If you pop down there this week, you're likely to run into Jake Wagoner, a Kirkland, WA, mural artist who is busy

painting away on this newest piece of public art in Friday Harbor.

Jake started out painting as a kid, and art for him has become much more important as he grew up. He has a strong graphic arts background and has been doing mural work professionally for about 5 years now, and he's getting more and more busy as time goes by. After this, he will return to Kirkland and go directly to meetings for two murals he'll be doing next, and then later this summer, he'll be doing a large project for the Issaquah Skate Park.

He submitted two proposals to the Town for this mural, one that was more straightforward – a photo-realistic image of [an otter and the] Lime Kiln Lighthouse, and this one that was ultimately chosen that he calls *“Witness the Beauty.”*



*Jake Wagoner – Tim Dustrude photo*

“I wanted it to be a reminder to viewers, and to myself, to always try to see the bright side of things,” he says.

The mural will be finished in time for this coming Sunday's dedication at 2:00 pm with a reading of Bill Weissinger's winning poem *“What You Don't Want to Do.”* ###

## Witness the Beauty Ceremony



*Mural artist Jake Wagoner, his fiancée Jeane Meyersahm, and their son Dylan after the celebration – Louise Dustrude photo*

It was a happy celebration on Sunday in Sunken Park when the mural *“Witness the Beauty”* by artist Jake Wagoner of Seattle was dedicated. A beautiful day, chamber music from the bandstand, a prize-winning poem read by Bill Weissinger, and an appreciative crowd complemented the visual art. It's a continuation of the Town's efforts to improve our enjoyment of the park.

On Sunday, May 22nd, members of the community, the Town Council, and even passing tourists came to *“Witness the Beauty.”*

Jake *“Dkoy”* Wagoner, the Seattle-based artist, presented his mural at the ceremony in Sunken Park. Wagoner gave a small speech at the event:

*“Thank you everybody for coming out. This is an idea that I've actually had for about three years now, so it's really cool to see it come to life. I'm glad I'm getting a lot of good response from the town and everybody who's stopped by. So thank you guys.”*

Wagoner is a designer and muralist who gets *“inspiration from the universe, animals, nature, and the connection between us.”* His art, design, and murals reflect strong imagery that honor his subjects.



*Left to right: Julie Greene, Town of Friday Harbor Arts Commission Coordinator, with commission members Fiona Small, Susan Williams, Diane Martindale, Debbie Pigman, Lori Stokes, Farhad Ghatan, and Megan Kilpatrick-Boe (Not pictured: commission member Ruth Offen). Keith Busha photo*

Also featured at the ceremony was Bill Weissinger, winner of the Sunken Park poetry contest sponsored by the Friday Harbor Arts Commission. Bill read his poem *“What You Don't Want To Do”* to celebrate and honor the beauty of San Juan Island:

## What You Don't Want To Do.

*When the camas are blooming sapphire or fawn lilies hide in white patches, you don't want to drive down Bailer Hill to find glacier-clad Mount Baker reaching out for you,*

*but if you do drive down Bailer Hill, don't turn right on Little Road and right again on Cattle Point, because that will take you to American Camp,*

*but if you go to American Camp, don't smell the shoals of Nootka rose or walk the miles of beach-logged gravel where always you'll find solitude enough to listen to the whisshhhh of waves washing against that tightness in your chest,*

*but if you're gentled by the waves, still ignore across the Salish Sea the white Olympic peaks, tinged pink perhaps by the setting sun,*

*but if you are unlucky enough to see this mountain range in alpenglow, don't listen in the faltering light for whale-breath.*

*If, spiting my best counsel, you've heard the whoosh of whales as the dusk tides carry our sunset west, go back from whence you came. You think I'm kidding, but I'm not. Really,*

*since if next morning you're still here, you might drive to Whale Watch Park, in which case don't walk downhill, because that will take you to more eagles, and maybe Orcas breaching, likely schools of porpoise, salmon jumping, seals, or red-beaked pink-legged black-bodied Oystercatchers, and always a lighthouse, it too warning you off.*

*And don't walk uphill, because that will take you through quiet paths in private woods with ravens, pileated woodpeckers, chickadees, and Kinglets in the red-trunked madronas and the firs, and if you know what's good for you, you won't just stand in the parking lot, talking to visitors from Germany or China or France or to any locals either for that matter, all having forgotten their aloofness back on the mainland and so happy to chat,*

*but if you do go to the Park, on leaving don't head north to English Camp, with more shore and quiet woods and what the Islanders call a mountain, which you should not climb though it's an easy hike of only twenty-minutes, because – and now we're to the nub – from Mount Young's top you'll see not only Henry Island, not merely Vancouver Island and Salt Spring, but all the way back home,*

*and if you can see all the way home, you'll realize you are seeing in a circle, that home is San Juan Island now. Don't say I didn't warn you.*

Mayor Carrie Lacher concluded the ceremony: “By the power vested in me as mayor of the Town of Friday Harbor, I do hereby proclaim this a beautiful day in the town. I hope that you go forth and witness the beauty however you may experience it. Whether it's visual, the written word, music, the sound of whales, but I hope you all take a moment today to appreciate and witness the beauty that is all around us. Thank you again.” ###

### **UPDATE:**

**In August 2021, the Town Council brought the artist back to retouch the piece. What was originally intended as a 5-year installation had become too popular to replace.**

