

**The 2008 Sooke Fine Arts Show  
Presented by the Sooke Fine Arts Society  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Sooke Fine Arts Show Committee Design Award for 2008  
Honours Jim Merrill**

**Sooke, BC – April 22** -- In 2008, the Sooke Fine Arts Show will honour the passing of long-time supporter Jim Merrill by presenting the Committee Design Award in Merrill's memory. Merrill passed away in February of this year.

“With his quiet, behind the scenes support, Jim really gave the Show the boost it needed to get it off the ground again in 2007,” says Evonne Black, Sooke Fine Arts Committee Chair. “Jim was instrumental in providing the Fine Arts Society with the office space, furniture and equipment necessary to coordinate the 2007 Show. It will be an honour for the Society to show their respect to Jim by presenting the 2008 Committee Design Award in his memory.”

Merrill was not only a great supporter of the arts in Sooke, but an artist in his own right. Though he enjoyed painting, his true forte was in home design. Over the past ten years Merrill received numerous awards from the Canadian Homebuilders Association, at both the BC and Yukon level and the national level.

“Jim’s great ability was to interpret the west-coast-building style with a curvilinear, modern feel. The result was a home that reflects both the rugged forests and coastline around Sooke,” says Ted Jones, co-owner of Jim’s first award-winning home. “He extensively incorporated the art of local artist Carey Newman, making it an integral part of our home,” adds Jones.

The Committee Design Award, selected by members of the Sooke Fine Arts Organizing Committee, is presented to an artist for their artwork that is then used in the graphic design for the following year’s promotional material. In 2008, the colorful glass sculpture of kelp, anemones and rays by Vancouver Island artist Craig Hellemond enlivens all of the advertising pieces.

Merrill’s wife, Cheryl DeMerchant, will present the award on Friday evening, July 25 at the Artist’s Opening Reception for the Sooke Fine Arts Show. "Jim was a visionary; he

celebrated the local artisans by incorporating their talent in many of his custom homes. Jim would have been honoured by this recognition."

The public will be able to view the all of the award-winning art, along with over 350 pieces from artists on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands beginning Saturday morning, July 26 at 10 am. The show runs from 10am until 9pm for the first nine days, and closes at 6pm on Monday, August 4.

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### Backgrounder

The Sooke Fine Arts Society presents the Sooke Fine Arts Show, the premier juried fine arts show on Vancouver Island, each summer. The Society, a volunteer, non-profit organization founded in 2006, promotes awareness of the visual arts and appreciation for local artists from Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands.