

Check It Out! Podcast Transcript
Episode # 12
“The Art of Breaking Glass with Jack Archibald”
Sno-Isle Libraries, Dec. 27, 2018



Speaker 1:	00:00:00	Want to get the latest business news and solid financial advice from the experts for free? You can with your Sno-Isle Libraries accounts. Library customers can download the latest news and advice from publications like Entrepreneur, Kiplinger's, Fast Company and Inc. You'll find feature stories around the business of technology, leadership and innovation, the stock market, retirement planning, and achieving financial success. All of that with a library card just waiting for you online at Sno-Isle Libraries.
Ken Harvey:	00:00:32	In this episode of Check It Out, we're going to spend some time with a self-confessed banjo wacker, nettles farmer, and a world famous glass artist who describes himself as a glass breaker. All that and more coming up next.
Ken Harvey:	00:00:57	Welcome to episode 12 of the Check it Out podcast from Sno-Isle Libraries. This is the podcast for lifelong learners with inquiring minds and made possible by the support of the Sno-Isle Libraries Foundation.
Speaker 2:	00:01:10	The views and opinions expressed on this podcast may not necessarily reflect the official position of Sno-Isle Libraries.
Ken Harvey:	00:01:17	We're back for another episode of Check it Out. I am joined in the studio by Jim Hills.
Jim Hills:	00:01:23	I'm glad to be here.
Ken Harvey:	00:01:24	Hey Jim, just reminding people what you do and what I do for Sno-Isle Libraries.
Jim Hills:	00:01:31	I am public information manager.
Ken Harvey:	00:01:33	Is that what you do?
Jim Hills:	00:01:33	I do. I get to tell great stories about the library and the people that use it, people that work here. It's awesome.

(Continued)

Ken Harvey: 00:01:39 I think I'm your boss, some days.

Jim Hills: 00:01:42 Some days.

Ken Harvey: 00:01:42 Some days, I'm the communications director at Sno-Isle Libraries. I get to work with just talented and committed individuals, professionals like you ...

Jim Hills: 00:01:51 Thank you.

Ken Harvey: 00:01:51 Yeah, who help get the word out about what Sno-Isle Libraries does and what we offer all of the residents, I think three quarters of a million residents in our two counties, Snohomish and Island county.

Jim Hills: 00:02:03 It's amazing to think of the number of people that we get to serve with a public library service. It's awesome.

Ken Harvey: 00:02:09 Hey, and for members of the audience who don't know where Snohomish and Island counties are, we are located north of the county that Seattle metropolitan area is in the beautiful state of Washington. I would like to say, and I think I can confidently say, that we are in the most beautiful corner of the United States.

Jim Hills: 00:02:32 Absolutely. Our guest might live on the most beautiful corner of that corner.

Ken Harvey: 00:02:39 We're going to follow that lead. I'm delighted to have us spend some time with a special studio guest. He is a self confessed banjo wacker. We're going to find out a little bit more about what that means, but also he's a world famous glass artist. Jack Archibald is joining us. Jack, hi.

Jack Archibald: 00:03:00 It's good to be here, Ken, Jim.

Ken Harvey: 00:03:02 Jack described himself as just an ordinary guy. We're going to see whether or not he continues to feel that way after we're done with him today. He happened to do purchase a rundown shack, he says, at least in his history, on a seven acre tract of nettles at the end, tail end, south end of Camano Island. Camano Island, he describes it as part of the American archipelago of the Puget Sound. I really love that descriptive language. He says, it's at the edge of account of a country on the shelf of a continent.

Ken Harvey: 00:03:42 How did this man get to be well-known? Well, he's really celebrated and recognized as an artist because of his work in

creating eye catching and light bending and intriguing works with glass. Those works have been installed in buildings across the Pacific Northwest and I believe, many parts of the United States. They, I can tell you from having seen a number of them personally myself, as well as having looked at photos of them, of the ones outside our area, they transform the spaces that they're in. His work has been actually installed in libraries and schools and colleges and universities, fire stations, research facilities, trade centers, courthouses, and the list just keeps on going. I won't keep running down that list, but gosh, there's hardly a type of building that's frequented by the public that his work has not been featured in. He's actually also been featured in a documentary called Fire and Glass, which was produced by Anthony Godoy.

Jack Archibald: 00:04:53 Godoy.

Ken Harvey: 00:04:54 Godoy. It just so happens that Jack and I share a corner of the south end of the American archipelago of Camano Island. I also live on that south end of Camano Island. He and his lovely wife, Karen sometimes walk past our place on their way out to check the crab pots out in the Puget Sound. Just wanted to let everyone know, those are cold waters.

Jack Archibald: 00:05:24 Yes, they are Ken.

Ken Harvey: 00:05:25 Unless you're a five or six or seven year old and you don't have a fully developed nervous system yet.

Jack Archibald: 00:05:34 Or you're 68 year old guy that doesn't really have any more sense. Just wade right out there.

Ken Harvey: 00:05:39 Hey Jack, let's get into this. Again, we're delighted to have you.

Jack Archibald: 00:05:45 It's good to be here. Thank you.

Ken Harvey: 00:05:47 I've known from the first time that I met you that at some point it was going to be nice to get you in a place where we could interview you and grill you about who you are and the kinds of stuff that you do, because it's beautiful stuff.

Jack Archibald: 00:06:04 Well, thanks.

Ken Harvey: 00:06:08 You're a glass artist. Is that how you would describe yourself? What's the term that you use?

- Jack Archibald: 00:06:15 I call myself a glass breaker, but it's taken me years to accept the mantle of an artist. I don't have any particular art background. I didn't have any particular training. In fact, the way I learned stained glass when I bought my old shack down by you, they're in '77, I didn't have some windows in that building. I had plastic. It was cold in the winter. I got tired of feeding the fire. I took a night class at Stanwood High School for, I think it was a one hour night. I should have gone back to the next courses, but by the second week, I'd already built a couple of windows to fill in my windows. I didn't know how to frame a house. I didn't know how to get ... I just thought this would be an easy way to get glass in there. That was my start, but I got totally hooked on glass. I just started making my own little windows and filling in places. It just took off from there.
- Ken Harvey: 00:07:11 What is there about glass?
- Jack Archibald: 00:07:12 Glass is magic. It's like ... What's nice about glass versus other art forms is that you're working with light. It's the way light interacts with that glass, how it's refracted, how it comes through different seasons, different times of night. The longer I've worked with glass, the more I've gotten used to different glasses that have qualities that are transformative. You can buy blown glass with a flashed front. It'll look ... it might look cold on one side. You go inside the building, look back out, it'll be warm and embers, because of that flashing. Then there's iridescent. There's all kinds of glasses. I'm like a crow, bring back the sparkling thing, then put them in the nest. It's easy to get hooked on glass.
- Jim Hills: 00:08:01 I'm really interested to hear you talk about that, the properties of glass. I had an opportunity to try and photograph. I say, try and photograph the windows that are at the Camano Island Library. It was a late in the afternoon, winter day. There was good light coming through, but I was trying to shoot it from both the inside and the outside. It was a completely different looking window, or set of windows based on, which side of it was on, where the light was at the moment. I had no idea I was going to have that kind of experience trying to capture the image. Then I started realizing that the guy who did this had planned it that way. I'm really curious to hear you talk about the different qualities of the glass.
- Jack Archibald: 00:08:47 Well, that's a good example, that particular window in the Camano Library. You can go up to the Skagit station, the train station up there, the same kind of glass is in it. Trying to photograph a stained glass window is incredibly ...

Jim Hills: 00:09:03 Frustrating.

Jack Archibald: 00:09:03 It's frustrating. You just have to catch the light right. You're really ... You can go back again and again. When I first started out, I would go down to one of my bigger projects. To win projects in the public art sphere, you have to have about 10 good slides. At that time it was slides, now it's digital, which it's wonderful to be able to work with digital.

Ken Harvey: 00:09:23 Isn't it though?

Jack Archibald: 00:09:24 Oh, I can't tell you. To try to catch the light just right. I'd always try to catch it right at dusk usually and catch the interior light trying to balance the exterior light. Like you said, Jim, in those windows, the exterior is very different than the interior, and so you get two different windows in those photographs. You could use either one.

Jack Archibald: 00:09:48 Another thing I have to do is catch the architectural setting. For a while I tried hiring professional photographers. They're coming down for an hour or a couple of hours. If the light's not right, you're not going to get a good photograph. I don't care what kind of camera they're using or how good an eye they have. A lot of it's just serendipitous.

Jim Hills: 00:10:08 Yep, having to be there. I was really curious about that particular window because the outside of that building where the window is, the colors in the window when you look at it from the outside seem to blend nicely with the signing on the building, the whole feel of it. You get on the inside and the inside of that building is warmer and the window is warmer on the inside.

Jack Archibald: 00:10:32 Absolutely. Outside's got a ... The little area it's at is sheathed with, I don't know if it's aluminum, but some metallic aluminum, so it's real cold. The window is very cold too. It's got these dichroics in it. The colors aren't warm. When you go back inside, they turn amber. On the outside, they're more of a blue to a green, but a cold blue-green.

Jim Hills: 00:11:00 Well, I'm really happy to hear that it wasn't just me being an idiot with my camera, that it was planned that way.

Jack Archibald: 00:11:06 I can't tell you how much time I've spent with cameras and going back and going back and going back. A lot of times with digital photography, you can mess with the images through Photoshop. That's become a wonderful tool for me, surmounts

some of the issues you had when you're just shooting slides. It was a fortunate that shoot slides and print and do it again and again and again.

Ken Harvey: 00:11:29 Yeah, I remember those old days of slides and prints and using film. You'd just go through so many shots trying to find one that would work.

Jack Archibald: 00:11:44 Really, just one. You're just after that one shot. If you got it, then you duplicate it. We used to have send in for any project you applied for, have to sit in a set of slides to them then a set of slides to the next one. I have whole, just tons of these slides. It cost a fortune.

Ken Harvey: 00:12:01 Yeah. Hey.

Jim Hills: 00:12:03 Go ahead. I had another question about this. When you were introducing yourself and how you got into glass art, it seemed accidental. In my head, that's how I had envisioned you is the accidental artist who ended up being really good at it. Then I've seen pictures of you and some video of you doing the work. You said you're a breaker of glass, but then when I see your work, it looks like it was broken pretty intentionally. I was wondering, do break it intentionally or do you have to go through a lot of breaking to get what you need?

Jack Archibald: 00:12:38 Well, stained glass is nothing but taking a large piece of glass, cutting it down and cutting in and shapes. In my case, I lead it. You've cut it into the shapes. You've created a puzzle, a jigsaw puzzle. If you're doing a large mural, and I do large scale work sometimes, then you're really building a giant puzzle. You're going through window mullions, the framework of the building. You're going through those, so you have to measure those out. You're building the puzzle piece by piece. You're breaking the glass. You're putting it back together in a form, a shape.

Ken Harvey: 00:13:18 What's the largest piece of work that you've done?

Jack Archibald: 00:13:21 Well, one solid piece of mural was probably the Southern Utah university, which was 40 feet by 30 feet.

Jim Hills: 00:13:29 My gosh.

Jack Archibald: 00:13:31 The first big project I got, the second project I ever got was the state patrol headquarter in Puyallup, and also combined transportation area, but it was 70 feet long by 20 feet tall, but it's not continuous. There's some wall space in that. That was a

very, very modest budget. That was my second one. You've got to figure, I'm a guy that lives down at the end of the island, doing little projects or little windows for people's bathroom. They don't want to see anything, anybody looking in. I got this opportunity to get involved in the public art sphere. My first ones in Wenatchee for a little school. I did their library window. It was a curved window. My arts liaison from the Washington Arts Commission took me aside and says, "We really don't have a budget for this. You're proposing something too big." I said, "Man, I don't get an opportunity to do something like this. I'm going to jump on it." I didn't make any money on it, but I got my first nice mural.

Jack Archibald: 00:14:32 The second one, everyone opens another door. I still feel that way. Every project opens another door. You're really not so much after the money, you're just after that opportunity. Lately that opportunity has kind of gone away. After the recession, things dried up for public art a little bit. They stopped building the buildings. It's all based on a construction fund. I'm still waiting for it to come back a little bit. Now because they're ... I mean, the competition is ferocious now. You've got everybody jumping into the pool for every project. I mean, at one time you could go after a modest budget and figure, "Well, all right, I'm going to be a big fish in a little pond." Now all the sharks are in with you. It's gotten a lot harder.

Ken Harvey: 00:15:16 If there's anyone out there who's listening who has a project coming up and you're looking for something to consider really transforming your project, give this guy a nod. Take a look at his work. It's pretty incredible.

Jack Archibald: 00:15:32 You raise an issue. It's like someone out there, but we're talking. I've never really done corporate or commercial much, mostly it's public art. That's one of the joys of public art is that they're the folks that put in large scale artworks. I mean, you don't see corporations putting a lot of art into their ... We talk about a capitalism in America, but they don't really support the individual artists that much, but the public art, the 1% for art does. It certainly made my life different. I mean, it transformed my life.

Jim Hills: 00:16:04 When you're looking at a public art piece and you're looking at the bid documents that come in with it, some of those come with ideas and themes that they're interested in. You have quite a bit of latitude in interpreting that in what you propose, don't you?

- Jack Archibald: 00:16:17 You have absolute latitude in a sense, because what you're doing is competing for that project. It's pretty rare in the public art sphere that they'll actually give you too much of a theme or a direction. They're really just throwing out a budget, throwing out locations they might be interested in. When I come in, I'm looking at windows of course, although not always. The Everett Train Station is a clock. Mostly you're up against folks that might be proposing sculpture or they might be proposing, well, all kinds of fields, brick work. You never know what you're up against. It's an irony to me that part of public art and my so-called career is competitive. Part of the reason I got interested in art is you don't have to play the game to be competitive. You're just doing what you want to do. Then you end up ... It's a very competitive field. That's the irony of all this.
- Jim Hills: 00:17:20 When you are looking at a particular opportunity, what's going through your head about ... How you start to envision it? I mean, you talked about being excited about here's an opportunity. This isn't ... I mean, yes it's a business. Yes, it's going to pay something, but this is ... It's not a paycheck. It's an opportunity. What are you thinking when you're ... How do you start to envision some?
- Jack Archibald: 00:17:40 Well, I guess when I look at ... They'll send out an RFQ, a chance to apply for a certain project. I'll look at the building. We're looking at a building and see if there's something there for me. I'm usually looking at an entry way or something dramatic. Occasionally not, but that's what I'm looking for. If I see something there that looks like something I'd be interested in, then I go after it. Budget comes into it of course. You don't want to ... I mean, when I was younger, I would really give them way too much and still do really. In some ways, I'm going to make the budget. If I have to do more work, well I'm not that busy really, I mean honestly. I found that in some ways, your introduction overblows what I think I'm all about. I do try to ... Well it's like the first, the second project was state patrol building.
- Ken Harvey: 00:18:39 That's a very humble, modest Camano Island resident.
- Jack Archibald: 00:18:46 They had the whole front of this curved window that was 70 feet by 20 feet. It just looked pretty dramatic if you took it on. Was the money that good for that project? No, it wasn't. I was in the middle of building my house at the time when I got picked to do that project. It meant I got to finish the house. I really wasn't sure we would. Again, it opens that next door. People would see that. They would think, "Oh, this guy must be a big timer." Well, I'm not. I probably never will be, but it does

put that in your head. They don't ask you what the budget is most of the time. They're looking at the work. Eventually, I end up with my 10 slides. That's what you're working toward. You want those 10 slides that just pop. They come up. Then you can compete with some of the big boys. When you finally reach that point, you were a happy camper, I'll tell you.

- Ken Harvey: 00:19:46 Jack, one of the things that I have seen in my own life is that certain things inspire artists. Is there someone's work, either current or past work, that inspires you or has inspired you in your own?
- Jack Archibald: 00:20:06 I get asked that a lot in my juries, in the committees that decide who's going to take on the project. They're usually ... The people who ask that are usually artists. They want to know which artist was your inspiration. My stock answer basically is that they're people you wouldn't have heard of. They're stained glass guys. Ed Carpenter is one of my heroes in glass. He would do large scale installations. What I always say that committees is I work with light. My people that I'm inspired by are the other guys that work with light. They do designs. I don't always see those come together where I see folks that are ... I like their designs or I'm inspired by their designs. For my own part, I don't know.
- Jack Archibald: 00:20:56 I don't try to overthink my glass work. It's not an intellectual process for me. It's probably simple and maybe a little dumb. I go after the building. I'm trying to say something about a building and trying to turn that building into ... I want the glass to become a signature. I know when I apply for them I always say, "Well, I'm a collaborative guy. I'm willing to work ... If you want something that's just decorative over here or if you want that or if you want ..." I can add iconic sort of signature. I'm happy to do it.
- Jack Archibald: 00:21:29 The truth is I want to signature. I want the building. I want to own that building. Architects see that. I have a lot of trouble with architects for that reason. It's the bane of my existence when I have to deal with, fighting with architects. Everybody has this Frank Lloyd Wright image now. I want to control everything. I want to control what you wear into mind building for god's sake. They certainly don't want to see the smiley face come on the front of that building. Sometimes it does work out. Sometimes you have architects that are really happy to work with you.
- Jack Archibald: 00:22:01 The Everett Train Station is a very good example of a nice collaboration down there. We started out on that one. They just

wanted a nine foot clock. They wanted to put a clock in and me put the smiley face in the clock. I went, "This just sounds corny." I fought. I fought. I fought for let's do something bigger. They said, "We don't really have the budget. We're not going to give you any more money." I said, "Yeah, but it would look a lot nicer, wouldn't it?" Finally the architects bought in and we did. We built this structural, stainless steel clock.

- Ken Harvey: 00:22:35 It's beautiful. It's impressive.
- Jack Archibald: 00:22:38 It's not the most artistic thing in the world, oddly enough. I mean, in some ways, you think of it as it's more architectural. I mean, it's an architectural constructs.
- Ken Harvey: 00:22:46 It's functional art.
- Jack Archibald: 00:22:48 Yeah, and it was a tough project. I didn't make much money on that one. But I'll tell you, I still love walking in that building.
- Jim Hills: 00:22:56 The northwest ... Speaking of inspiration and glass. When you say you're a glass artist, in the northwest, a lot of times that might turn into be hot glass, blown glass art.
- Jack Archibald: 00:23:06 Almost always.
- Jim Hills: 00:23:08 Do you consider yourself next door, part of that community? Is there something that comes from that?
- Jack Archibald: 00:23:16 Not really. When you think of glass or art in the northwest, you think glass, you think to Chihuly and Pilchuck glass up there. Stained glass is kind of ... We're more kin to macrame, I think, for most people. They've got Aunt Matilda like, "Oh yeah, she made some glass last year.
- Ken Harvey: 00:23:39 Is that like how crochet is considered [crosstalk 00:23:42].
- Jack Archibald: 00:23:42 I think so, Ken. When I tell people and [inaudible 00:23:47] and they say, "What do you do?" I say, "I'm a stained glass artist." You just know what they're thinking. That's fine.
- Ken Harvey: 00:23:52 I would challenge anyone who thinks that there's anything pedestrian about, certainly the work that you do or those in the glass breaking community to really take some time and absorb what uh, the impact of that work.
- Jack Archibald: 00:24:18 Well, a little ... the documentary you were talking about, Godot's film. The part of the impetus for that was that I think

stained glass in the world or even just the United States, just take the United States or even just take Washington, take a state and then go and look at some of the monumental stain glass works. I mean, we're building cathedrals now. It's like when you saw them on film gives people a new appreciation for what stain glass can do. It can do everything it did in renaissance glass. I mean, it's almost spiritual. I mean, it's, like I say, working with light, it's big. I mean, it commands your attention. It's pretty. Sometimes even the designs are worth talking about.

- Ken Harvey: 00:25:06 Well, you know, there were a few additional works of art that you had installed and that I had wanted to spend just a little bit of time talking about. Kaleidoscope ...
- Jim Hills: 00:25:18 Kaleidoscope is an interesting ...
- Ken Harvey: 00:25:19 ... was one of the ... I was just trying to ... I wanted to hear what you thought you were trying to communicate through that work. It's something to me. There's something that seems to be going on in terms of that space and how that, like you were saying, with the functional art or the glass clockwork at the Everett Train Center, there's something about the kaleidoscope, a piece that seems to transcend space and time.
- Jack Archibald: 00:25:49 Well, it does in a sense. When they had the project, I didn't read the perspectives very carefully. I went down. It's for a low income housing project. It was a storefront, but right beside the McDonald's down on 3rd and Pine. It's a really nasty area. They had these windows, and I just, like I said, I didn't read the prospectus. I thought it'd be a typical, you're looking in and out. It's a four foot wide room. I got down there. I just held my head in my hands. I said to the folks, I said, "I didn't read the prospectus." They said, "Well, we really hope you apply." I went home. I thought, "Wow, what am I going to do with a four foot space?"
- Jack Archibald: 00:26:29 What we decided, I decided was to put mirrors on the walls, to put mirrors on the floor and then create this kaleidoscopic quilt pattern thing that when you look at it ... Then we lit it up too. We had lighting going on all the time. I would go down and change it every few months. When it was Christmas, we had Christmas lights, those ones that you can have 40 functions and it'll do all sorts of things. Well, it really works on that kaleidoscope. Then we'd create a little viewing areas, so you could see into these. As you walk by, it really had a kaleidoscopic effect.

- Jack Archibald: 00:27:06 It was really a lucky deal to do it. It was a challenge to come up with something that worked in the space. That's my job. I mean, you're trying to look at a building, you're trying to look at a space and then imagine, "All right, what can we do with this?" It fires the imagination or sometimes it just dignifies the building. I don't know. You've got different ... A courthouse, you're going to treat a lot differently than a, oh, I just was down at Utah for a state liquor store, which I have not done yet, by the way. I was really anxious to do a couple of them too. You do look at every building and its function differently. Some, that's not as important. Some, it's totally critical. That little building, it could have been anything. The space demanded something kind of a little weird.
- Jim Hills: 00:27:56 It's really interesting to hear how your connectedness to the space and to the building and that that's really an important part of your art. It is not by itself, this is my thing that I did and I'm going plunk it on ...
- Jack Archibald: 00:28:12 It's not a canvas. It's not that I get to go and do whatever I chose to do. Although, I will say I got in a wrangle with the architects on that big state patrol building. They pulled a rug on me at the last minute. They had promised to do something at the end. They didn't really want anything in their front windows. They came to the meeting. We had everyone there. They said, "Well, I'm sorry guys. We changed everything. We won't be able to put anything in there." I said, "Well, I really was looking forward to playing in the big leagues with you boys, but you've obviously made it clear you're not collaborative. Now, you've got a ticked off artist on your hand. What I have now is just a big canvas I'm going to play with." Now that's a bluff. I was just being a meathead about it. In the end, I tried to make it still be resonant to the building. I think we did. Oddly enough, we put a thing we call Quixote's Comet. It looks like a comet. To the state patrol guys, I learned later, it looks a lot like a revolver. I think they really liked that one. You can see that thing for half a mile away lit up at night.
- Jim Hills: 00:29:26 Now, you had mentioned your first studio and how you got started. Again, so it was attached to the building was the idea of fixing this problem that you had with the building, like you needed windows. Do you also, where you're living on south Camano, does it also come into some of the inspiration? The way you look at the glass and the light and the art when you're staring at the table and wondering where to place that next piece?

Jack Archibald: 00:29:57 In this sense, Jim, when I first started out, I was really into the colors of it. I really like colors. I would use ... You're living in the Pacific Northwest. I would make these colorful, dark California style windows where you don't have the sunshine coming in 12 months of the year. I realized, because of the location went to clearers, bevels, a lot of open spaces, especially in the public works, but even in the residential is that you just don't want to darken it up too much. I mean, you really just want to ... The environment played a role in that, I guess would say.

Jim Hills: 00:30:41 Yeah, that's interesting.

Ken Harvey: 00:30:46 I do have this one question about, and I'm going to go back to kaleidoscope as an example. I love science fiction and science speculative fiction, from time to time, I read stories of something in the future where people have come back to earth after the earth now is devoid of life and civilization. Someone uncovers an artifact. I'm thinking to myself, "Okay, so future human explorers returning to earth, and they uncover this artifact. It's the kaleidoscope installation. They're trying to figure out what it's for. They're trying to figure out who made this and what was the purpose of this and is it a communications device." What would you think ...

Jack Archibald: 00:31:53 This is like Motels of the Mystery. You ever read that book where they come back and they find the motel?

Ken Harvey: 00:31:58 Yeah.

Jack Archibald: 00:31:59 The go through the motel. They find the [inaudible 00:32:01] over the toilet. They're trying to imagine, "What kind of religion was this? It is some altar?" Let's hope it's thought of as an altar. I don't know. Good luck to those guys when they come back.

Ken Harvey: 00:32:21 Jack, you've mentioned 1977 coming to the island. Why Camano Island? Why the south end?

Jack Archibald: 00:32:32 I'm one of those people that I think luck plays such a role in your life. It's like you fall into something and maybe go with it. Luck does have a place in it. Camano, for me, was I decided I wanted to move out of the city. I'd moved to Seattle. My marriage was busting up. Things weren't going very well. I just wanted out of the city. I'd always wanted to go back to the country. I grew up in the woods. My dad was a forester. We grew up in national forests. I just want a place with some woods and get away. I drove up Whidbey Island. They didn't have anything to show a

guy that was looking for something for \$25,000 and five acres and a house. They said, "Are you kidding me?"

- Jack Archibald: 00:33:14 I just happened to see the Stanwood exit. It said Camano Island. I drove into town on Sunday night. There was a real estate office open. The guy lived just south of where we do. He said, "I think I got something for you." This old shack was for sale. The guy was moving away. He had only had it for a couple years. Dug it out of the blackberries. Came down and looked at it a few days later.
- Jim Hills: 00:33:39 In the dark?
- Jack Archibald: 00:33:42 Yes, in the dark, Jim. In more ways than one. They were baking cookies. They had the oil lamps on. It was a hippie dream. It was just a hippie dream for me. I just went, "Yes." I mean, I bought it right there. When I came back in the daylight, my wife at the time, shortly thereafter left me for good reason, sat in the corner and cried. I don't really blame her, but she says, "What are we going to do with this?" I said, "I'm going to live in it. That's what I'm going to do with it." 17 years I did, until Karen and I built our house up on the hill. That was fun too. That was a two years of building a house. I recommend that to anybody. It was a hoot.
- Ken Harvey: 00:34:28 Teach you some life lessons?
- Jack Archibald: 00:34:31 It made me an old man real quick. If that's a lesson, yes, it did, Ken.
- Ken Harvey: 00:34:36 Jack, what exactly is a Skeeter Daddle?
- Jack Archibald: 00:34:39 Skeeter Daddle is me. It's just a little play on words. Skedaddle, Skeeter. I don't know. Daddle, just seemed like a funny nom de plume. I just wanted to write a few stories. I used to do a lot of letter writing. I just decided at some point I wanted to write about what life was like on the end of the island back when I came. I didn't want it to go away, because we're gentrifying up a little bit. It was an interesting place. It's still an interesting place. Don't get me wrong.
- Ken Harvey: 00:35:12 You're not saying gentrifying just because I moved in, are you?
- Jack Archibald: 00:35:14 Well, no I'm not Ken. You have raised the bar. It was a gnarly old place back then. I didn't want it to not be a written down. In some ways ... I write a little blog. I write a few books on this. I

just wanted, it's kind of like a diary. Skeeter Daddle writes the diaries. That's all.

Ken Harvey: 00:35:44 I do think that it's an interesting term. I spent a significant amount of time trying to find it on the internet.

Jack Archibald: 00:35:54 Good luck. Good luck.

Ken Harvey: 00:35:55 I thought I'd just ask you directly. Banjo wacker ...

Jack Archibald: 00:36:00 I'm a banjo player.

Ken Harvey: 00:36:01 Let's talk about that.

Jack Archibald: 00:36:02 I'm a banjo player and not a particularly great one, so I'm a banjo wacker, I guess more than a banjo musician. We have a little band.

Ken Harvey: 00:36:11 Yeah?

Jack Archibald: 00:36:11 Oh yeah, South end String Band. We've been playing for 15 years. Started out back in 2002. We're just a back porch band. Just get together, the neighbors and play some music. Half of us didn't know how to play anything. Just come down and drink beer. We ended up with 11 people in a band. Started playing around. We did a lot of benefits. We a had a Save the Grange back in 2004. We actually saved the Grange. We played for them for 10, 12 years and gave them most of the money we made and kept them afloat. We do a lot for the historical society. Still put on a benefits for them. The joy of it, again, it's like the glass. You want to give more. You give a large murals, because it's going to come back and pay you back later. In the band, you play for some of these. Well, you get an audience. We play for the Camano Senior Center a lot of years for really nothing, but you'd get a guaranteed audience of a 100, 150 people. When you're a little band like we are, that's a big deal.

Ken Harvey: 00:37:23 That's a big deal.

Jack Archibald: 00:37:23 It's really fun.

Ken Harvey: 00:37:25 Especially, if you look out and you see them tapping their feet, nodding their heads.

Jack Archibald: 00:37:28 We've got old time fiddle music. It's fun music unless you're a kid. We don't appeal to the young crowd, but us old goats, yeah, you'll tap your toes.

Jim Hills: 00:37:41 How old were you when you ... I mean, because we've talked about art, we've talked about music. You're a writer, a blogger, and how old were you when you realized that the juices for all those things were coursing through you?

Jack Archibald: 00:38:00 I mean, when you're sitting in bed or lying in bed at age five thinking, "You know what? I'm going to be this, this, and this."

Jim Hills: 00:38:06 When you moved out of Seattle, where you selling insurance and this was a whole shift?

Jack Archibald: 00:38:12 I was an itinerant workers, Jim. I didn't last in a job much more than three months anywhere. I thought, "Oh, that'd be fun. Just do that the rest of your life." Not really understanding the idea of resumes and that future employees might be interested in that job record. I drove school buses. I worked in kennels and dog pounds and all kinds of odd jobs that weren't going anywhere. I didn't expect they would. When did I think I'd become ... I don't know. When I started class, I had a job as an orderly at the hospital graveyard two nights a week, Everett General. I'd get a ... Somebody'd want a stain glass when I'd take it in. I'd walk around with it. Somebody'd say, "Oh, I wouldn't mind having stained glass window too." So I would make another one, sort of show and tell thing. That built up. Then there was a ... It's a hard thing to decide to label yourself an artist when you're, I don't know. There just comes a point where you go, "I can't deny it anymore. I guess I do this."

Jim Hills: 00:39:18 It sounds like it's something you can get labeled, right?

Jack Archibald: 00:39:20 Yeah, I think so. I don't think in my own head I would. I knew that's what I do. I've had people around me. Camano's got a lot of art. People are very artistic. I'm not, to tell you the truth. At some point, you have to go, "Well, yeah, but this is what I do. I'm okay. Here we go. I'm just going to ..." There was a, I forget the name of the cartoonist in Seattle, but I listened to her on before podcasts, but some interview. She says, "I never thought of myself as an artist." She says, "I'm just a cartoonist. I'm just a cartoonist." I'm just a stain glass guy. At some point she says, "You just have to go, I guess so." I think Gary Larson was a little like that too, the Far Side. I'm like that too. I think at some point, "Well, I can't deny it anymore. This is what I do. All right, I'll have to take it."

Jim Hills: 00:40:16 The other part that is clear when listening to you talk about it is you like it. You like it a lot.

Jack Archibald: 00:40:23 Yeah. No, I think you should do things you like. If I didn't like doing it, I wouldn't do it. Some of the times it's really hard. I mean, some of this public art, these big installations. They're very stressful. The politics of some of these fights I'd go through are just, they're tiring. I really like seeing those things go in. I really like glass. I really liked public art. I mean, I really, that was odd to fall into that. I had applied back around '88 and been turned down a couple of times. I was remodeling something in my old shack. I had a beam stuck up on a truck jack. It fell off and hit me in the shoulder. My arm went numb. I threw down the hammer. I was so ticked off. I said, "I'm done. I'm done. I'm done with glass. I'm just done." The phone rang about an hour later. It was, the Arts Commission saying, "We picked you to go on the roster. Don't assume you'll get anything, but your roster." Well, so I didn't quit right then. It had a happy ending.

Ken Harvey: 00:41:28 I just wanted to remind the audience, we are, Jim Hills and I are talking with Jack Archibald, self confessed banjo wacker, glass breaker, and author and a school bus driver earlier in career ...

Jack Archibald: 00:41:49 And may end up back there before long.

Ken Harvey: 00:41:51 ... and South end nettle farmer on Camano Island. Hey Jack, we have, as Jim had mentioned earlier, we've seen your work in the Camano Island Library, and I think we've got your work elsewhere.

Jack Archibald: 00:42:11 Yeah, we have, let's see, the Mukilteo Library has a couple, Marysville, Camano, Stanwood. Let's see. I got the other library around here isn't yours on Sno-Isle, Burlington. My wife's a librarian, so I really like putting glass at the libraries for some odd reason.

Ken Harvey: 00:42:36 I was going to give you the opportunity to talk about your library connection that goes beyond just the artwork that you've installed.

Jack Archibald: 00:42:44 Yeah. Karen's worked with libraries all her life. One of the sacrifices she made was coming out to marry me for more reasons than one. I think career wise it was a big sacrifice. For a while, she worked at the University of Washington's library. She ran Odegaard during the evenings for a lot of years. That's a long commute. You think you have a long commute to here. She had a long commute. Then the traffic just started getting terrific. At any rate, then she worked for Sno-Isle for about a decade. Different libraries, Marysville, Arlington, Stanwood. Then she finally went up to Burlington. My connection with Sno-Isle is through Karen. I like libraries, whether ...

Ken Harvey: 00:43:30 Why?

Jack Archibald: 00:43:31 Oh, libraries represent everything. I mean, libraries are, they're the DNA of culture for us. Everything's in a library. We just recently, as you know, got the Camano Library after the pilot program a couple of years, finally had it put in. It's a small miracle. I mean, libraries ... It's hard to sell them to people that just think Google is everything. Libraries offer all kinds of ... I mean, I have friends that don't have computers. If you want to apply for a job, you don't have a computer these days, they're not going to ...

Ken Harvey: 00:44:09 Can't really do it.

Jack Archibald: 00:44:11 You really can't do it.

Ken Harvey: 00:44:11 Companies don't want you to walk in the door anymore and apply.

Jack Archibald: 00:44:14 No, no, no. You've got to have a ... Libraries offer that. They offer ... Well, it's democratizing thing. You've got access to all that information, all that, the computers. You want to set up an email account, whatever. When I'm traveling I use the library to check email. I don't know. It's just got everything, music, art. I don't know. I can't imagine a world without libraries. I really can't.

Ken Harvey: 00:44:40 You wrote what I consider to be a classic blog or newspaper opinion piece back when Sno-Isle Libraries had a funding campaign going on for just regular funding. I think we may just go ahead and post it with this podcast on the show notes page. You were arguing about why it made sense to help fund the library. You used what I consider to be your Skeeter Daddle perspectives and a sense of humor.

Jack Archibald: 00:45:23 I did one straight. I did one Skeeter. I always got to ... Again, I'm always for let's, let's support the libraries. There's people that just think, "Well, I've got a computer at home. I don't need to support to the library. I've got Google, I got Wikipedia." I just don't think people have a really good grip on what they offer. I mean, what you can find in the library is ... You've got people to help you find it. I mean, Karen was a ... When people come in, they're looking for something. Well, that's what she's there for. That's what a librarian does. They help you find this stuff. You're sitting at home. You're drilling through 16 ads and a bunch of bogus stuff. You think, "Well, I can't find it." Well, a professional could. That's what you find in a library. Half of us don't really

care. We're going to get past the ad, find the first Wikipedia article. That's plenty. Why do I need a library? A library is a cultural place. I mean, you walk in and it's got, like I say, we've got art, which is why I'm interested in putting art in these libraries. A couple of them are donations. It just makes it a cultural place. I'll get to be a cultural tour going into my own library.

- Jim Hills: 00:46:38 Speaking of Karen, you mentioned before we were on the air, that she's got an interest in local history too. The two of you might have some connections to local history that you're preserving and working on out there.
- Jack Archibald: 00:46:54 Yeah, Karen, since 1985 or so, we got involved in, we went down together to the historical society. She stayed for the ... She's still there. It's quite a historical site.
- Ken Harvey: 00:47:06 She's not come home any of the nights?
- Jack Archibald: 00:47:08 Well, I've seen her a few times. I've seen a few. She's been back on hiatus. She's got a particular ... She's written a book on Camano. She writes articles for their newsletter and does her newsletters year after year after year. These articles are in depth on a particular ... She just had an article in the Everett Herald on the Bryant, Town of Bryant down there where Highway 9 hits 530.
- Jack Archibald: 00:47:37 Our history, we were talking earlier before we started, we've got an old 1915 house. When we remodeled that there was a theater poster in there. Full size theater poster of a woman in a risque outfit, which it turns out is a woman named Ruby Reid. She lived in that house as a little girl, we think, and her mom and her sisters. Ruby went away and became a burlesque dancer. She came back in the '40s, built another house next to ours, which we now own, a little 1940s bungalow. She came with her husband, Harry Reid, or Harry Vine. They lived up there a few years. We've lost track where they went. She taught dancing classes. We're following that little history and trying ... All this leads her down these avenues of the south end, particularly all these families. These histories get lost. I mean, I have trouble remembering back 40 years when I first came here. I mean, I forget who lived down the road. I forget, where that house was and who did what. It all goes to rot and rust and ruin in no time flat.
- Jack Archibald: 00:48:54 Karen tries to hang onto that. It's been fun to watch her do it. She knows more history of that area than just about anybody I know. She, at one time applied for the Northwest Room down

at Everett, Dave Dilgard, Margaret Riddle. I was really hoping she picked that job up, although she would never have retired. She'd die down there. It would've been a perfect job for her, librarian and historian.

Jim Hills: 00:49:23 It sounds really fun that you've got your own roots, you're making some roots, and then you're looking at the roots too. All of who you are, where you're living, and what's ...

Jack Archibald: 00:49:33 I grew up moving around all the time. Karen did too. It's really interesting that we've laid down these roots. It's like you plant your gardens, you plant your trees, your arboretum, and you actually see it grow. I never thought I would see that. I was always a rolling stone. I always like moving. I never really thought I'd find a spot that would hold me. Camano, it just ... Well, I didn't come from a place that had tides and you could look off and see the mountains and you could get to them. It's a great place to live. I mean, I just, well, I moved.

Ken Harvey: 00:50:10 Absolutely.

Jack Archibald: 00:50:10 I moved. It's gotten a little more crowded, but that's fine. The other thing, Camano, when I came, thinking of history and the question of its history, it doesn't have a lot of history. I mean, it had the logging. It had a few chicken farms down at Mabana, which is near Ken and I. It didn't really create an identity the way a LaConner did or other places. In some ways, it's a blank slate, which you can create that place. I mean, a while back we started a studio tour, Mother's Day studio tour. Now we create an art island here. That's not a bad identity, I think. You add to that. Last year we started a craft show, Shannon Kirby's down the road from me, a sculptress. We set up ... We're going to start an annual fine arts crafts. We launched it this year. It went really well, I think. We'll keep it going.

Jack Archibald: 00:51:16 You'd like to do that with music. You'd like to do that with writing. We've got the library. That was a score. Those are big deals, those little thing. You don't want this to be Smokey Point. You want it to be Camano Island. It has some sort of cultural identity. It's not just a bedroom community. You have a reason to be here, a reason to be happy with it beyond just the natural beauty, which is plenty. We had this group of Friends of Camano Island State Parks. They go around. They take care of all the county parks. I've got a little county park that's mine over at Hutchison. We tried to put art in there. We just put in the newest library, you guys. I haven't really, we haven't really been annexed by you folks at Sno-Isle. I'm assuming you'd be interested soon.

- Jack Archibald: 00:52:07 We had a telephone booth show up at the park. Some guy brought in, he actually laid a pad. While I'm mowing, I see this pad show up. It's four feet, three feet by three feet. I'm thinking, "Something's coming. What's coming?" Took five weeks and then boom, there's this old 1960s rectangular glass, fold door telephone booth. I'm sitting with Leslie Moore, Camano Library, over for dinner one night. We're just talking about this telephone booth and what to do with it. It's not that cute a thing. She said, "Well why don't you make a little library?" We did. We got a little library down there. She's providing all kinds of books. It's one of those where you don't take one and leave one. You can just take them. She's got lots of books coming in that they can't use at the Friends of the Library. We've got a library down there. They've already vandalized it, of course. They even burned a few books, but that's part of the mythology of the south end. I think. Maybe they're not literate, but they at least finding something they can use for kindling.
- Ken Harvey: 00:53:16 Jack, in our last few minutes, any advice you would give someone who's listening, who may have in them these things moving around that it's waiting to be expressed. It can be expressed through art. It might be expressed in glass. It might be expressed through music or writing. They're just not certain what to do with it. They are just feeling these stirrings. What would you, what would you say to them?
- Jack Archibald: 00:53:50 I have a million people come up to me and they say, "Oh, you're an artist. You're an artist. I don't have an artistic bone in my body." I mean, I hear that all the time. I always think, "The bad news for those folks who think they're invertebrate is that we all have artistic bones in our body. We just don't try to use them. We don't try." Really, we're all creating our own lives, aren't we?
- Ken Harvey: 00:54:17 Yes.
- Jack Archibald: 00:54:18 Really, the artistry is you're making your life. I mean, whether you're building your house or making a guitar or playing a guitar or whacking a banjo or breaking glass, I mean you're building your life really. You should look at it that way. I mean you should be conscious of it. My life is my doing, I mean, and so artistic, yeah. We all have that in us. If they wanted to pursue it ... I had someone I just met and he said, "Oh, I was thinking of making stained glass." I said, "By all means go to the library. They got books down there." That's all you really need. I mean, you can go take a class, but the books are in the library. That's all. You've got to go buy some tools. It's a very easy craft. Then

get excited about it. I don't know that. My advice to anybody is just jumping in the pool. The water's wet.

Ken Harvey: 00:55:07 Well, we want to make sure that ... I'm delighted you said that. Hopefully people will really listen to the wisdom, Skeeter Daddle wisdom.

Jim Hills: 00:55:21 Skeeter Daddle wisdom.

Jack Archibald: 00:55:22 We call it moonshine wit and moonshine wisdom, wet powder wit.

Ken Harvey: 00:55:28 Well, it's been the life while having you on this podcast.

Jack Archibald: 00:55:31 It was a pleasure to be here.

Ken Harvey: 00:55:33 We want to just really invite members of our audience to go online and take a look at some of the work that Jack has done that's transformed buildings. Take a look at some of the writings and musings that have come from moonshine and needles, nettles and other things. Also, if you have a occasion to find out when the string band is playing and come out and be part of that audience and tap your foot.

Jack Archibald: 00:56:05 Thanks Ken. Thank you Jim.

Jim Hills: 00:56:07 Thanks for coming.

Jack Archibald: 00:56:07 Appreciate it.

Abe Martinez: 00:56:10 Did you know you can download some of the best business and finance magazines for free with your Sno-Isle Library's card? Learn more online at Sno-Isle Libraries.

Ken Harvey: 00:56:21 If you have a great library experience you'd like to share with us, we would love to know about it. Drop us a line at checkitoutpodcast@sno-isle.org. Again, that's [checkitoutpodcast](https://www.facebook.com/checkitoutpodcast), all one word, [@sno-isle.org](https://www.facebook.com/@sno-isle.org). Who knows? We might even invite you to share your story on a future podcast.

Jim Hills: 00:56:43 What an interesting conversation that was.

Ken Harvey: 00:56:45 Wasn't that?

Jim Hills: 00:56:46 Oh my gosh, what just happened.

Ken Harvey: 00:56:49 Boy, I really enjoy Jack. He's a great guest.

Jim Hills: 00:56:52 How do you find that kind of person, right there in Camano Island?

Ken Harvey: 00:56:58 Well, my own neighborhood, essentially almost right across the street from where I live.

Jim Hills: 00:57:02 Makes you wonder what you can find if you just go next door and ask for, borrow a cup of sugar, who you're going to run into.

Ken Harvey: 00:57:06 That's right.

Jim Hills: 00:57:07 Knock on the door and make friends with your neighbors. Oh my gosh.

Ken Harvey: 00:57:09 Well, I think that's a great reminder that we've got all kinds of individuals who are, not only a part of the culture, but bring culture.

Jim Hills: 00:57:19 What I thought was really interesting is listening to his humility about what he does, but then once he started talking about it, the ownership that he has. He started saying, "I really want to own that building. I really want to put my stamp on it." Yet it took them decades to say to himself that he's an artist.

Ken Harvey: 00:57:44 Yeah. I think that one of the things that I find with creatives, and he talked a little bit about that challenge that some people have seeing themselves as creative, maybe thinking of themselves, "I don't have a creative bone in my body," but in fact, just taking life experience or passion and figuring that you're creating something, you can create something with that. Quite often creatives have a sense of humility and modesty that causes them to disregard themselves.

Jim Hills: 00:58:25 Yeah, yeah. The other part that I loved is how he connected that back to life. When he was talking about those who don't see themselves as creative and he goes, "Really, we're all creating our own life. That's our canvas." He saw that and becomes this armchair philosopher.

Ken Harvey: 00:58:42 Yeah, it was pretty profound, I thought.

Jim Hills: 00:58:43 Absolutely, I just loved that. What an experience that was.

Ken Harvey: 00:58:47 Well, I think that Jack Archibald is one of the jewels in our region and one of many jewels that we have all across our

region. That is actually one of the things that we, with this podcast, are trying to do. We want to share those jewels with the greater audience and elevate them so they can be recognized but also learn from them. There's a lot of life experience that he shared with us in that podcast that I thought was pretty fascinating. Just that whole story of coming to Camano Island in 1977, and the way he ... There's something fascinating. I actually think we need to have him back, because I think there's more story there.

- Jim Hills: 00:59:35 You know what I'd love is if he'd bring his wife, Karen back. Maybe we talked to them both at the same time.
- Ken Harvey: 00:59:40 That's a great idea.
- Jim Hills: 00:59:41 I think that that would just be exciting.
- Ken Harvey: 00:59:42 Ah, because she's a librarian, and so she can give us a librarian side and also, you know what it's like to live in ...
- Jim Hills: 00:59:48 What it's like to live with Jack Archibald.
- Ken Harvey: 00:59:50 Yeah, what it's like. Exactly. Yeah, I was also intrigued by his sharing about the work that he has done and where some of that work is featured. Right at the start of the interview, you and he were talking about how difficult it is sometimes to photograph that art work, and how the light changes the nature of it, and its ability to be really captured in a photograph.
- Jim Hills: 01:00:25 For me, that would be like about how he dismisses his own talent, because he's clearly thinking about his medium, what he's using, how it's perceived in the environment, the feeling that you get out of that. I just, the level of investment that he gives to his art and his work is just exciting.
- Ken Harvey: 01:00:49 What do you think about what he was saying in terms of that one art piece that was the kaleidoscope, and how it bounces light all over the place?
- Jim Hills: 01:01:00 You know what I thought it was, it seemed ... He had talked earlier about how he looks at a building. It's not so much that his art is going to be someplace. He looks at the building and how he can enhance that and what does it bring to the building. Then he had the constraints of the space of the kaleidoscope. He was almost ready to give up on it. He was saying, "No, I can't."

Ken Harvey: 01:01:21 Because it was a four by four foot ...

Jim Hills: 01:01:23 Something like that.

Ken Harvey: 01:01:24 ... space.

Jim Hills: 01:01:24 Yeah, yeah. Yet, he went back and said, "Well, what can I do with it."

Ken Harvey: 01:01:29 Yeah, what do I do with it.

Jim Hills: 01:01:30 What do I do with that space?

Ken Harvey: 01:01:31 I think it was, "What do I do with that?"

Jim Hills: 01:01:33 Yeah, there you go. The space was all about the building. Then he massaged his art and his vision and what he thought he could do to fit that, which really sounded like that's a theme of what he brings to a project.

Ken Harvey: 01:01:50 Well, I thought it was fascinating too that this guy is a, as he said, "I'm a glass breaker," right?

Jim Hills: 01:01:58 Yeah, yeah.

Ken Harvey: 01:01:58 I thought that was really cute, like, "Oh yeah, you have to break that glass and then reassemble it." He talked about a giant jigsaw puzzle. I mean, actually that reminds me of what he said in terms of the size of some of those pieces of work.

Jim Hills: 01:02:16 We didn't get into that about how, so where did you do that? How did you get it from one place to another. The logistics of his art could be its own separate podcast.

Ken Harvey: 01:02:27 Yeah, yeah. We may have to re-explore that with him so we can better understand how he actually pulled some of that stuff off. He also, I found it fascinating that this glass breaker artisan is also a writer, is also a musician.

Jim Hills: 01:02:46 Yeah, he's looking for a lot of outlets for whatever he's got a that makes Jack Archibald who he is. He's got a lot of outlets for that creativity. He's found it. He's comfortable with it. That's the other part. While we were talking, being able to look at his face and the comfort, I guess that's the word that I would have to come back to, the comfort that he has with what he's doing in his life, how he's bringing that to his community, to his clients, to himself, it was inspiring,

Ken Harvey: 01:03:24 We could see his face. Of course, the audience couldn't during the podcast. Hey, take a look at the photo of him from the podcast, because we were seeing some wonderful expressions displayed on that face while we were talking. I'm really excited about having him back at some point.

Jim Hills: 01:03:45 That's going to be good. You mentioned that's the whole point of this podcast. I'm just excited about what comes next that we don't know about yet, and that we're going to go find.

Ken Harvey: 01:03:56 Coming up next, a spotlight on library stewardship.

Abe Martinez: 01:04:03 Just for a moment, pretend that you were this guy.

Brian Rush: 01:04:06 I'm Brian Rush. I'm facilities managers, Sno-Isle Libraries.

Abe Martinez: 01:04:11 Since you are Brian, you're responsible for the maintenance of 23 local libraries in a variety of buildings ranging from modern steel and glass structures to historic wood framed store fronts. Let's not forget the big brick service center in Marysville. By the way, these facilities are built to serve over three quarters of a million people spread out over two large counties covering over 2100 square miles. Don't pity Brian. He loves his job.

Brian Rush: 01:04:41 I'm really into this stuff.

Abe Martinez: 01:04:43 This stuff he's talking about is what he's been focused on since he joined Sno-Isle staff seven years ago.

Brian Rush: 01:04:50 We want to reduce cost, provide the best service, and make sure that people and the processes and the places within the facility support whatever it is that we need to do.

Abe Martinez: 01:05:00 Which is Brian's modest, if somewhat technical way of saying he's taken Sno-Isle facility's management to a whole new level, providing better service for the public at substantially lower costs. The most visible evidence of that is the way of library facilities are kept clean and healthy.

Brian Rush: 01:05:20 I'll give you an example. We have libraries open seven days a week. Many of those libraries only received cleaning maybe five or six days a week. We added days per week, so if it was open, it got cleaned. We added carpet clean quarterly. We added window cleaning quarterly. Many of those were only two times a year. We doubled the window cleaning, the carpet cleaning. Also we have a day porters at seven of our higher volume locations, so the restrooms, entry areas and any areas of focus

that needed additional cleaning in the middle of the day got cleaned. We added all of that along with doing green cleaning. We cut our costs by more than \$100,000 per year.

- Abe Martinez: 01:06:02 Sounds crazy, right? More and better service for less money. The secret is good management and consolidation of services. Think of it this way. The 23 community libraries that make up the Sno-Isle system share things like books, DVDs, digital resources, and even special events. As a result, every Sno-Isle customer has access to a massive collection that no single community library could possibly have on its own. Well, Brian and his facilities team use that same economies of scale idea to streamline and consolidate everything from custodial contracts to the purchase of cleaning supplies. They did it all while going green.
- Brian Rush: 01:06:49 Sno-Isle Libraries was the first library system to incorporate lead GS-42 green cleaning practices in any library district in this state.
- Abe Martinez: 01:07:00 Translation, when it comes to cleaning Sno-Isle Libraries strictly uses products and practices certified to be healthy for humans and sustainable for the environment. That's actually a huge deal since high traffic libraries are harder to keep clean than a typical office building. Yes, we were the first library district in the state to reach that green clean standard. The sustainable practices don't stop there.
- Brian Rush: 01:07:29 We now have a single stream recycling and composting at all of our libraries. We realized that 90% of our trash, in many cases, was just paper towels. We learned from a facilities tour of Cedar Grove that they loved paper towels. We realized that's really all we have. We had very little solid waste, but yet we were sending all of our waste stream out to the landfill and paying top dollar for it. We paid a much smaller amount to compost those materials. We would have mulch brought back to our buildings. We've become a full cycle compost and recycler.
- Abe Martinez: 01:08:09 The fact is, for the past several years, Sno-Isle Libraries has been transforming itself to become a greener, more sustainable operation in some pretty amazing ways. In the process, they've saved hundreds of thousands of dollars. This has been especially true with regard to energy efficiency, but that is a story for next time in part two of our stewardship spotlight. For Sno-Isle Libraries, I'm Abe Martinez.
- Ken Harvey: 01:08:45 Enjoying this episode of the Check it Out podcast? Head over to the iTunes store, Google Play music store, or most other

podcast stores. To subscribe, rate the podcast, or leave a review. Your rating and review will make it easier for others to find the Check It Out podcast wherever it's available.