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LIFESTYLE



Inside:

*Beyond organic, Wildling Farm
Hiking for the outdoor enthusiast
From fiber to fashion*



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A new year, a new opportunity to explore the wonderland that is the Olympic Peninsula.

In this issue of Lifestyle, we're thrilled to introduce a talented group of makers, dreamers, and visionaries that exemplify what life is like in our part of Washington state.

Starting in Port Townsend, you'll meet the folks that brainstormed the comfiest hoodies on the Peninsula.

Making a pit stop near Four Corners showcases the new business Dog and Wine Designs, where local woodworker Kate Marshall crafts furniture and functional art from local timber.

A little road trip to Port Ludlow will introduce you to the Port Ludlow Hiking Club, where anyone is welcome to join in for spectacular year-round hikes with other outdoor enthusiasts.

Connect with your inner child as you follow the story of Tribal Edge, based in the tiny town of Blyn, sandwiched between Discovery Bay and Sequim. If connecting with nature, getting fit, and experiencing the outdoors on a deeper level appeals to you, this is the place to be.

Even if you've never dropped a line in the water, you're in good hands with local fishing guide Mike Howell, of Howell's Guide Service. There's something biting anytime of the year,

and if you're up for an aquatic venture solo or with friends, a guided trip on one of the famed Olympic Peninsula waterways is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Molding her way into clay is Sequim artist Linda Collins Chapman, whose ceramic carving makes heirloom quality collectible works of art.

And wrapping up our Peninsula tour is a young couple from Hawaii who have created Wildling Farm in Port Angeles. (They even deliver their trademark sourdough tortillas!)

We think you'll enjoy meeting the latest group of folks who call the Olympic Peninsula home. Whether you're just passing through, on vacation, or a long-time neighbor, this is just a sampling of the talent, local products, and unique offerings that makes living here a treasured experience.

Donna Etchey, Publisher

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TAKE A HIKE

Local club welcomes all outdoor enthusiasts

By Laura Jean Schneider

Photos courtesy of John Fillers

When Arizona transplant John Nuernberg relocated to the Pacific Northwest, he was immediately welcomed into a little-known Peninsula gem: the Port Ludlow Hiking Club.

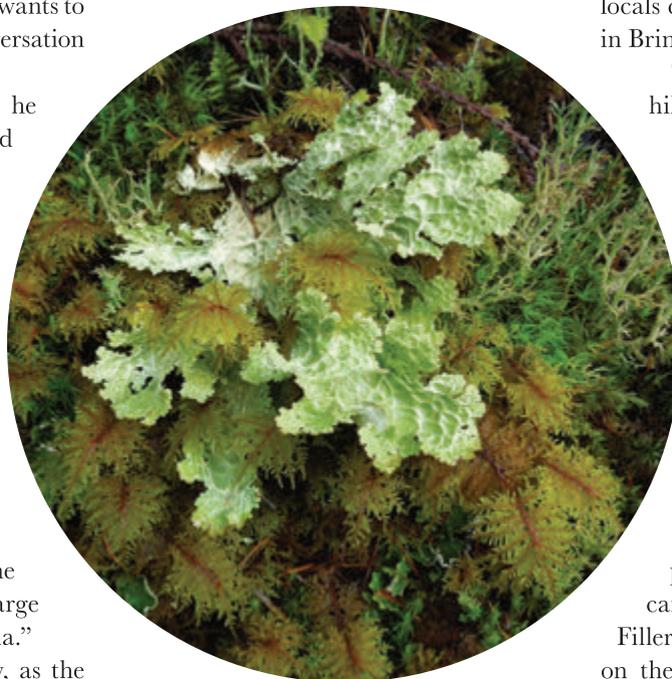
“It’s open to anybody who wants to hike,” he said in a recent conversation about the informal club.

“There is no president,” he added, but there between 15 and 20 members.

As a recent addition, Nuernberg has been on board for about a year; his position is unofficial scribe for the group. He manages bi-weekly emails about upcoming hikes; visitors and locals can sign up on the hiking club’s website.

“We moved here a year ago from Arizona to Port Ludlow,” Nuernberg said of he and his wife. “We had a real large hiking club in Surprise, Arizona.”

Before settling on Ludlow, as the



locals call it, the couple owned a cabin in Brinnon.

“We’re very familiar with the hiking in the area,” Nuernberg said. So it seemed natural, then, that he and his wife offered to guide some of the club’s treks.

The club focuses on day hikes, Nuernberg said, although sometimes multi-day excursions are planned to explore areas farther away.

“Day Hiking Olympic Peninsula” by Craig Romano is the source for many of the club’s most popular hikes. Would-be hikers can check out webmaster John Fillers beautiful nature photography on the club’s site, a preview of what

◀ Spectacular mountain views can be found along the Adventure Route Trail.

▶ Enjoy lush forest and plenty of running water while hiking the Olympic Peninsula with a group of like-minded hikers.

each location can offer.

“One of our favorites is Lena Lake,” Nuerenberg said, the lower trail being an easy route, but by taking the upper trail, one could add eight miles to create a 14-mile hike.

The club takes “lots of hikes in the Hurricane Ridge area,” he said, noting the 360-degree views.

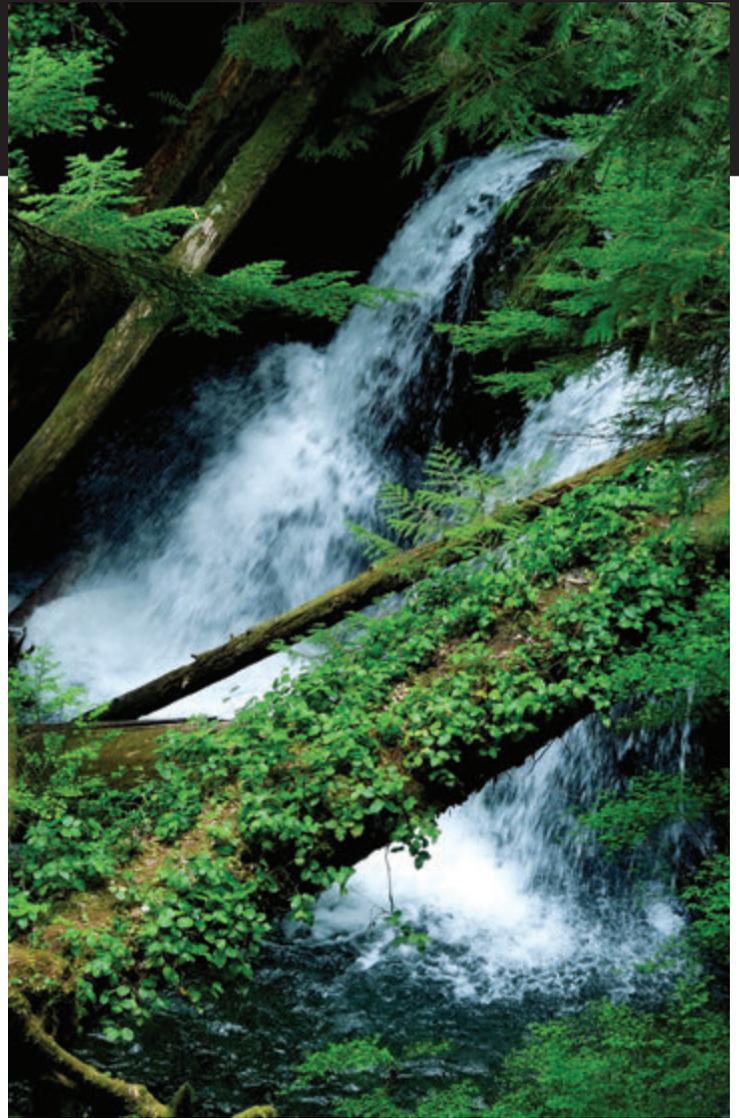
“We’re looking at primarily trails that are not too far away.” Hikers meet every other Friday at 8:15 a.m. at the Bridge Deck parking lot in Port Ludlow. Car pooling and community lunches are popular, pandemic permitting.

Nuerenberg said hikers should bring a backpack, first-aid kit, food, water, trekking poles, and wear good shoes for hiking in slippery conditions. Even though the Pacific Northwest is often lush and green, you can still get dehydrated, he warned.

Most group hikes have a leader, and a sweep, who follows behind to make sure everyone and everything is accounted for. Pets are welcomed in places where animals are permitted. Around 10 to 12 people usually show up on a given Friday hike day.

“It’d be nice to have more leaders,” Nuerenberg said, and so far the club has expanded mostly through word of mouth and by advertising locally.

Whether you live nearby, or are in town for the weekend, the Port Ludlow Hiking Club is a great place to meet new faces, get some exercise, and explore the Peninsula. See the Spring 2022 hike schedule and more at portludlowhikingclub.com.



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Dan Shyles and Rachel Herring Shyles are the proud owners of Wildling Farm in Port Angeles. They relocated to the Olympic Peninsula in 2020.



PUTTING DOWN SOME ROOTS:

A couple kisses wanderlust goodbye to embrace farming on the Peninsula

By Laura Jean Schneider
Photos courtesy of Wildling Farm

It's hard to imagine that anyone would move away from Hawaii, but one plucky couple did just that in 2020. When Rachel Herring Shyles lost her job at the nonprofit Hale Puna on the island of Kauai, the couple made a big decision.

"It was quite a leap of faith," Herring Shyles said of her and her partner Dan Shyles decision to move to Port Angeles, but having friends in Olalla, on the nearby Kitsap Peninsula, clinched the deal. They found a piece of property they were interested in: A heartfelt letter to the owners gave the young couple an edge over a buyer with more money. The story of the farm-to-be was that compelling.

"We've both hit our 30s, and we both realized it was time to start putting down some roots," Herring Shyles said. "I didn't want to be that mother working 50, 60 hours a week."

A farm seemed like a natural fit, giving her experience with a food forest at Hale Puna, and her gravitation to landscapes.

As a girl, Herring Shyles had been "enchanted with the Pacific

Northwest rainforest," and inspired by the protected and intact flora and fauna there. She grew up in suburban Nashville, but managed to follow her passion for nature, earning a biology degree and working in conservation, interests that are easy to put to use in her new surroundings. Her husband Dan is passionate about education, and teaches full-time at Port Townsend

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▶ Home-canned preserves, like this blackberry pepper jam, sell quickly.

High School. (There probably aren't that many farmers with degrees in astrophysics, but he's one of them.)

"We're both just nature lovers," Herring Shyles said. "I wanted my business, you know, to be centered around the place."

Herring Shyles takes charge of the daily operations of Wildling Farm, 3 acres of paradise west of Port Angeles.

Winter is the quiet season, now that the holidays are through. Their flock of 33 chickens are awaiting more daylight to kick-start egg production, and Herring Shyles has to get caught up on restocking some of her staples, like sourdough tortillas made with Chimacum-based Finnrivier Grainery flour, raw milk soaps made with Sequim's Dungeness Valley Creamery, and handcrafted rosemary salt.

"The tortillas have been a great hit," she said, adding that she offers a subscription service for consumables, enabling bulk savings. She also offers delivery within a 25-mile radius.

"There's a real need for this," she said.

Offering delivery has allowed Wildling Farm to make genuine connections and provide wholesome



products to folks who really need that extra love.

There's a single mom of three, without a vehicle, who gets to feed nutritious handmade tortillas to her kids. A woman with a broken leg who can't drive to the Sequim Farmers Market, where Herring Shyles had a booth last year. And a new mom nursing a newborn who finds it easiest to stay at home right now.

"One of the biggest challenges is to not take on more than I can handle," Herring Shyles admitted, laughing.

She's clearly capable, and used to

having a range of irons in the fire. As she and Dan settle into their relatively new home, she's been genuinely moved by the local response to their arrival.

"How welcoming the Olympic Peninsula community has been to us," she said. "I couldn't have asked for a better first year in business."

Although far from Hawaii, the spiritual concept of "aloha" seems to linger here in Washington, Herring Shyles said.

"I've really felt aloha here, just that sense of giving, and familial care."

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FROM FIBER TO FASHION

Northwest duo perfect a cult classic

By Laura Jean Schneider

Photos courtesy of Kiss the Rain

Olia Kerzhner wasn't having any luck finding the perfect hoodie. As someone who moved to the Pacific Northwest to be closer to the rain and overcast days, she was hunting for a daily staple, and coming up empty.

"I just couldn't find like a nice, simple, classic, hoodie," she said during a recent conversation.

Her criteria? "100 percent cotton and high quality."

Unable to find something she wanted to wear, in 2016 Kerzhner decided to make her own.

A friend and former colleague, Brendan Melville, who had also worked at Google as a software engineer, was immediately curious about the process.

"I was really passionate about it, and he was really supportive," Kerzhner said. "We kind of took the designer approach to hoodies," she said, laughing.

Kerzhner had never sewn a stitch until she started Kiss the Rain, her hoodie business.

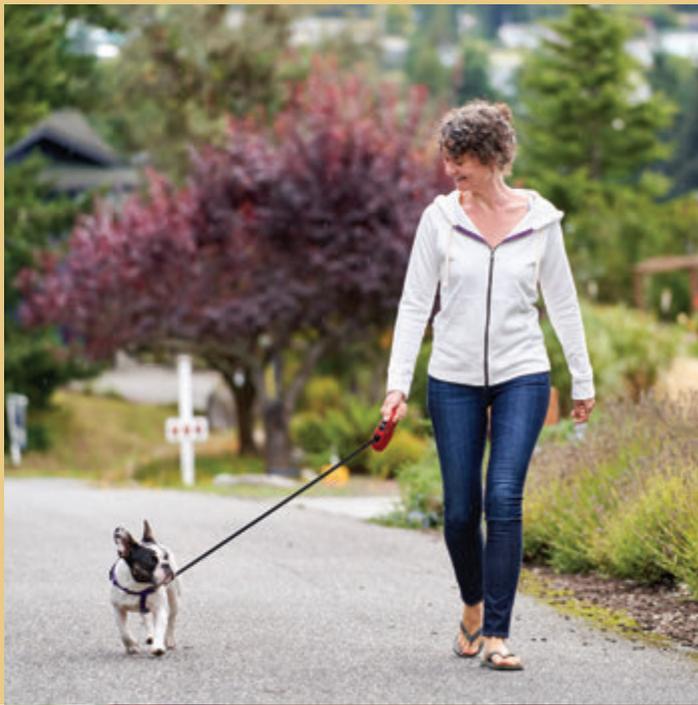
"That's my personal love letter to the Pacific Northwest," she said of her choice. "I moved here for the rain."

Determined to understand the process from the pattern up, Kerzhner actually bought multiple sewing machines and taught herself sewing while her hoodie

» *Continued on Page 14*

Brendan Melville, co-creator of Kiss the Rain,
models the men's pullover-style hoodie.





Kiss the Rain hoodies are available in three colors zip-style for women, and three colors for men, with two pullover options.

More at [kisstherain.us](https://www.kisstherain.us)



» *Continued from Page 13*

prototypes were in the works in Los Angeles.

“We’re very committed to ‘Made in the USA,’” she said. The zippers are made in the U.S., too, and the garments are made and dyed in LA before being shipped to Port Townsend, where Kerzhner has lived for six years now.

For such a basic wardrobe essential, the process of building a hoodie from scratch was time-consuming. “How is any of it even done?” she asked herself.

She had no idea.

Off Kerzhner went on an information-gathering mecca. She headed to Seattle, her former home, where she paid a professional sewer \$200 for three hours of non-stop questions. Then she headed to LA in her camper van with her beloved French bulldog, visiting fabric mills, zipper studios, designers, and dye houses.

“Garment dyeing,” she said, “is a whole other layer of complication.”

Just as she’d find a cotton fabric she liked, the garment wouldn’t survive the extremely high temperatures needed to achieved the Kiss the Rain lived-in look.

▲ Olia Kerzhner walks her dog, wearing one of the women’s zip hoodies.

◀ Olia Kerzhner decided to create the perfect hoodie when she couldn’t find one she wanted to wear. She taught herself to sew during the process.

Olia Kerzhner in the mulberry colored women's hoodie. All Kiss the Rain hoodies are made in the USA.



Four or so different prototypes were mailed to the creative duo from LA, with another round of edits each time.

“I have expectations,” Kerzhner said, admitting with a laugh that she’s a fiber snob.

In 2018, one year after Kerzhner decided to create her own design, she had a prototype.

“Our styling is kind of classic,” she said.

Instead of making an entire clothing line, she and Melville were focused on providing “just one really good hoodie.”

She and Melville launched a successful Kickstarter appeal in 2019 to help fund the project.

While Kerzhner initially set up at outdoor markets, the whole business has moved online because of the pandemic.

Melville taught himself photography and put together a marketing résumé for the business.

Watching the hoodies sell well, Kerzhner is plotting expanding, just a little.

“My partner [Melville] has been campaigning for sweatpants,” she said. While she’s made him a few pairs, she still relies on a remote day job.

“It’s so much work and we just can’t help ourselves,” she said joyfully.

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CERAMICS CONNOISSEUR

Sequim-based artisan recounts career in pottery



By James Sloan

Photos courtesy of Linda Collins Chapman

"Brigid" Ceramic 2021

For ceramics artist Linda Collins Chapman, pottery is more than just a passion; it's a daily pursuit that she's developed for more than four decades.

The artisan has displayed her pieces in shows from Hawaii to Washington, D.C., with buyers adding her art to their collections on four different continents. She may be a master ceramics artisan at this stage, but every expert started as a beginner at some point, and Collins Chapman's story of ceramic success is partially one of circumstance.

She grew up in a household of artists, musicians, and educators, and learned to paint and play classical music from

a young age.

"I played with a symphonic band as freshman [in high school]," Collins Chapman said. "The music definitely was my life because both my mom and dad were musicians."

One relative that impacted her artistry in a big way was her grandfather who was a painter, Collins Chapman said. Beyond painting, her grandfather was also a pottery enthusiast.

"He always collected Pueblo pottery in the Southwest," she said. Collins Chapman recalled the interesting designs that piqued her curiosity in ceramics as a child.

As she continued to develop her artistry and musical prowess in adolescence, Collins Chapman was eventually dealt a difficult decision for which branch of the arts to

“It’s more about giving back to community, and helping in all the ways I can. That’s where I am right now,” Chapman said.

pursue at the professional level.

“I had to decide in college whether to be musician or artist,” she said.

After much deliberation, she favored the artist path, and enrolled at the University of Colorado Boulder in 1969. She excelled in college and learned a great deal about painting and drawing, but her aspirations to continue were jeopardized after she couldn’t get into an upper-level course, because there were no spots left.

“I got closed out of an upper-level course, and the only thing that fit in my schedule was a ceramics class,” Collins Chapman said.

Little did she know, this decision would shape her career and lifetime pursuit as a master of pottery. From that class, she found her true niche in ceramics.

After continuing to evolve her work in pottery and other forms of art, Collins Chapman graduated from college with a bachelor’s degree in fine arts.

“In the meantime I was married and started a family,” she said.

She started her business Linda Chapman Design in 1976 shortly after graduating college, and she still owns and operates the business to this day.

Part of her decision to open her own business stemmed from the desire to work independently, and to hone in on her craft away from any distractions.

“My practice is by myself; I treasure that,” she said.

Working solo and developing her skill set proved successful for Collins Chapman, as she started to gain prestige for her incredible pottery and sculptures.

Her art pieces were displayed in countless exhibitions from the Denver Art Museum to the Smithsonian, with buyers around the world lining up to add her pieces to their own collections.

She moved her business from Colorado to Hawaii to Sequim where she currently works on new pieces.

While living in Hawaii, she discovered a love for teaching others that, perhaps, originated from her history of educators in the family.

» *Continued on Page 18*

▲ Image of Linda Collins Chapman shortly after graduating from the University of Colorado Boulder in the late 1970’s

► “Athene” Ceramic 2021





Boat Tray, 2021

» *Continued from Page 17*

“I taught at a private school in Kauai, [Hawaii],” Collins Chapman said. “I learned more from those little kids than they did with me. I always learned something new from them, and that is the beauty of it.”

Later on in life, she’s found the most fulfillment from teaching her skills to others and giving back to the community.

Collins Chapman is involved in many local art groups such as the Olympic Peninsula Art Association, where she helps raise money for art school scholarships to give to budding artists on the Peninsula.

“It’s more about giving back to community, and helping in all the ways I can. That’s where I am right now,” she said.

While her passion for ceramics hasn’t diminished in any way, and she’s still fashioning new and marvelous pieces from her art studio on a daily basis, she has found greater satisfaction in helping the community and paving the way for the next generation of artists.

“It’s a really, really good feeling to be able to share my skills and share with the community,” Collins Chapman said. “I couldn’t be happier.”

To see her new artisan creations and learn more about Collins Chapman, visit www.lindachapmandesign.com.



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OUT ON THE WATER



Mike Howell, left, hoists a big one on a recent fishing trip.

Exploring the Peninsula through fishing

By Laura Jean Schneider

*Photos courtesy of
Howell's Guide Service*

Michael “Mike” Howell used to guide fishermen part-time while running a sandwich shop in Port Townsend. Now he’s swapped sammies for salmon full-time. Trips can be booked through his website, howellsguidingservice.com, and start at \$350. Since he offers fishing 12 months of the year, there’s always an opportunity to experience the area firsthand in a one-of-a-kind way. Mike credits his grandfather for supplementing his formal education with the ability to “read the water and chase fish.”

Recently, Howell found some spare time while fishing in Mexico to answer a few burning questions for Lifestyle.

It takes dedication to fish year ‘round. When did you get hooked?

There’s an outstanding amount of fishing in Washington that allows for anglers to chase multiple species in several types of water, but in fall/winter is when you’ll find the biggest, most aggressive fish moving through the rivers to the west. Being in the elements really makes you earn it and it only builds your gratitude for everything around you to new levels.

What about fishing the Olympic Peninsula makes it unique?

I’ve fished all over the world but the Olympic Peninsula has everything. From



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What do you love most about leading fishing trips?

As much as I LOVE chasing fish, it's the fellowship through experiences and nature that does it for me. Some of my clients have become really great friends; there's a certain magic that happens when you're rowing a boat with two other people for eight hours. It's a connection that can't be fabricated.



Guiding fishermen of all ages has become a passion for Mike Howell.

Why should a total beginner try fishing?

In the days of cell phones and instant gratification, fishing is an activity that can keep someone that needs a healthier outlet not only entertained, but also brings us closer to the earth. And if you hate running as much as I do, it's a good way to get those steps in!

Best fish story?

Last steelhead season I watched a bald eagle dive for a fish so big it had to use its wings to swim it out. Absolutely breathtaking.

What is THE piece of gear you wouldn't be caught without?

I keep a plethora of gear and things to save someone's life but TOILET PAPER is an absolute essential! Those gas station burritos and strong coffee people tend to consume in the morning can sneak up on the most seasoned anglers.

Name four things in your glovebox.

Advil, back-up fly box, trail mix, and now spare face masks.



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AN ART & A SCIENCE

Career scientist celebrates the natural beauty of wood



Photos & Article by Laura Jean Schneider

I met Kate Marshall at her workshop, her two rescue dogs, Bubba and Tango, bounding about as she walked toward me. She seemed surprised that I had found the place, and I had to confess that I did drive past several times. The base of Marshall’s new business, Dog and Wine Designs, is tucked away off of Highway 20 in the Four Corners region of Jefferson County, up a narrow dirt road.

Dressed in safety glasses, worn-in Carhartt overalls, and felted navy scuffs that spelled “l-o” on the foot of one and “v-e” on the other, Marshall led the way inside to where her mentor and friend of 12 years, Gary McLuen, has let her set up shop.

McLuen is an engineer, Marshall explained, and hardly uses the wood shop for himself. The two met when Marshall was working on her post doctorate at a lab in Sequim; he had brought a slew of kids in to tour the lab. Now, the two spend time together every week at the shop.

Marshall and her fiancé of 18 years (“I don’t think we’re ever going to get married,” she said, laughing) live in Port Hadlock, and a few times a

week Marshall commutes to Tacoma, where she works for the Department of Defense as an independent contractor for the Hearing Center of Excellence at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The clinical trials she was conducting were halted, or discontinued altogether by COVID, and with a little extra time on her hands, Marshall found herself in the woodshop time and again.

While she completed her first project, a dinner table for her house, around eight years ago, she started her business last year. Combining two of her best loves — dogs, and drinking wine — she honed in on her essentials for happiness when coming up with a business name and logo.

“Wood has not always been my

medium,” Marshall said, sitting across a work desk from me with Tango nested in her lap. Shoulder-length strawberry blonde hair framed her face. She said as a teen, theatre and performance arts had interested her. Then came adulthood and a long dry spell from artistic endeavors.

Now, Marshall has fallen for wood. “Originally it started out, ‘I need a coffee table,’” she said. But for her, the draw extends past the utilitarian.

“I like wood, how could you not?” she asked, explaining how she loves to let the simple beauty of the wood’s grain be the show-stopper centerpiece of her work.

A stack of unwaxed end-cut cutting boards made with cherry and

Kate Marshall holds a decorative platter in process, Port Townsend Vineyard corks bobbing in a resin river.

Marshall has found working with wood the ideal creative pursuit.



charity auctions or to nonprofits. Marshall has been the chair of the board of Port Townsend's Domestic Violence Shelter, Dove House, for three years. Community causes are close to her heart.

She and McLuen source much of their wood locally, use a powder-coating business in Port Hadlock to paint metal items, like table legs, and use wood harvested directly from McLuen's 22-acre property.

As we walked around the studio, Marshall pointed out ebony, walnut, cherry, madrone, and maple, among other hardwoods she works with.

She hefted a piece in the works: a rectangular tray made of two maple cuts that looked like river banks with a clear resin river flowing through. Wine corks bobbed at the bottom.

Then she pulled out a set of coasters she'd made scaling down the process and adding some gold shimmer. They were a Christmas present for her mother. Often, her projects start out as gifts, she said.

Two maple nightstands stood together, waiting for finishing and legs.

A request for a Scotch board was on the to-do list, and after finding some photos of a beverage dispenser online, Marshall had an idea mulling about for a prototype.

The dogs ran in and out of the shop, a constant pop of energy. When Bubba started yipping uncontrollably, she got up and redirected his attention.

"He's a rescue," she said. "He came with some baggage."

While projects of all kinds inspire Marshall, she's honed in: "I'd like to focus on furniture."

Creating custom, heirloom quality goods make sense to her.

She showed me a photo of her first piece; a table, with wooden butterflies drawing the cracks in the wood together.

The dogs climb on it, it's gotten banged and bumped, moved to another home, but it's solid, dependable, and made by hand.

Marshall is humble about her abilities.

"I just kind of putz," she said.

To see examples of Marshall's work and inquire about custom orders, go to dogandwinedesigns.com.

walnut woods sat on the desk to my left, destined for Uptown Cutlery in Port Townsend. She spoke joyfully of three pieces of furniture she'll be giving back to the community through upcoming

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21+ ONLY

TAKE A WALK INTO HISTORY ON THE CHETZEMOKA TRAIL

When you're walking downtown Port Townsend, driving out to Fort Worden or looking for sea glass at North Beach County Park, remember what used to be there.

For hundreds of years the S'Klallam people lived in the village of "qatáy" in what is now Port Townsend.

They fished for seafood, harvested plants such as native blue camas, and carved canoes for travel.

Today, there are many remnants of this period of time — if you know where to look.

That is why the Native Connections Action Group of the Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, in partnership with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, created the Chetzemoka Trail in Port Townsend—to educate the public on the relationship between the S'Klallam and the European settlers who arrived in Port Townsend in the mid-19th century.

The interpretive trail highlighting 18 historically significant sites throughout Port Townsend has signs that offer historic information about Chief Chetzemoka (pronounced Cheechma-han; later changed by settlers to Chetzemoka) and the S'Klallam people of the 19th century, as well as the impact of the arrival of European settlers and connections to present-day S'Klallam people.

The trail follows the life of Chief Chetzemoka, who is one of the best remembered S'Klallam leaders because he befriended the early Port Townsend settlers and helped the S'Klallam negotiate the difficult changes in their lives.

respectful relations despite their cultural differences," wrote Ron Allen, Tribal Council Chairman with the Jamestown S'Klallam tribe in a message about the new trail. "Chief Chetzemoka played a key role in establishing this relationship in the 19th century... Today, in the 21st century, our S'Klallam and sister tribes continue to strive to work together to solve problems in a complex society, respecting the values of both the indigenous and the non-indigenous populations of the area."

The trail divides into three loops: a 3-mile, a 6-mile, and 12-mile loop. The 3-mile loop is easily walkable and features d o w n t o w n historical sites, such as Point Hudson, Memorial Field and the Fowler Building.

The 6-mile loop extends west to Kai Tai Lagoon and Laurel Grove Cemetery, whereas the 12-mile loop goes all the way out to North Beach County Park and Fort Worden.

The trail is walkable and bikeable with elevation changes and



"Settlers and the indigenous peoples of the North Olympic Peninsula area have worked diligently to coexist and develop



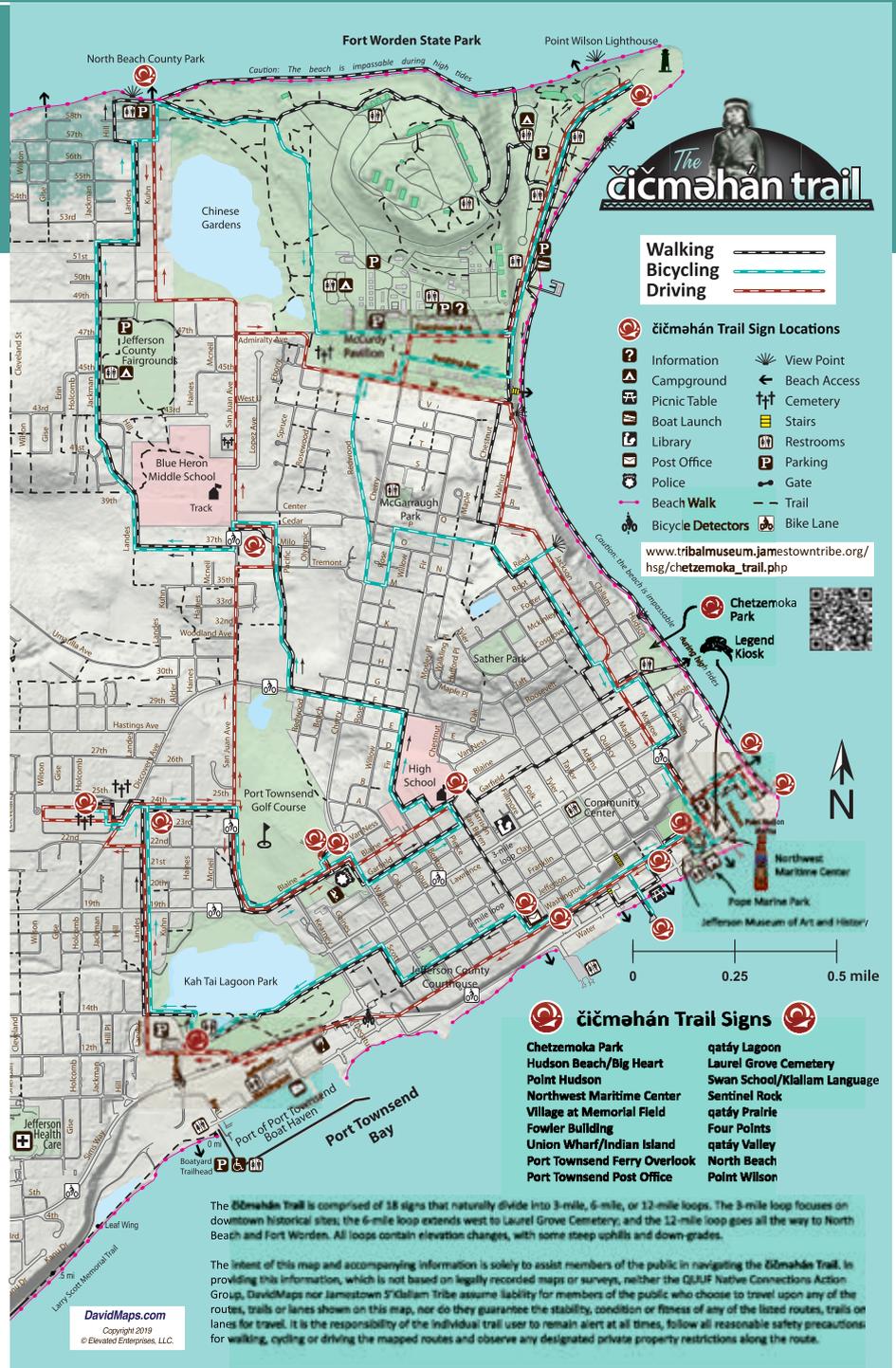
some steep uphill and downhill grades, but is also driveable.

Along the way, signs give information about the historical significance of each site, offering an opportunity for both locals and tourists to learn more about the people who lived in Port Townsend, or qatáy, before white settlers arrived. It also offers a perspective on Chetzemoka's decision to seek peace between the S'Klallam people and the white settlers.

The partnership Chetzemoka forged back in the 1800s is still alive today. An example is the Welcome Pole donated to the Northwest Maritime Center by the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Carpenter Dale Faulstich designed the new totem pole, which features the Supernatural Carpenter, the Spirit of Western Red Cedar, Chetzemoka and Sentinel Rock.

"This is the latest manifestation of a relationship between the Northwest Maritime Center and the Jamestown S'Klallam tribe that is probably about 15 years old now," said Jake Beattie, executive director of the Northwest Maritime Center. "Even during the initial fundraising efforts to secure a



place for the Maritime Center, the tribe was involved."

Beattie said the Maritime Center was honored to receive such a gift. It is located outside the Chandlery, at the intersection of Monroe and Water streets.

"It's really profound how

something like this can provoke all of us to think about who we are in relation to this place," Beattie said. "It helps us more completely conceive how we can be better informed, to think about the connections of humans to this place that happened before 1850."

ON THE WILD SIDE

Blyn business cultivates a ‘primal worldview’

By *Laura Jean Schneider*



*You
matter.
Keep
going.*

Reading Ben Sanford’s four-word mantra might leave you feeling a bit exposed. It’s straightforward and unmistakable, perhaps even uncomfortable.

But Sanford, 48, has been where you are, and his business, Tribal Edge, exists to remind people of why they matter, and where they’re going.

A native of the Pacific Northwest, Sanford has a deep history of place with his surroundings. Catching up after a work day early in the new year, Sanford touched in on his life work.

“I’m third generation here, and family’s here, and I am, as much as a Caucasian person can, feel I belong

here,” he said.

“I grew up here on the Olympic Peninsula,” he said. “I was kind of a wild kid.”

For Sanford that looked like playing outside coupled with a fascination for learning, and reading; “mentorship through books,” he called it.

“The Peninsula has just patterned who I am,” he added.

But the classroom was not where Sanford felt at home. “I was desperately seeking alternative ways of learning because school didn’t work for me,” he added.

As a teen, Sanford found his way to martial arts, and on to Tom Brown Jr’s Tracker School in New Jersey. A “primal worldview” made perfect sense to him.

Tribal Edge, at its core, is “a collection of skills, disciplines, and practices about what humans have always relied on.”

“I put a lot of emphasis on journey,” Sanford said. “Our focus is on training, and training is a process.”

Sanford offers four-day vision quest experiences, a traditional-style solo forest quest, heightened by a four-day fast from food and distractions.

“It’s a way of doing a deep reset,” he said.

Sanford sees each human as possessing seven key aspects: the tracker, the survivor, the healer, the protector, the shadow, the leader, and the visionary. During a seven-week session, Sanford helps each student learn a combination of skills and tools

to support each facet.

“It’s training that’s authentic and deep,” he said. “It can take years to be excellent.” (Case in point: Sanford is an instructor in the martial art of Sikal and holds ranks in Tae Kwon Do, and Ninjutsu.)

The kind of practices Sanford offers are self-selective.

“They’re skills; you can’t just buy them,” he said. “They are transformative, they end up transforming your life.”

And along the journey of Sanford’s own life came his first business, Tarzan’s Tree Service, followed by finding his partner.

“We kind of have a Tarzan-and-Jane story,” Sanford said, a smile in his voice.

“I had long hair and was an arborist, she was from LA.”

“She’s a soul guide,” he said of his wife, Victoria Jazwic-Sanford. “She kind of has this deep nurturing.”

“We do offer some coaching together,” he added.

“To me, the bottom line to any of our solutions, is education,” Sanford said, emphasizing the difference between knowledge, with deals with facts, and wisdom, an ethos or quality of experience. Now that he’s taught informally for nearly 20 years, Sanford is working on getting an associate’s degree in education from Western Governor’s University.

“I like to help people realize how much they already know,” he said.

“I’ve always just followed my passion.”



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