

Whidbey Island's Special Places

And the People Who Love Them

By Dan Pedersen

Dan Pedersen of Langley wrote "Whidbey Island's Special Places," a book available in local bookstores.

Book honors Whidbey's charms

Dan Pedersen of Langley, like others who live on Whidbey Island, said he's developed a deep affection for the island's forests, farms, beaches, prairies, wildlife and small towns.

So he wrote about it. "Whidbey Island's Special Places: And the People Who Love Them" is not only a dandy travel guide listing amenities and offering directions, it's also an ecological and historical look at places that may or may not be familiar to folks.

The book reflects my personal mission at this point in life — to open people's eyes to the character and value of what we have on Whidbey Island," Pedersen, 62, said. "Flipping from chapter to chapter, you can't help but be struck by the contrasts."

He carefully selected those he profiled, each in more than three pages, dotted with gorgeous photographs, most taken by Pedersen.

Washington State Parks Ranger Rick Blank talks about an 860-year-old Douglas fir at Deception Pass State Park.

Maribeth Crandell, environmental educator for Oak Harbor, talks about balancing nature and growth.

Susan Berta and Howard Garrett, founders of Orca Network, point out that killer whales have roamed Puget Sound and both sides of Whidbey Island since the glaciers retreated some 10,000 years ago.

Historian and former ship's captain Roger Sherman knows where the bodies are buried at Sunnyside Cemetery.



KRISTI O'HARRAN

Dick Malone shares stories about Admiralty Head Lighthouse and Fort Casey.

Craig and Joy Johnson, and biologist Sarah Schmidt, explain why they are bird lovers.

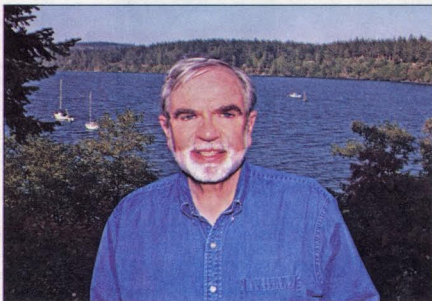
Pat Powell, from the perspective of Whidbey Camano Land Trust, and Elliott Menashe, forest ecologist, sum up why island property should be protected.

Veronica von Allworden explains her love for gray whales.

The book's author graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in journalism and served four years in the Air Force. He worked for a newspaper in Idaho and was editor for Fishing and Hunting News in Seattle. He retired from marketing at Safeco and is a contractor for the Island County Marine Resources Committee. He also serves on the board for Whidbey Camano Land Trust.

Born in Mount Vernon, Pedersen grew up loving Camano Island, where his parents owned forested property overlooking Saratoga Passage, just north of Cama Beach Resort.

"Our family's magical experiences on Camano Island with nature and wildlife planted the seeds for this book," Pedersen said. "We would sit by our rustic



Dan Pedersen turned his love for Whidbey Island into a book.

cabin, tending a small campfire, never knowing what would come our way next — a great blue heron, deer, raccoon or owl. We'd watch people dig clams on the beach and catch salmon from kicker boats. The island was our refuge from the world's cares."

He said he used to look across at Whidbey Island and daydream about what was happening over there. Now Pedersen drives daily to the post office in Langley and looks across at Camano, thinking about the wonderful times he had over there.

"I live in the woods of south Whidbey Island with my pretty wife, Sue, and our big dog, Rocky, and countless deer, coyotes, owls, hawks, woodpeckers and other creatures."

He was co-author of "Getting to the Water's Edge on Whidbey and Camano Islands" published in 2006.

For the new book, he said he decided that rather than just write about and photograph the island, he would ask locals, who really understand Whidbey, to share their personal stories.

Find the book at Edmonds Bookshop, Snow Goose Bookstore in Stanwood, Elliott Bay Book Co. in Seattle and around Whidbey Island at bookstores, coffee houses and wild bird shops.

Pedersen is all about supporting bookstores.

"For some shops the book already has generated \$500 to \$1,000 worth of profits," he said. "This is significant in the winter-time in these small towns."

Copies have been sold to folks around the world.

"Many others share my passion for Whidbey," Pedersen said.

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