

MURAL

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university. Although his training was typical for a young artist — papermaking, sculpting, wood carving, painting and more — he specialized immediately.

“I knew right away that I wanted to paint,” he said. “So, the second year I went to all my profs and convinced them to let me have a studio off campus and bring them as many paintings as I could make.”

His interests are varied: life sciences, astronomy, design, wildlife and more. When he was younger he thought he’d be a forest ranger but discovered he was more right-brained.

“Math. Math was just over my head, so I didn’t pursue science,” he said.

Canvases weren’t a hit with galleries. They wanted consistency, he said. They wanted him to choose a medium and a theme and stick with it. But he didn’t.

“Whatever turned me on that day is what I painted,” he said.

He moved to Vancouver Island and put on gallery shows of his own. They regularly sold out. Then, he painted a couple of murals around town. Soon he had a following. His first big commission fell in his lap when an organizer attempting to

line up muralists for the British Columbia installation at the 1986 World’s Fair came calling. Finding someone to take on such a big project — nine giant murals, each picturing a different tourist zone of British Columbia — was a challenge.

Michener volunteered. “It took me over 11 months, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week,” he said. “That really taught me a lot. I painted every mountain, every mesa, every river, every lake, every glacier, every canyon, every town. I’d never done anything like it before. There was a lot of interpreting and figuring it out.”

Another huge project he has completed each year for 20 years is the pair of 120x40-foot backdrop walls for the themed flower show at the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds in California.

He’s also the artist who created the Hotel Josephine Mural in Grants Pass, Ore., and the Canyonville, Ore., city hall mural.

He figures he’s completed more than 1,000 murals in his lifetime. There’s a ton of work that goes into a mural other than applying paint to a surface — research, study of other images, graphing and drawing. He’s learned a lot about technique. There is a freshness each time.

“I never know what’s going to happen before I start,” Michener said. “I

always go in saying ‘Oh, I don’t know if I can do this.’ And then something else takes over because I know I can’t do it. The one advice I give to most artists is to get out of their own way. When I’m not sure what technique or what colors I’m going to use, I just start slapping paint on ... and suddenly it just comes out.”

That mystical sense is what keeps him painting 50 years into his career.

“A lot of people want to come help you and want to learn to be a muralist and you hand them a roller and say, ‘here’s a hundred feet and it’s all got to be blue.’”

Painting El Bajio in Enterprise was all fun, he said. He started inside and then he and owner Leo Arenas came up with additional ideas until the whole building was transformed inside and out.

“The most rewarding part for me is the process where I get to let go, and I get to be in a meditative state while I’m just unfolding and not thinking about it.”

Once a painting is done, he doesn’t feel he owns it. He enjoys leaving it behind.

“I like leaving behind something that speaks to everybody,” he said. “I think I’m leaving behind portals for people to escape into for a little bit. I think it makes a big difference for them. And I’ve never had anybody graffiti a mural.”

Hansel’s ‘Road Kill’ legislation becomes law

Joseph ‘Deer Kill’ law will not be implemented in namesake city



Hansel

Barreto

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

A bill that earned State Sen. Bill Hansel the moniker “Road Kill Bill” has become law.

Hansel and Rep. Greg Barreto, both of whom represent Wallowa County, introduced two laws designed to salvage wild meat for human consumption in the last legislative session. Both will become effective by January 2019. Hansel tried to share, if not deflect, the dubious honor and pass that on to cosponsor Barreto, but the alliteration was too much fun for lawmakers and it stuck.

The (Road Kill) Wildlife Salvage Bill requires State Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules for issuance of wildlife salvage permits to use deer or elk accidentally killed as a result of vehicle collisions.

It’s not a new idea, 20 states have salvage bills,

according to Hansel, and Montana even has a phone app that streamlines the permission and collection process.

Oregon lags behind other western states in that regard, but salvage of the approximately 1,600 deer and elk killed in run-ins with cars in Eastern Oregon will begin in 2019.

The bills were part of a discussion with the two legislators hosted by Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce Nov. 9 in Enterprise.

The second bill Hansel and Barreto sponsored began as “The Joseph Deer Bill” but found broad support and was eventually passed as the Urban Deer Population Bill. Despite the fact that the discussion of what to do about urban deer becoming a public nuisance began in Joseph, ironically the city will not be implementing the law, according to Mayor Dennis Sands.

“Sen. Hansel had sent me a copy of the proposed bill, and I presented it to the council last year. We decided to not pursue it at this time,” said Sands.

Other cities will implement the law, which requires

State Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt a pilot program for urban deer population control. Before deer can be harvested, the city must determine that the deer populations constitute a public nuisance, pass an anti-feeding ordinance and work with the State Fish and Wildlife Commission on determining the process of harvesting.

Deer harvested will be donated to a local food bank or other charitable organization at the expense of the local government.

Other than occasional visits such as the one with the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce Nov. 9, the two keep tabs on the county in a variety of ways.

“Those morning teleconference meetings (held at the Wallowa County OSU Extension Office while the legislature is in session) are extremely valuable to us,” Sen. Hansel said. “Of the 76 bills that came through that we worked on pretty extensively, 36 were the result of a constituent request. Somewhere in the district someone asked for help.”

The representatives emphasized that finding the solution was the ultimate goal when a problem is identified. When constituents present ideas, the representatives are hoping that both a clear definition of the problem and a suggested solution are available.

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