

Jeff Patterson, creator of really BIG pottery, uses unusual style

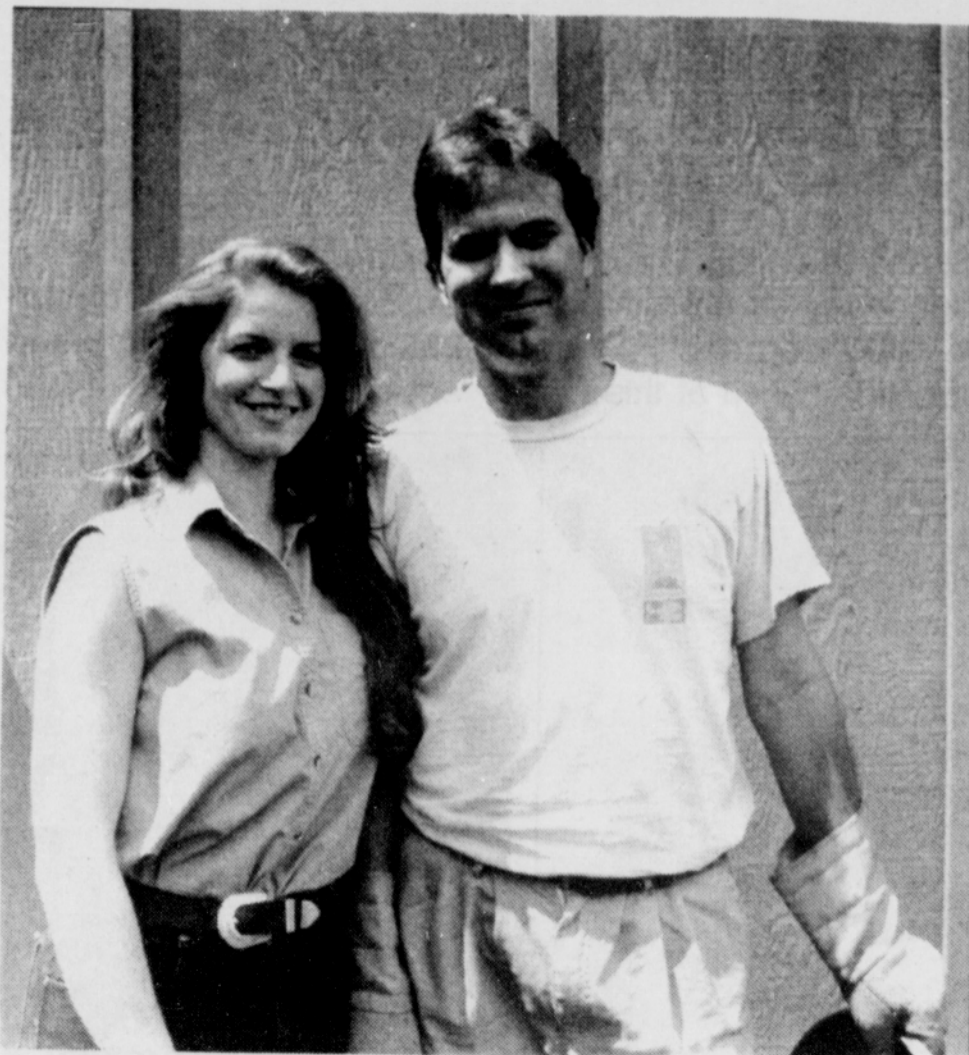
Jeff Patterson who, with his wife Linda, moved to Vernonia in 1993, has been devoted to the ceramic arts since he was twelve years old. He has pursued and developed his professional skills in its technical and artistic dimensions for 20 years. Yet, while doing this interview, it was necessary for him to go to his photo file for pictures of his work, for it is in such demand that his own studio is bare of finished products.

In the past six years, Patterson has participated in

more than thirty workshops, exhibitions, shows, special projects, and "Artist-in-the-school" programs in California, Oregon and Washington. At present, his production consumes up to half a ton of clay each week, with his products shipped to galleries or clients as soon as they are finished.

Yet, through it all, there is a pervasive dissonance in Patterson.

"I think sometimes," he said, "about the clay being mined in some distant place, shipped to me in my



Linda and Jeff Patterson

studio where I create a finished form that is glazed and baked, ready for a gallery, that all I have done is produce an object, something to be looked at."

Because Patterson feels that he has an obligation to make his life relevant in a way that directly contributes to his community and society, he has on several occasions, sought fulfillment of that need.

While seeking other ful-

fillment, he has never abandoned his art. He has struggled with the dichotomy of being and doing, but he is still a potter.

In 1979, while sailing in the Straits of Juan de Fuca, he docked at Friday Harbor on San Juan Island. There he met a yacht designer and talked his way into becoming an apprentice. He stayed for four years without pay, and found it a gratifying experience, learning to create something of

beauty that also was functional. To earn a living, he worked part time for the port and with a Juvenile Corrections program which provided first offenders with the opportunity for diversion. If the program was successfully completed the youth's record was clean.

His interest in the diversion program, prompted him to matriculate at Southern Oregon State College, where he majored in Sociology with a focus on Criminology. After the first year he was awarded a one-year scholarship to the University of Hawaii, where he continued his degree program.

Following his year in Hawaii, Patterson resumed his college work at SOSOC, doubling his class hours and completing the work on his BA degree in three years. He then joined the Rockaway Beach police department, but stayed only one year, before returning to school for a Master's program in Ceramics at the University of Oregon. The UO program proved to be unsatisfactory because his own development in the field exceeded the program offered.

Most of Patterson's work Please see page 22



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