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people to get in some holiday shopping, she said.

Cultivating personal interaction

Cathy Hamilton, who creates intricate decorations using primarily seashells, wood and other natural materials, will also encourage visitors get a hands-on artistic experience by making a seashell tree ornament during the tour.

She recently joined the Peninsula Arts Association and is new to the studios tour this year. Since most of her sales are conducted online through Etsy and she no longer shows her work at galleries, she appreciates opportunities like this to connect with clients face to face.

“Unless you’re looking online,” she said. “I’m not really out there.”

Though her schedule doesn’t allow her to attend as many markets and festivals as she used to, she could never give them up completely, partly because she enjoys that customer interaction.

“It’s nice when they come up to your booth and they just can’t take the smile off their face,” she said.

Her work room is set up inside her house, so for the tour she will open her garage and give people more space to create ornaments and browse her collections.

In addition to hosting demonstrations and activities, many of the artists put up decorations and offer snacks to create a festive atmosphere. Marsh said it’s especially fun to watch the kids, who enjoy playing in the clay while their parents browse and shop.

A coastal connection

Instead of planning a demonstration, watercolorist Eric Wiegardt, who is native to the Pacific Northwest, will use the time to show new work and speak with patrons.

Although his gallery is open year-round, he is often away teaching throughout the United States or Europe. During November and December, however, he comes back to the studio-gallery that he set up inside his great-grandfather’s house along Bay Avenue in Ocean Park in the early 1980s.

While his work has impacted both the national and international art scene, it bears traces of his coastal upbringing. In general, his pieces tend toward impressionistic and interpretive, capturing and communicating his feelings toward a certain subject matter rather than a realistic replication.

His paintings, including the recent Tide Point series, capture his recollections and feelings of being around the water.

“It does get under your skin,” he said. “It certainly affects my subject matter.”



If You Go

Peninsula Arts Association’s 12th annual Fall Open Studios Tour

Long Beach Peninsula

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 29 to Dec. 1

Maps are available at the Long Beach Peninsula Visitors Bureau, the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber, the Ocean Park Chamber and participating studios. They also can be downloaded from beachartist.org.

ABOVE Jim Unwin holds a gnarled piece of driftwood that he found at Waikiki Beach that he plans to carve.

RIGHT Linda Marsh throws a bowl for microwave mini cakes on the wheel at her studio, Marsh Pottery and Succulents, in Long Beach.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

