



Craig Johnson photo

Whidbey wildlife photographer Craig Johnson captured this Greater Yellowlegs foraging in the shallows of Crockett Lake in Coupeville.

A book for those who love this island

BY PATRICIA DUFF
South Whidbey Record

Hot off the press is Dan Pedersen's latest love song to Whidbey Island.

"Whidbey Island's Special Places and the People Who Love Them" takes readers on an eye-opening journey through some of the island's most precious, diverse treasures of habitat and history.

The thoughtfully laid out book includes 95 color images up to a full page in size. Accompanying the photographs are 10 revealing interviews that tell the stories of Deception Pass State Park, Oak Harbor's waterfront trail, Coupeville and Penn Cove, Sunnyside Cemetery and Ebey's Prairie, Admiralty Head Lighthouse and Fort Casey, Crockett Lake and Keystone Spit, Greenbank Farm, South Whidbey State Park and the Wilbert Trail, Double Bluff beach and Deer Lagoon and Langley.

Roaming the island with his trusty Canon 40D in hand, Pedersen said he tried to focus on places that not only have easy access but also those that give the island its special quality.

Pedersen, who in 2006 co-authored the popular local guide, "Getting to the Water's Edge," said his impetus came mainly from the fact that there aren't any books available like this one about the island. Bookstore owners were asking for it, as were many of the people he has encountered on the island who know how special Whidbey is and want to convey it somehow.

It was just crying out to be done, he said. "I know the people, I know the places, I have a writing background and Craig has the printing background," Pedersen said.

He was referring to Freeland resident Craig Johnson, a graphic artist, wild-bird photographer and author, with his wife Joy Johnson, of "Our Puget Sound Birds and Habitat."

Johnson designed and printed the book, and though most of the photographs are by Pedersen, additional photos of wildlife are by Johnson. There are also some aerial and underwater photographs by Veronica von Allworden of Langley.

While the book is likely to appeal to visitors as a keepsake, Pedersen said he created it especially for those who live on Whidbey or own property here.

"All 10 chapters are presented in the words of local residents who are passionate about where they live," Pedersen said.

The title of the book is an apt one. Pedersen succeeds in drawing out the sometimes eccentric and down-home personalities who inhabit the beloved island. But, eccentric or otherwise,



Dan Pedersen photo

The Ferry House is part of the preserved history at Ebey's Landing in Coupeville.

these are some of the people who ultimately love Whidbey Island for its abundant and precious natural life, and who will do everything in their power to cherish and preserve it.

Pedersen chose his interviewees carefully. "I'm especially proud of the people I interviewed and the values by which they live their lives," he said.

"They are driven not to pursue wealth, but to preserve for future generations the island's most cherished natural lands. My goal is to convey their love and insights about the island's nature, history, rural lands and wildlife habitats."

A special chapter describes lands saved by Whidbey Camano Land Trust, which coincidentally celebrates 25 years of preserving island lands this week.

The author said he hopes readers will find the book entertaining, and also learn from it and appreciate the island in new ways.

Pedersen is a writer and photographer who contributes articles about nature to area newspapers. He is the communications manager for the Island County Marine Resources Committee, and wrote the marine interpretive signage seen at many shoreline locations in the county.

"Whidbey Island's Special Places and the People Who Love Them" is currently available at Wild Birds Unlimited and the Island Framery in Clinton; Moonraker Books in Langley, the BookBay in Freeland; Local Grown, Kingfisher Books and the Lavender Wind Farm in Coupeville; and the Wind & Tide Bookstore in Oak Harbor. The book costs \$19.95 and is also available online at www.whidbeywrite.com.

Pedersen will be signing copies of his book at the 25th anniversary celebration of the Whidbey Camano Land Trust at Coupeville High School Performing Arts Center from 7 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3. The trust will celebrate



Dan Pedersen photo

The author took this shot of his wife Sue Van Etten and their dog Rocky while on an island beach stroll.

the more than 6,100 acres of land that has been saved. To reserve your \$10 event ticket or to find out more, go to www.uclt.org.