

A Volunteer's Journey: Behind the Scenes of SPAC's Arts & Crafts Exhibition

by Kari Frazer, SPAC

Nestled within the quaint charm of the Saanich Peninsula lies an extraordinary showcase of artistic brilliance: the Saanich Peninsula



Arts & Crafts Exhibition & Sale. This annual event, now in its 71st year, is a testament to the dedication and passion of its volunteers, like one standout individual, Cathy Schulhauser (left).

Cathy, a seasoned volunteer with a decade-long commitment to SPAC, leads a team of 19 volunteers tasked with the monumental challenge of curating and displaying over 700 pieces of art in just eight hours. It's

a feat that demands meticulous planning, coordination, and a deep appreciation for the arts.

As a former registered nurse, Cathy found a natural fit within SPAC when she first joined, initially assisting with hanging members'

work at the Saanich Peninsula Hospital. Rapidly demonstrating her leadership abilities, she soon became the lead volunteer for the hospital exhibit and an integral part of SPAC's annual exhibition and sale at the Mary Winspear Centre.

Three years ago, Cathy assumed the role of Show Designer, succeeding a 20-year volunteer, Sandy Bligh. Beyond simply arranging artwork, Cathy leads a small group of volunteers that is responsible for designing and placing floral displays throughout the exhibit. She likens these displays to adding accessories to an outfit, enhancing the overall ambiance and elevating the viewer's experience.

For Cathy, volunteering isn't just about the logistics: it's about creating an unforgettable experience for attendees. Each year, over 300 dedicated volunteers, alongside Cathy, come together to orchestrate an event that draws in an estimated 3,000 visitors. With over 160 artists submitting work to the main gallery and an additional 60 showcasing their pieces in the gift shop, the SPAC Show has become synonymous with excellence in local arts and crafts.

Despite her demanding volunteer responsibilities, Cathy remains committed to her own art practise, specializing in landscapes and florals in oils. She emphasizes the importance of submitting one's best work to the show, as artists continually raise the bar in quality over quantity.

When asked what motivates her to volunteer year after year, Cathy's answer is simple: the joy of hearing attendees praise the show's beauty and their enjoyment of it. Her dedication to SPAC's mission of fostering creativity and community spirit is truly commendable.

As the 71st Saanich Peninsula Arts & Crafts Exhibition & Sale approaches, Cathy Schulhauser and her team of volunteers stand ready to weave magic into the fabric of this beloved event once again.

For tickets and more information, visit www.spacsociety.com.

Photo by Kari Frazer

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