

# Nymbol's Secret Garden: A world of imagination

Couple follows their inner-children to create a unique business in Langley

By Carolyn Tamlar

**THINK ABOUT ALL** of the imaginative dreams you had as a child that you suppressed or forgot as you entered the adult world. Most people simply leave those dreams far behind them.

Sam (Samantha) and Bill Cass decided to let their dreams inspire them, and the result is a new business in Langley: Nymbol's Secret Garden.

The store celebrated its grand opening in September. The Cass' believe that the store is a combination of all that they have become as they let their creative spirits soar. The two of them designed the store's interior to frame their imaginary merchandise, including painting the walls to look like a forest and the floor to resemble a litter of leaves.

Nymbol's Secret Garden offers an amazing range of costumes, scarves, clothing, books and toys for big and

little people. Nymbol, a puppet and the store's namesake, greets visitors. All of the items in the store are handmade, one of a kind, and made by people Nymbol knows. In addition to the merchandise, they offer dress up parties for children and adults and frequent puppet shows with Nymbol as the star.

Sam and Bill had lived in the corporate world for several years. Both worked for Nike in Portland before their move to a new world on Whidbey Island. Sam was a graphic designer and a shoe designer. Bill designed footwear for Keds and Converse and spent the last 13 years designing shoes for Nike, including Lance Armstrong's seven-

time Tour de France winning cycling shoe. Both Sam and Bill were getting nervous about possible layoffs at Nike, and they were also realizing that they wanted to live and raise their children in a different environment.

In February of this year, they visited Whidbey with some friends. Sam says, "The island called to us." Two months later they came back on their own and saw a "retail space available" sign in Langley. It felt right to them, and they made the leap to a new business and a new home.

Bill got hooked into the puppet world through seeing the excitement in the eyes of his two daughters (Tabatha, 10, and Isadora, 8) when he read to his children using the puppets as the storytellers. He drew the character of Nymbol in time for Halloween last year and decided he wanted to make his own puppet. After much trial and error, Nymbol was ready to hand out treats at the door, to the great delight of every trick-or-treater.

Bill says he has always loved to

## Catch Nymbol's act

Watch Nymbol's adventures on YouTube by searching Nymbol's Secret Garden.



Bill Cass and his creation Nymbol often perform impromptu shows for visitors to their shop.

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draw. While working at his shoe designing jobs, he freelanced as an illustrator on the side. He also illustrated his first book that is being published by Random House this year, "The Survivorship Net," written by his friend Jim Owens.

His latest passion is telling the story of Nymbol. He currently has numerous illustrations he has prepared and is working on the story for what he hopes will be the first in a series of Nymbol storybooks. In the meantime, he creates puppets, loves doing puppet shows, both planned and spontaneous, and helps Sam with the day-to-day operation of the store.

Sam serves as mistress of Nymbol's Secret Garden making costumes, jewelry, masks, wine labels, goddess shrines, wreathes, spray potions, drums and crowns, as well as interior design, color consulting, package design, footwear design, painting, drawing and silkscreening.

The theme for Nymbol's is "Make something beautiful by listening to

your heart; infuse it with joy, magic and spirit; and add a light sprinkling of happy mistakes."

#### **EVOLUTION AUDIO CUSTOMIZES MOBILE ELECTRONICS**

Evolution Audio opened this year in the 2100 block of Queen Street in Bellingham.

Founded by Brady O'Brien and James Anderson, Evolution Audio specializes in mobile electronics.

"In our industry, we are unique in that we are a full custom-fabrication facility, which allows us to seamlessly integrate aftermarket products into even the most complicated vehicles without making permanent modifications," O'Brien said.

Evolution Audio is a member of Whatcom Young Professionals and Sustainable Connections.

#### **MIXING BOWL SERVES UP NUTRITION IDEAS FOR DIABETICS**

Jan Kincaid Rystrom, a registered

dietitian for 15 years and also a certified diabetes educator, has opened Mixing Bowl Studio in Bellingham to help people manage a wide variety of food-related challenges.

Mixing Bowl Studio is located in the 1100 block of Larrabee in the Fairhaven District. Rystrom works with clients who contact her directly, as well as healthcare professionals who refer patients to her. Her services include medical nutrition therapy for chronic conditions, such as diabetes and high cholesterol levels, nutrition counseling, diabetes management, group presentations and corporate wellness consulting. She also will assist clients with weight loss, eating disorders, food allergies, vegetarian diets and sports nutrition. Many insurance plans are accepted.

#### **STROLLER STRIDES OPENS IN MOUNT VERNON**

Stroller Strides, a fitness program for new moms, celebrated its grand opening Sept. 16 in the 500 block of

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