

"THE RACE," "THE ORCHARD," AND "THE TRAIN"

A Painting Sculpture by Jo S. Fyfe

Dedicated at Cashmere High School

Sept. 4, 1984

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide for the Cashmere School District a historical record of the unique, multimedia work of art now on permanent display in the hallway adjacent to the south entrance of the Cashmere High School building.

The artwork is actually three separate, but complementary pieces entitled "The Race," "The Orchard," and "The Train," and was created by Spokane artist Jo S. Fyfe on a commission through the Washington State Arts Commission's Art in Public Places program. The work was formally dedicated on Sept. 4, 1984.

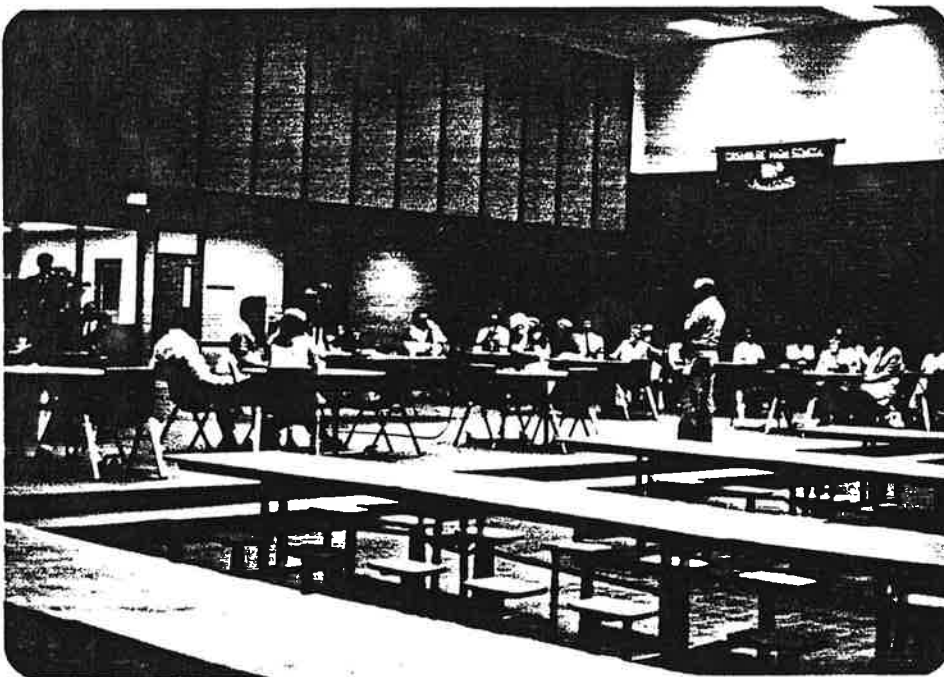
The information in this history was gathered in September, 1984, by three Cashmere Middle School Corps of Discovery students - Tim Caudle, Jennifer Scherer, and Gretchen Wick. It was written with the help of Ed Stover, a September Experience education student from Central Washington University. Overall supervision was provided by 7th Grade teacher and Corps of Discovery advisor Barbara deRubertis.

THE DEDICATION

The formal dedication ceremony for "The Race," "The Orchard," and "The Train," a multimedia artwork created for Cashmere High School by Spokane artist Jo S. Fyfe, was held Tuesday evening, Sept. 4, 1984.

The ceremony was held in the high school Community Center following a regular Cashmere School Board meeting. The center is adjacent to the hallway where the artwork is on permanent display. An estimated 75 to 100 people attended the event.

Brief introductory remarks were made by Cashmere School District Superintendent Randy Hauff, Cashmere School Board President Randy Smith, Cashmere High School Vice-principal Bill Kelly, and high school



Cashmere School Board Chairman Randy Smith addressed audience at dedication ceremony.

Principal Pamela Brunelle, who introduced Mrs. Fyfe.

Representing the Washington State Arts Commission, which commissioned the artwork through its Art in Public Places program, was commission Vice-chairman Gary Montague, who is from Wenatchee.



Artist Jo S. Fyfe is interviewed for television at dedication.

Bill Kelly, chairman of an art committee initially formed in 1981 for the purpose of selecting art for the new high school, paid particular tribute to those who served on the committee during the three-year art selection process.

Besides Kelly, members of the committee included Fred Wallick, Marilyn Wilson, June Person, Lucy

Kenoyer, Bettianne Waters, Nancy Johnson, and Barbara Smith.

Kelly also explained some of the difficulties encountered during the art selection process. The committee was forced to start the selection process over from scratch when an artist who was originally



Cashmere High School vice-principal Bill Kelly at dedication ceremony.

tapped for the job failed to live up to the terms of the contract, which stipulated that the artist visit Cashmere and the high school building where the work would be displayed.

Both Kelly and Randy Hauff had high praise for

Jo Fyfe, who was finally awarded the contract to do the artwork in November, 1983. The contract was fulfilled on schedule in August, 1984.

Kelly said that Mrs. Fyfe was suggested for the job by Michael Moore, arts consultant for the state arts commission.

Hauff explained that Mrs. Fyfe was "very timely, very punctual" in her working relations with the district. She spent a full day touring Cashmere and the school facilities, submitted preliminary drawings and ideas, and managed to incorporate local history



Cashmere School District Superintendent Randy Hauff at dedication.

and a regional flavor into the finished work.

Kelly and Hauff also explained the state arts commission's Art in Public Places program, which was established by the state Legislature in 1974. This program provides that one-half of 1% of capital expenditures for new construction be spent on visual art for public buildings. The law applies to new construction by state agencies, colleges and universities, and local public schools.

Purpose of the program is "to foster culture and the arts and its interest in the viable development of the state's artists and craftsmen." The state arts commission, which is charged with administering the law, states that it "seeks to provide high quality works of visual art for the public in places where they live, work, and study."

On the basis of the total cost of construction of the new high school, which was completed in 1981, a total of \$9,577 was allotted for visual art to be displayed at the school.

Of that total, \$1,425 went to the state arts commission for administration, which included the costs of advertising and contacting prospective artists.

Approximately \$5,500 of the balance went to Mrs. Fyfe for her commission. Another \$2,250 went to David W. Wharton, a Sun Valley, Idaho, artist who



Corps of Discovery advisor Barbara deRubertis, left, with Jo Fyfe.

was commissioned to do a series of lithographs which are also on display at the high school.

Following the dedication, those who attended were encouraged to view the artwork and ask questions of the artist.

Mrs. Fyfe remained in Cashmere the following day to conduct "creativity workshops" at the middle school and high school. Students who attended the workshops were able to view slides which illustrated step by step the evolution of the artwork. Mrs. Fyfe narrated the slide presentation, and explained in detail the



Jo Fyfe held creativity workshops for students during her visit to Cashmere.

technical and creative work involved. Following the slide show, she helped the students create original designs in clay, and then make "press molds" from the claywork. The clay designs later were fired in the school's kiln.

THE ARTWORK

Several terms have been used to describe the style of artwork created for Cashmere High School by Spokane artist Jo S. Fyfe. Among them are "multimedia design," "three-dimensional canvas," "multimedia stretched canvas," or even the rather strange word, "triptych," which alludes to the artwork being in three separate, but complementary parts.

Perhaps the artist's own term is the most appropriate. Mrs. Fyfe calls the artwork a "painting sculpture," which conveys the fine arts, as well as the three-dimensional aspects involved in the work.



Jo Fyfe, left, with Cashmere Mayor Suzanne MacPherson

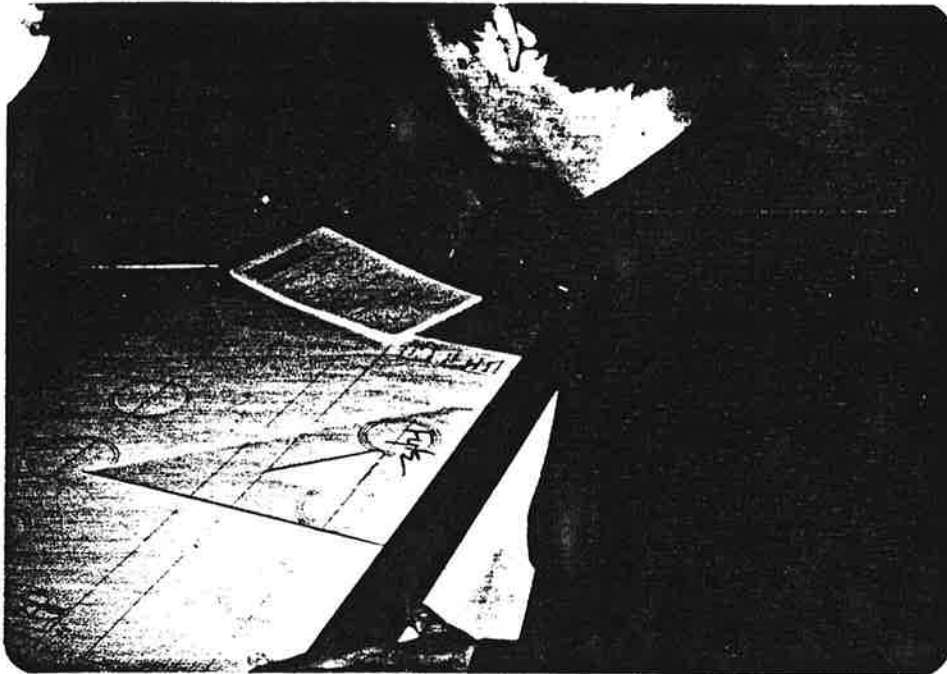
The artwork is composed of three circular-shaped pieces. Each circle is 46 inches wide and weighs about 50 pounds. A variety of materials is involved in the artwork, including acrylic paint, a variety of woods, copper tubing and enamel, bronze, brass, deerhide, pigskin, sheepskin, as well as the basic materials such as canvas and plywood used to support the artwork.

Each piece carries its own theme, but all three themes have the region in common. Each circle has its own simple, two-word title which is keyed to the basic event depicted in the work. The titles are "The Race," "The Orchard," and "The Train."

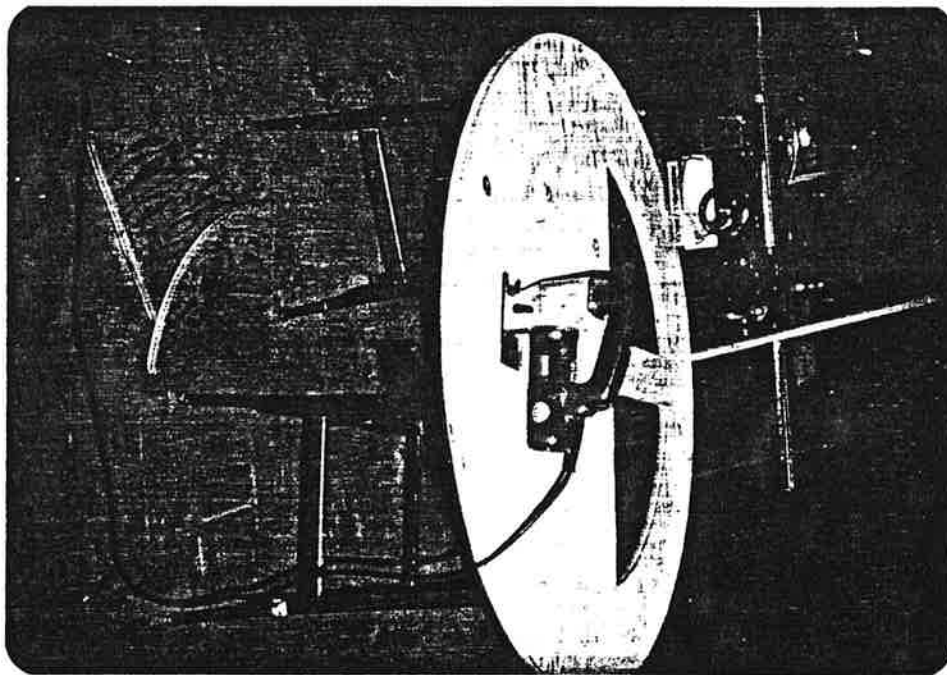
"The Race" is rooted in local Indian lore. Legend has it that the huge fir tree located at the eastern edge of the Cashmere High School parking lot was once the turn-around point used by local Indians in their horse races.

Ironically, the tree memorialized by Mrs. Fyfe in her artwork died as a result of the construction of the parking lot, which had a fatal effect on the tree's root system. The tree was cut down shortly before the artwork dedication. However, an impressive stump remains, and that is expected to become a work of art itself, possibly a wood sculpture.

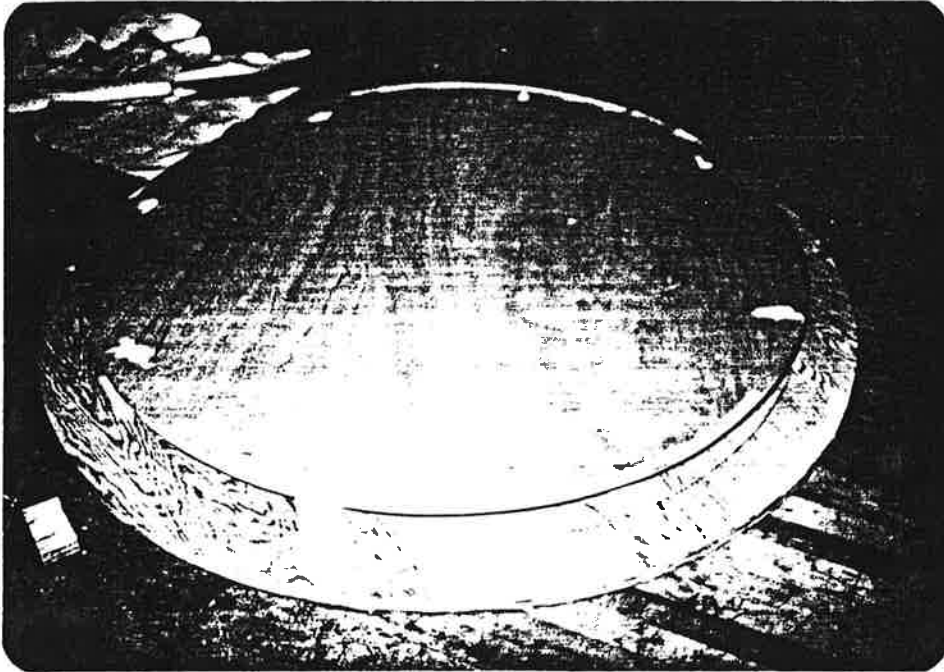
The race itself is depicted in acrylic paints in what Mrs. Fyfe describes as a "plains Indian" flat imagery style. This part of the work shows the



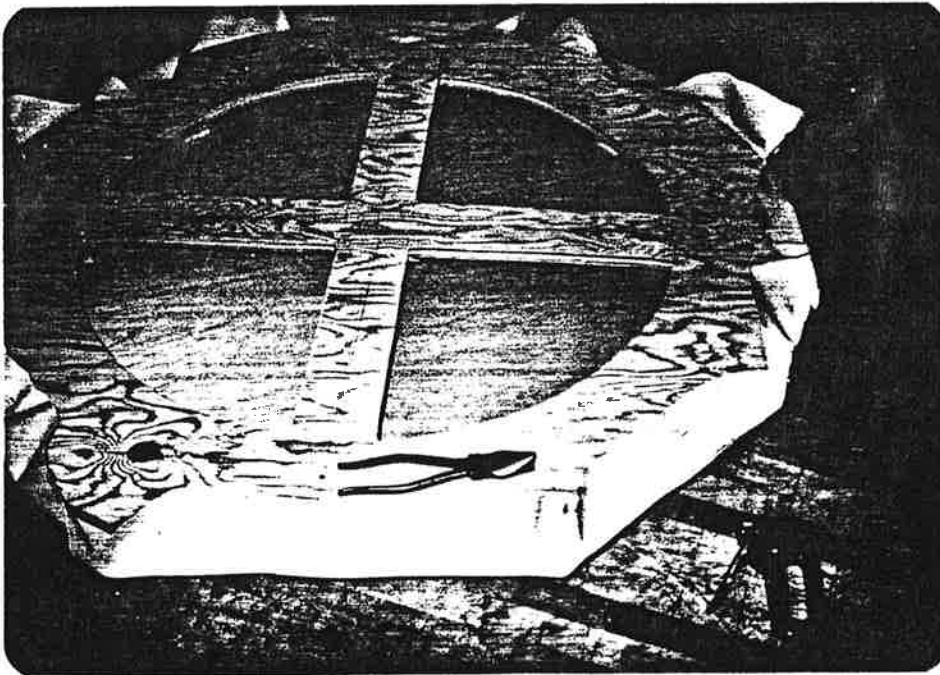
Precision planning for artwork starts on paper.



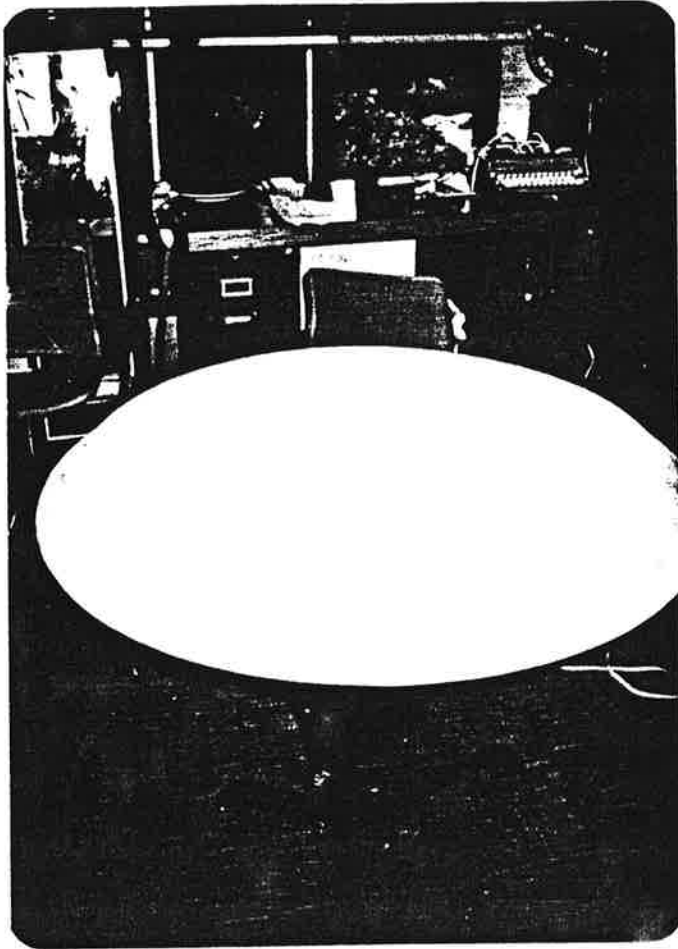
Framework of heavy-duty plywood; sections are cut out to lessen weight.



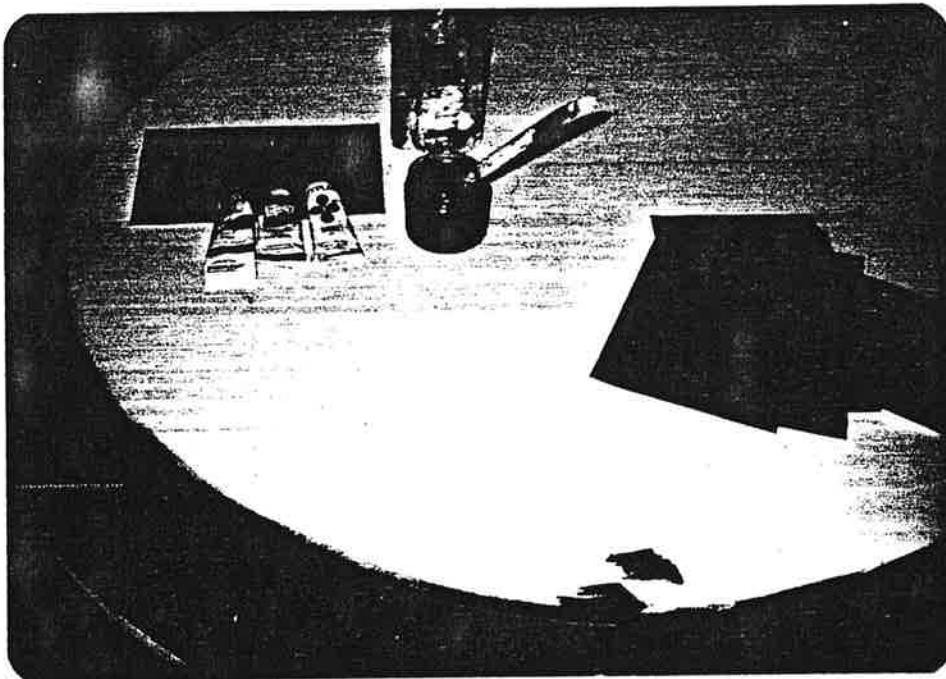
Two circles of plywood make up framework.



Canvas is then pulled over framework.



Canvas is stretched and ready for painting.



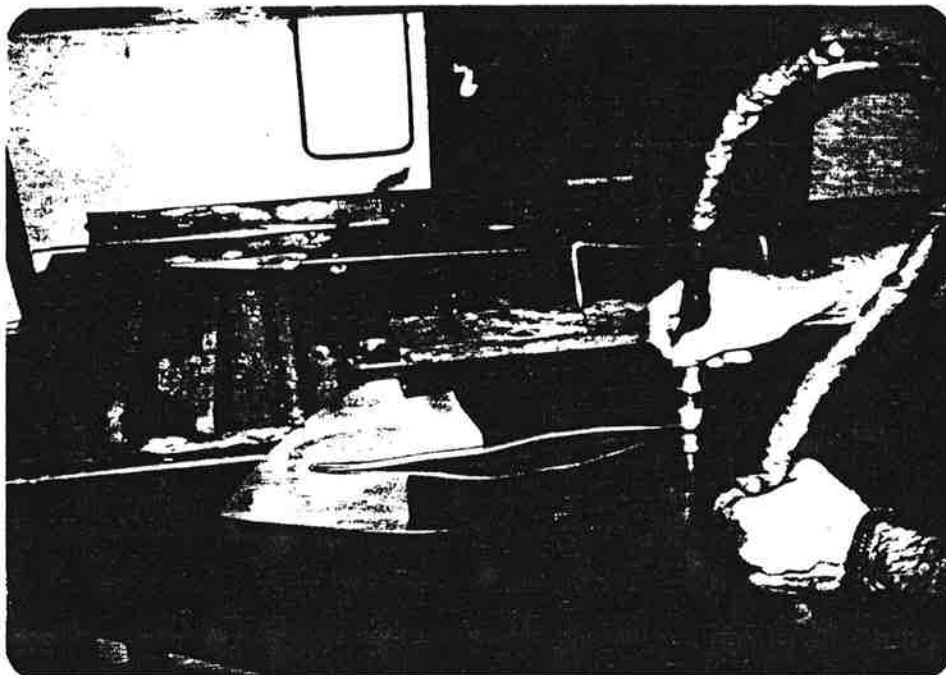
The painting begins on border of stretched canvas.

Indians racing on horseback toward the tree, with the hills in the background depicted in yellows, browns, and blues.

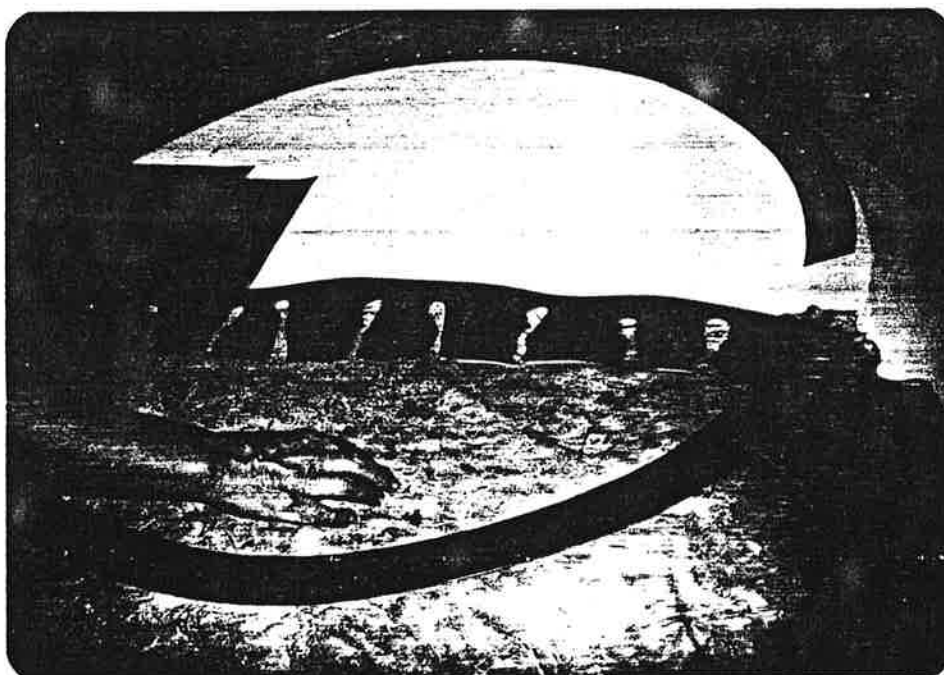
The painting appeals not only to the senses of sight and touch, but also to the sense of smell. One of the materials in the work is a native smoked deerhide which Mrs. Fyfe said she found at Duncan's Bead Shop in Spokane, one of various places where the artist "scrounges" for some of the materials she uses in her art. If one leans close to the work, the smell of the smoked hide is quite distinctive and, indeed, lends tangible support to the Indian theme of "The Race."

Even though some of the materials used in the artwork were scrounged by Mrs. Fyfe, the creative and technical work to render them suitable for the artwork was painstaking and involved much time and energy.

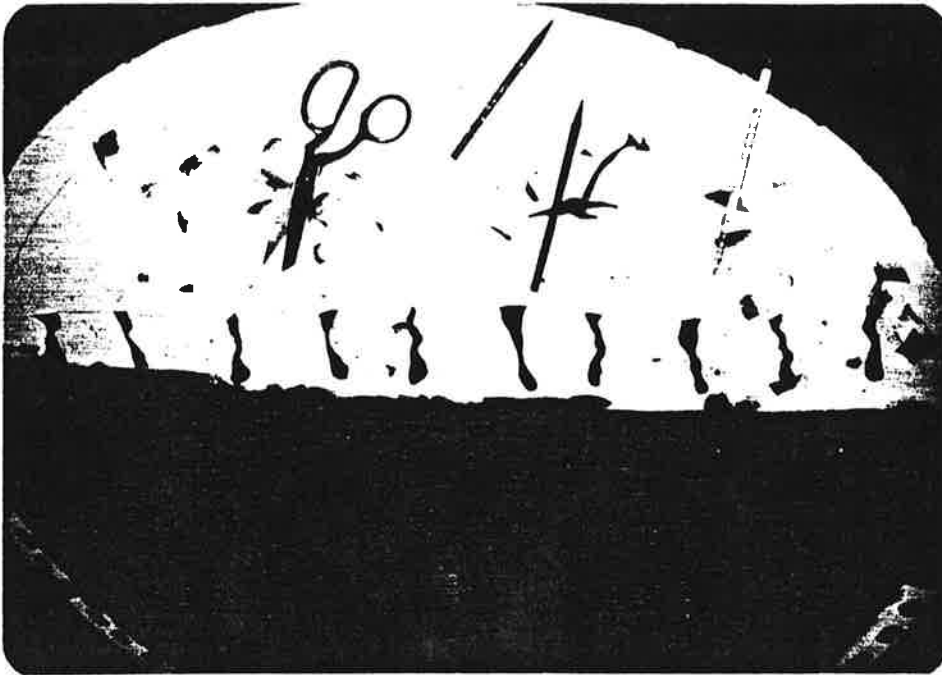
For instance, each of the three circles of art is studded in various, strategic places with countersunk copper tubing filled with brightly colored enamel. Mrs. Fyfe found the tubing at Pacific Hide, a local Spokane junkyard. Once found, the work began. The tubing was cut into sections and filled with enamel in a powdered form. This required from four to five firings, since the enamel shrank after each firing and the tube sections had to be repacked until they were full. Just to prepare



Helia arc tool is used to cut brass used in "The Race".



Native smoked deerhide lends an aura of reality to "The Race".



Acrylic paints were used to depict Indians racing in "The Race".



Bill Fyfe, the artist's husband, hangs up the finished work in the artist's home studio.

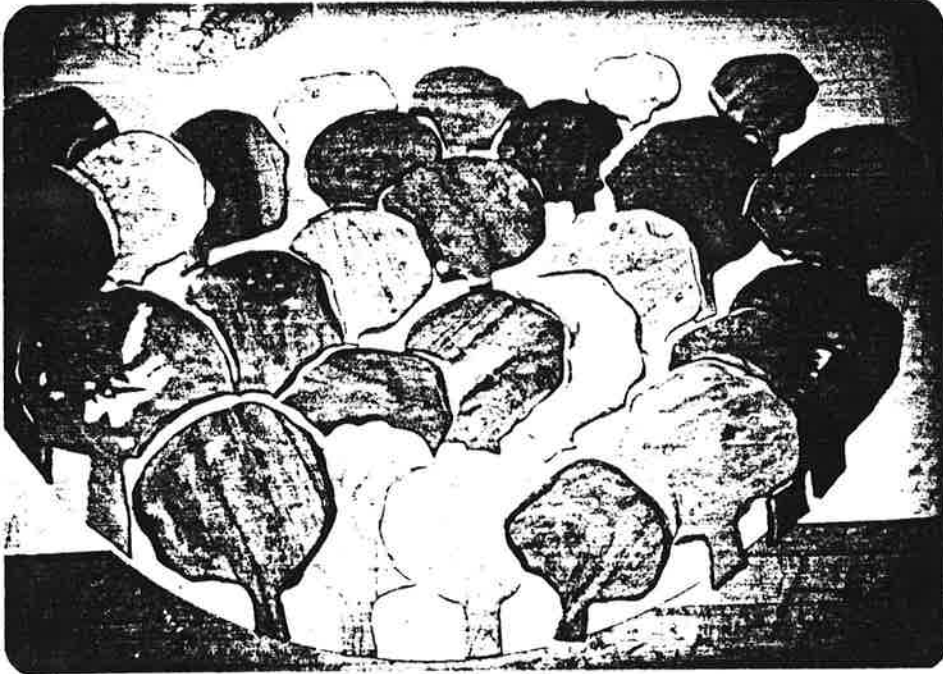
20 small sections required three hours of work.

Mrs. Fyfe estimates she "easily" put in from 600 to 700 hours of work on the project over a 10-month period of time.

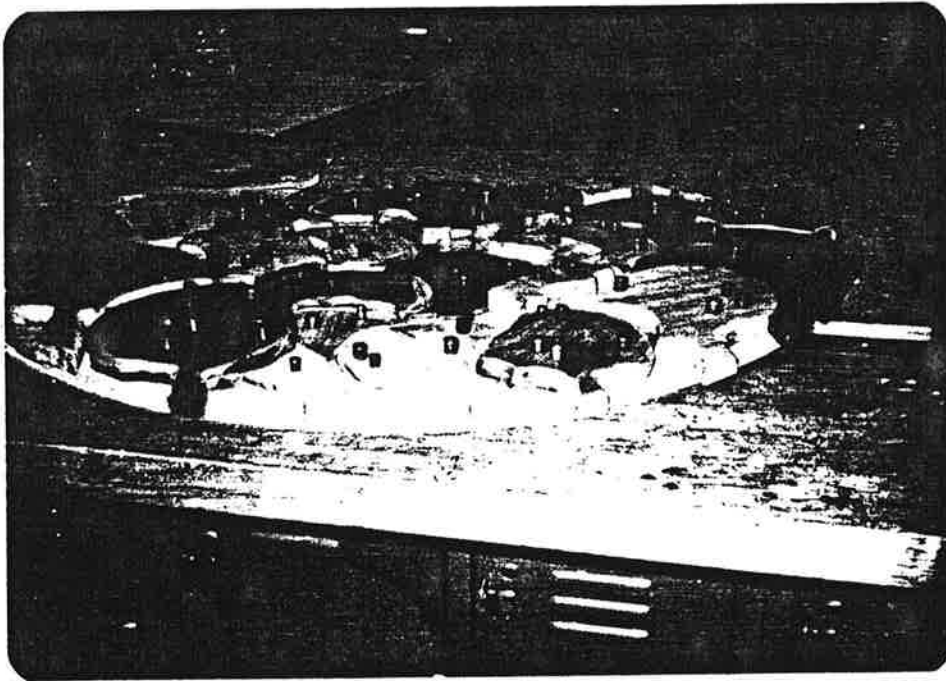
"The Orchard" recognizes the importance of the fruit industry to the area. The work depicts a montage of fruit trees made from a variety of woods. Mrs. Fyfe said she wanted to use apple wood, but couldn't find a commercial outlet that sold apple wood. She decided on several different kinds of wood, including cherry, walnut, maple, alder, ribbon maple, and koa, a wood that is native to Hawaii. The woods are sanded, oiled, and waxed and are studded with enamel-filled sections of copper tubing to simulate apples.

Mrs. Fyfe also managed to incorporate some of her personal history into the work.

Part of the background material of "The Orchard" is made of pigskin, a sentimental acknowledgement by Mrs. Fyfe of her girlhood spent in Okanogan County. It seems her grandfather, an Omak-area pioneer orchardist named Oscar Storch, used to clean up his orchard by running the pigs through following the harvest. Therefore, the pigskin background for "The Orchard" seemed appropriate.



A variety of woods were used for trees in "The Orchard".



Sections of copper tubing filled with enamel were used to simulate fruit in "The Orchard".

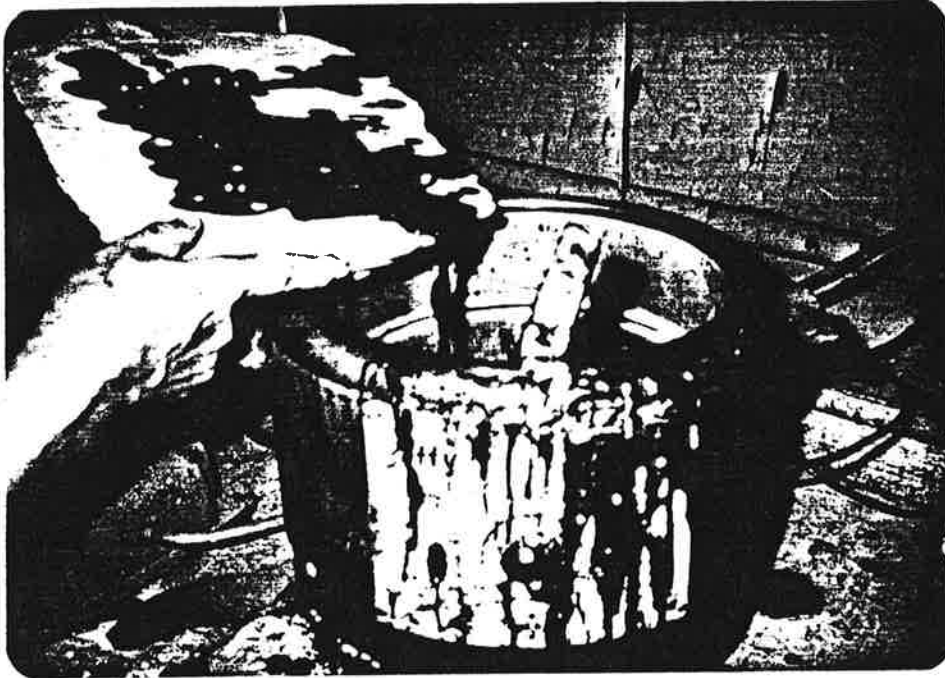
"The Train" reflects the importance of rail transportation and the grain industry to the local economy.

Mrs. Fyfe said she got the idea for the piece as she was driving from Spokane to visit Cashmere. As she was passing through Douglas County on U.S. Highway 2, she was struck by the variations in color in the grain fields, the contrasts between fields which were lying fallow and those where the grain had just been harvested.

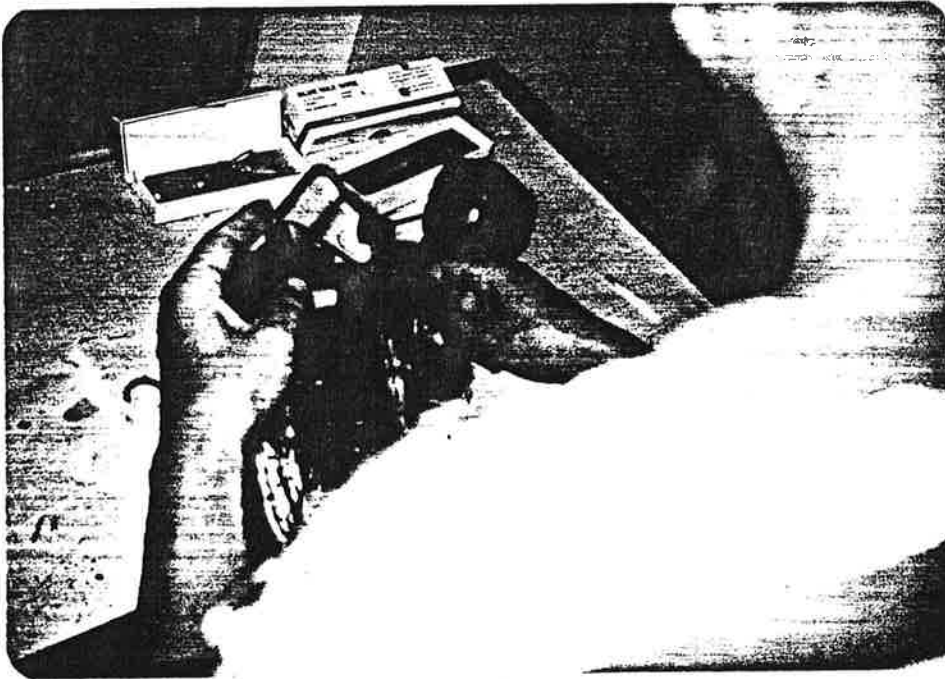
She decided to tie the transportation and the grain harvest ideas together in the same work. "The Train" shows a vintage-style bronze train traveling above a field of wheat, which alternates between fallow and full growth. Stylized cutouts were made in a laminated walnut and cherry panel, and the panel was then placed over a commercially tanned deerskin.

The bronze train in the work was a technical challenge. It was created using the "lost wax" process. This involved making a wax model of the train, making a mold around the wax, then burning the wax out of the mold. The resultant void was then filled with the liquid bronze which became the final sculpture. The whole process is very delicate, involving extremely hot liquids which can be quite dangerous if they are mishandled.

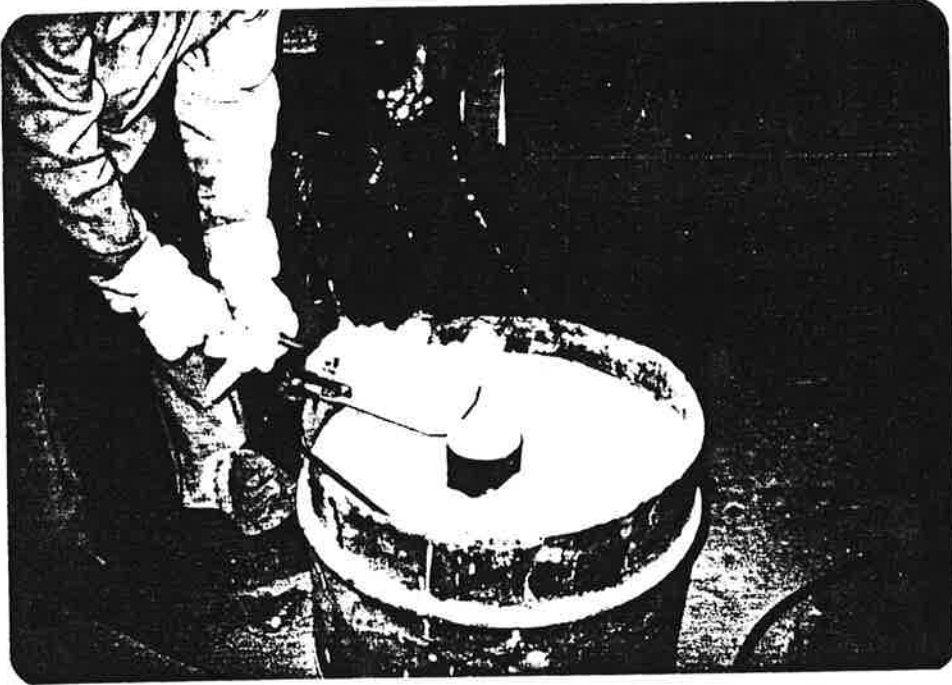
These are some of the highlights involved in



Wax model is first step in creating bronze sculpture in "The Train".



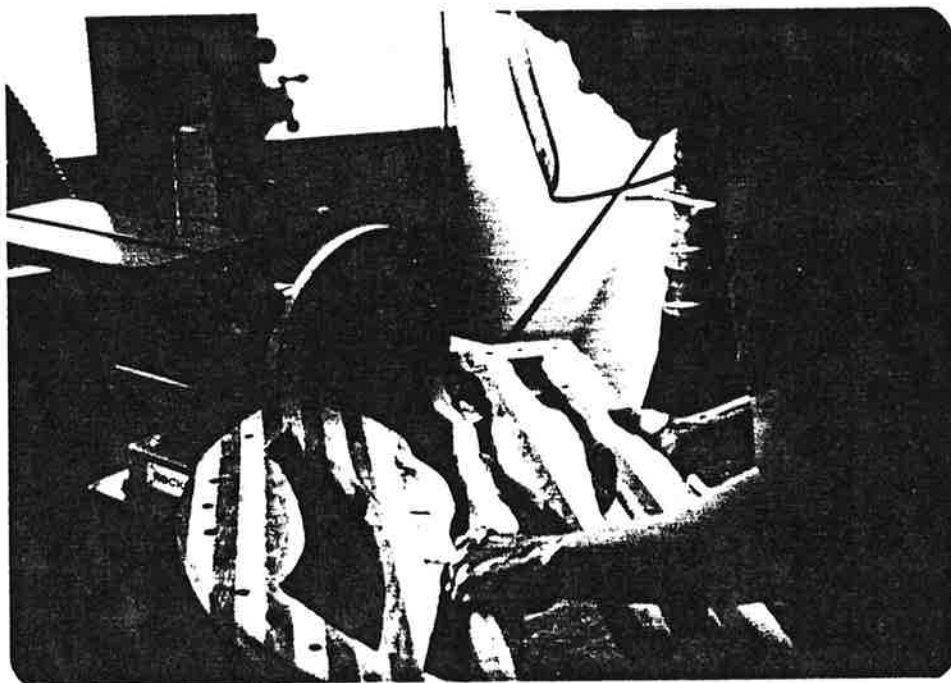
Preparing the wax model prior to casting bronze sculpture of engine.



Liquid bronze is poured to form casting for sculpture.



Moment of truth: Revealing the finished product.



Finishing laminated wood for wheatfields depicted in "The Train".



"The Train" as it appears at Cashmere High School.

the creation of the total project. Some of the basic materials involved in the artwork are not apparent to the average viewer. The frames alone took three days to build and cover with canvas.

Much of the brass plate used in the project also was a challenge to prepare. Electric shears were used for some of the cutting. Another intricate tool used was a helia arc, which cuts using a mixture of oxygen and electricity. The result is a beautiful discoloration of the brass which borders the length of the cut.

Mrs. Fyfe said the art project was really a family project which required the assistance of her husband, Bill, her daughter, Amy; 15, and her son, Jim, 12. She also said it was a project she enjoyed. She met a lot of interesting people in her fieldwork and took slides of all the places she visited.

"That's what makes it all fun," said Mrs. Fyfe. She explained that it's also fun to interpret and find meanings in the finished work.

"There's so much information, and much of it is processed subconsciously," she said. "You look at so many things that it takes a while to sort all of those things out. But that's the fun of it."

After all the work, Mrs. Fyfe said perhaps the most difficult time came after the project was completed, and the three circles of art were stored

in her studio in Spokane awaiting delivery to
Cashmere.

"I was afraid the house would burn down," she
said.

THE ARTIST

Any work of art reflects the character of its creator, and Jo S. Fyfe has used her own experience growing up in Okanogan County orchard country to convey the regional themes and moods in "The Race," "The Orchard," and "The Train."

Mrs. Fyfe, who was born in Omak on May 8, 1941, said that her upbringing adjacent to the Colville Indian Reservation has had a strong influence on all of her creative work.

"I have been strongly influenced by the heritage of the plains Indians, and especially that of Chief Joseph and his people," said Mrs. Fyfe. "The unique position of the Indian in America has served as a catalyst in my artistic expression."

Her exposure to the Indian influence was a recurring experience throughout her childhood. The family moved frequently because of her father's work as an engineer with the U.S. Bureau of Mines, a position that took them from Omak to Alaska to central California to Idaho and finally to Spokane, where they settled permanently when Mrs. Fyfe was 12. However, both sets of grandparents remained in the Omak area and Mrs. Fyfe was a regular visitor throughout her youth.

Actually, Mrs. Fyfe's future was very nearly

nipped in the bud at the tender age of six weeks. Her father, Richard "Dick" Storch, had traveled ahead to his U.S. Bureau of Mines job at an isolated outpost in the backcountry of Alaska north of Anchorage. Mrs. Fyfe and her mother, the former Evelyn "Gari" Garigan of Okanogan, were flying in to join him when the small plane in which they were riding malfunctioned and the bush pilot was forced to crashland the craft. Luckily, no one was hurt, but the pilot and Mrs. Storch, who was carrying young Jo, had to walk out several miles from the crash site. Mrs. Fyfe said her mother later told her she slept through the crash.

Mrs. Fyfe described her young years as "good times," filled with experiences which later would influence her work as an artist.

"We were basically outdoor people," she recalled. "We spent a lot of time in the mountains - camping, climbing. I really got into rocks, and petroglyphs. I used to fantasize a lot - I would imagine myself living a long time ago.

"I've always had a romance with the American Indian, and I consumed all kinds of lore."

Her visits to her grandparents' orchards in Omak and Okanogan also left strong impressions. Both sets of grandparents lived there, and led the rustic lives of pioneer orchardists.

For instance, she recalls life with her

maternal grandfather, Ben Garigan, who lived in Okanogan.

"He lived in an old river rock building on the hill," said Mrs. Fyfe. "The only thing painted was the outhouse. He had running cold water, but no hot. The icebox was kept cold with a block of ice.

"I remembered one time he butchered a rooster. We ate a whole week on that rooster."

Her visits with her paternal grandparents, Oscar and Molly Storch of Cmak, were just as impressionable. A particularly strong memory is that of her grandmother calling the pigs to eat the potato peelings she threw over the back fence. She would often call her husband at the same time, just changing the name, so her grandmother's call would sound something like:

"He-r-r-r-e pig, pig, pig ... he-r-r-r-e Oss, Oss, Oss...!"

The pigs were also used to clean up the orchard following harvest, and Mrs. Fyfe has immortalized that childhood memory by incorporating pigskin as the background material in "The Orchard."

Art did not emerge as a major interest for Mrs. Fyfe until her college years. As a matter of fact, she had aspirations to be a foreign correspondent as a student at Spokane's North Central High School, where she graduated in 1959.

Then, "for some reason, I don't know why," Mrs.

Fyfe happened to take a Basic Elements of Design class as a freshman student at Washington State University in Pullman. She had always liked to build things as a child, but it was this class that influenced her eventual decision to make art a career.

That career was not overnight in the making. She met her husband, Bill Fyfe, about this same time, and dropped out of WSU after the couple married.

The couple lived and worked in Spokane for a short while, then returned to Pullman, where Mrs. Fyfe graduated in 1964 with degrees in education and fine arts. She since has added a master of fine arts degree to her credentials. Her husband, Bill, later graduated from Eastern Washington University at Cheney and is now a special education teacher in Spokane.

Mrs. Fyfe has taught in the Spokane area for many years. She started teaching at Jonas Salk Junior High School and also taught night school for WSU in Spokane for several years. She later shifted over to a teaching position at Spokane Community College. When Spokane CC opened its Spokane Falls campus in 1967, she moved over and has taught there since, including a seven-year stint as chairperson of the art department.

She said she currently is teaching Color and

Basic Design, Volume Design, and Sculpture.

"I have very high expectations of my students," she added.

She and her husband, Bill, have two children, Amy, 15, and Jim, 12. The family has acreage just outside Spokane, and maintain a very busy schedule both at home and at work.

In addition to her teaching career, Mrs. Fyfe is very active as a professional artist and exhibits in many shows throughout the Western United States. She produces most of her artwork at the studio in her home and keeps a rigorous work schedule - from 8 to 11 or 11:30 p.m. on weeknights, and works another 10 to 12 hours on Sundays.

Her family is very active in outdoor sports. Mrs. Fyfe says she likes to hunt ("with a camera") in the fall, fly fish, cross country ski, and swim. She also is an active home gardener. She sees her art as a recreational, as well as a professional interest.

"My art is a form of relaxation," she says.

Mrs. Fyfe is happy with the choices she has made, and believes in being positive about her life. It is this attitude which carries over into her art.

"I like everything; I really do," she said.

"When the students say they're bored, or that they don't like something, I tell them it's a choice you make. Happiness is within."



ARTIST JO FYFE POSES WITH "THE RACE" AND "THE ORCHARD"

Artist hangs three different works at Cashmere High School's center

By SUSAN PALMER GILLIN
Wenatchee World staff writer

CASHMERE — Visitors to Cashmere High School now have three new works of art to admire in the hallways.

Those will be dedicated in ceremonies at 8 p.m. Tuesday at the high school's Community Center. Refreshments will be served.

Artist Jo Fyfe, an Omak native now living in Spokane, visited the school to hang her multi-media artwork earlier this month.

Ms. Fyfe created three round wall hangings each 46 inches in diameter and weighing 40 to 50 pounds. The three works are "The Race," an Indian horse race in copper and oils; "The Orchard," featuring wooden trees with enameled red apples; and "The Train," a cast bronze early-day locomotive, cars and caboose.

Each of the works features several different media, including hand-tanned deer hide, pigskin, walnut, bronze, copper and oil paints.

Ms. Fyfe said she tried to incorporate media appropriate to each piece. For example, the pigskin was chosen for the apple orchard piece because it reminded her of how her grandfather used to allow his pigs to run through his orchard, cleaning up the fallen apples, after harvest season.

The specially tanned deer hide was chosen for the Indian piece because of the way Indians use to tan their game hides. That piece also features a painted lone pine tree. The tree still stands in the high school parking lot, which was once the site of Indian races.

Ms. Fyfe is an instructor and former art department chair at Spokane Falls Community College. She began the art projects last November after a school committee selected her.

Money for the artwork comes from the Art in Public Places

program of the Washington State Arts Commission. The commission makes one-half of 1 percent of the state's cost of new construction in public schools and other public buildings available for the purchase of original art.

Cashmere's new high school was built in 1981.

About \$8,000 was available to Cashmere for purchase of Ms. Fyfe's three pieces and for five lithographs by David Wharton placed in the school last spring, said Assistant Principal Bill Kelly.

Arts commission spokesman Mike Moore said the idea behind the program is to make works of original art more readily available to the public.

He called Ms. Fyfe's works "a nice model" for the program because the collection shows a range of materials and a wide artistic approach.

Eastmont C

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(September 3-Se

Eastmont County Pool will be day, September 4, 1984. The pool will be 3rd due to the Labor Day Holiday.

The first week of the Fall session will feature public swims. All swim lessons will be held on September 10th.

For more information, please call 325-1234. There are still openings in some sessions offered in the first session.

ACTIVITY

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Public Swim
Public Swim
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Therapy Exercise
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Two hit Seattle plays

SEATTLE — Seattle's two longest-running plays, "E/R Emergency Room" and "Angry Housewives," have been extended through Oct. 28.

"Angry Housewives," the longest running of the two, is at Pioneer Square Theater's 107

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