

Views from the Rock



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Encaustic artwork in the gallery at the Hoffman Center.

# A PLACE FOR THE ARTS

After a 25-year career in bank marketing, most recently in executive management, Vera Wildauer moved to Manzanita full time in 2006. In 2008 she co-founded the Manzanita Writers' Series, bringing regional authors to the coast for readings and workshops and encouraging local writers to share their work during open mic.

In 2009, Wildauer joined the Hoffman Center board of directors, working to expand the Hoffman Center's marketing efforts and managed the Hoffman Center's blog site. She also generated press releases and flyers for literary and other events. She served as president beginning in 2014.

Her board experience includes eight years with a mental health non-profit in Everett, Washington, where she served as board president for four years.

In 2012, she cofounded the North Coast Squid, a journal of local writing and art, to further develop the writing community in North Tillamook County.

She lives with her husband and cat in what had been her family's beach house since 1975.



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Vera Wildauer, president of the Hoffman Center board of directors.

**Q:** What type of programs do you bring in for writers?

**Wildauer:** The main thing is the writers' series. We bring in authors. Usually those folks do a workshop of some sort, with some sort of craft element or publishing.

**Q:** Are there a lot of writers in town?

**Wildauer:** Yes, all levels. And Gary Seelig is really working the music scene.

**Q:** There seem to be a lot of artistic people in Manzanita.

**Wildauer:** It's a historical legacy. There always was. Manzanita was an enclave for writers and artists of all sorts, a place to get away. In fact, several of our featured authors ended up moving here.

**Q:** So they come in, give a lecture and then they go back and decide they want to settle here full-time?

**Wildauer:** Yes, at least as second-home owners and frequent visitors. We are more a retirement-age kind of place.

**Q:** Are younger artists coming here as well?

**Wildauer:** The clay studio has attracted a younger set, which is cool. We just had young adult author April Henry spend a full day at the (Tillamook) middle school and high school talking about writing and what inspired her. Another part of our writing program is the publication

of the North Coast Squid. We have a young writers category where we try and encourage young people to submit as well.

**Q:** Sounds like there is no shortage of creative input.

**Wildauer:** We probably have 100 volunteers for all of the different programs.

**Q:** What are your challenges?

**Wildauer:** Well, funding. We are definitely moving toward more stable funding sources, growing our donor base.

**Q:** More stable than what?

**Wildauer:** About half of our revenue is earned income — admissions, tuition sales and proceeds from gallery sales. But we still have to rely on donations.

**Q:** Do you rent the building out for events?

**Wildauer:** We have a lot of meetings here, presentations. The local emergency response team meets here.

**Q:** Any new programs?

**Wildauer:** Our "Art of Dying" program is going gangbusters. It can be anything from green burials to setting your priorities later in life, to setting up a network of people to help you. Certainly everybody is very engaged and interested in making their lives rich with experience. Those kinds of things really help people stay young, vital and active.

**Q:** How important is the Hoffman Center to the artistic core of Manzanita?

**Wildauer:** Well, it's hugely important — of course I would say that! What we offer is not just people being involved with the arts, but that creative expression that comes from doing things with people. It's really important to the well-being of the community.

**Q:** Is there a downside to this?

**Wildauer:** No! This is a happy spot.

**Q:** Do you get people from outside of the area?

**Wildauer:** Typically we get people from Astoria down to Pacific City. For our writers' workshop we got two people from Alabama. They looked online and found two workshops. There was one here and one in Pennsylvania, and they decided to come here.

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



**Q:** Who were the Hoffmans? Were they the inspiration for the center?

**Wildauer:** Oh, yes. Lloyd Hoffman was a painter. And Myrtle Hoffman was a musician. They were extremely welcoming to artists of all sorts.

**Q:** Did they live here full-time?

**Wildauer:** Yes, for many years. Their house was across the street from where we are now. They had a trust specifically to create a cultural center. Their house really wasn't a very good venue, so in 2007 the founding board bought this building, which was kind of like an antiques mall.

Over the years it evolved and we refurbished it, making it more suitable for the kinds of programming we do.

**Q:** Did you have a model for the arts center when you started?

**Wildauer:** I think it was definitely original from the start. The first board went around and looked at a few arts centers and also had community meetings. As time has gone on, we've really developed the programming out of the interests of the community.

**Q:** What were the first activities?

**Wildauer:** The clay program was started in 2004 when they got a kiln, and it's evolved a lot since. The clay studio is in existence because there is a strong group of people who are focused and excited about that. In fact, we are the only publicly accessible clay studio between Astoria down to Lincoln City.

**Q:** Tell me about the center's organization.

**Wildauer:** We have a nine-member board composed of local community members.

**Q:** Do you have any paid staff?

**Wildauer:** No. We have contract employees — a bookkeeper and a cleaning service. Basically all the program staff and the board are unpaid.

**Q:** What is your title?

**Wildauer:** I am board president. My origin is through the Manzanita Writers' Series. Kathie Hightower and I started that in 2008. I write poetry and short fiction.

## Mystery author comes to Hoffman Center

Ingrid Thoft will read from her latest book, "Duplicity," at the Hoffman Center for the Arts in Manzanita on Saturday, Nov. 18, at 7 p.m.

"Duplicity" is the fourth in Thoft's series with Boston-based private investigator Fina Ludlow.

Thoft was born in Boston and is a graduate of Wellesley College. Although always wanting to be an author, her first real-life job was at a radio station in coastal Massachusetts, ripping wires and running the board for a Sunday talk show. She's worked in human resources at Harvard, and did a stint with an interactive software company.

Thoft wrote two novels about an amateur sleuth that did not sell. When she decided an amateur sleuth character led to limitations, she decided to focus on a professional private investigator instead. In order to create a believable character, she enrolled in the private investigation



Author Ingrid Thoft

certificate program at the University of Washington. Thoft's first book, "Loyalty," was followed by "Brutality," which was awarded the Shamus Award for best P.I. novel by the Private Eye Writers of America.

Thoft lives in Seattle with her husband.

Thoft will teach a workshop, "Mastering Murder," from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Hoffman Center for the Arts and tuition is \$40. Register at <http://hoffmanblog.org>.

Following Thoft's reading and Q&A, the center presents an open mic where up to nine local or visiting writers will read five minutes of their original work. The suggested theme for the evening is "Mystery and Murder." Admission for the evening reading is \$7. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

The Manzanita Writers' Series is a program of the Hoffman Center for the Arts, across from Manzanita Library at 594 Laneda Ave.

# Finding art in a coffee cup

A lifetime ago, September 1977, in New York City, I moved the five boxes of everything I owned from a cockroach-ridden furnished summer sublet on Jones Street around the corner to my first leased apartment on Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village. It was a studio, about 400 square feet; there was no basin in the bathroom so

I brushed my teeth in the kitchen sink. Cornelia is a picturesque one block long street one block west of Sixth Avenue between Bleecker and West 4th. The West Village was a hip 'hood. You never knew whom you might encounter. Gerome Ragni, one of the creators of the Broadway musical "Hair" lived there; I learned not to gawk at the model Lauren Hutton in front of me at the bank. I'd landed a nice, polite job with a scientific book publisher that covered my \$180-a-month rent, but the job didn't

interest me half as much as my second gig, waitressing at the Cornelia Street Café.

I worked Sunday mornings (the actor Anthony Perkins was a regular), and Wednesday nights when they hosted a songwriter's workshop. The workshop was headed up by Steve Forbert who was from Mississippi and just my age. He was already being called "the new Dylan."

It was at the Cornelia Street Café I learned about Italian coffee drinks. Before the café owners, Robin Hirsch, Charles McKenna, and a perpetually angry Italian beauty called Raffaella took me under their wing, the only coffee I was familiar with was Folgers Instant and the pale swill they served at the Greek coffee shops proliferating the city. Raffaella was the Sunday barista and she schooled me to the nuances of espresso, cappuccino, Americano, macchiato, and café latte, which she said was a breakfast drink.

In 1977, in America, there was no "latte art." Latte art — specifically those lovely heart designs created by a deft rendering of milk foam — are presumed to have started in Italy, but their actual provenance is unclear. Latte art is a mixture of crema and microfoam. The techniques to create them are called free pouring and etching. It's a tricky business to get the crema and the microfoam to a particular temperature and consistency to create distinct patterns. In the U.S., latte art is believed to have started in Seattle during the late '80s when a man named David Schomer championed a rosette pattern off a photograph he'd seen. Raffaella's artistic expertise at the De'Longhi machine was creating the perfect high hat of foam to cap her cappuccino. Along with her artist's model figure, Italian accent, and signature scowl, her talent for creating the perfect foam no doubt contributed in no small part to the success of the café.

These days I love wandering around Cannon Beach sampling coffee. In between gallery hops, I might grab an Americano at Insomnia, or nurse a cappuccino on the porch at Sleepy Monk. I love seeing Rachel and Rebecca behind the counter. They are a terrific sister act. In my humble opinion, there isn't a better place for people watching anywhere on the North Coast than Sleepy Monk.

Last week I introduced a Gearhart friend to the wonders of Sea Level Bakery and Café. I urged her to buy a couple of demi baguettes to take home for the dinner party she was planning. We sat outside in the sun, marveling at the glorious weather. I ordered a 12-ounce latte to stay in a china cup. I confess I dislike coffee in paper cups. When mine came up, the design on it was so lovely, I felt moved to take a photograph. For a moment I wished I could travel back in time to show it to Raffaella. I know she would have appreciated it.



EVE MARX/FOR CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

An artfully designed cup of coffee at Sea Level.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH  
EVE MARX



See Letters, Page 5A