

Beavercreek Bulletin

Monthly paper by and for residents of Beavercreek,
Oregon

BEAVERCREEKBULLETIN

Spotlight: Diana Crites

Editor's Note: This month's spotlight is a different format, written in the first person by Diana herself. (She wrote so beautifully, we didn't want to change anything!)

My family and I moved to Beavercreek last fall from West Linn, after a whirlwind house purchase and sale. We were originally searching for rural property in Oregon City and its outskirts. Our ideal was a lush, uncrowded area with smart properties that showed pride of ownership, and especially with the feeling of being away from the Portland Metro area. We wanted to find our “forever home” in an area that was unsullied by urban blight.

When our dream home came on the market we acted really fast; putting in an offer within a day of it going on the market. It was such such a stress-filled process, but I'm so happy to say it was all worth it. We've been here almost a year, and through all the seasons now, and have never felt more at home.

Diana's home in Beavercreek

My favorite thing about Beavercreek is how untouched it is. We loved the area on sight, but love and respect it more and more as we discover its secrets. The farm stands that run on an honor code and present fresh harvest and local flowers, the neighbors who still look out for one another, local producers of animals and grain — plus all of the unregulated beauty of the natural landscape — just make Beavercreek an understated utopia.

I absolutely cherish the potential to my home and property. It was laid out extremely well, and we are surprised weekly by smart design choices that were made long before we got here. There is a compost system behind our 4-stall barn. There are man made ponds that seem to act as a rainwater catch for the far pastures, but we're still figuring that out. We have a poultry metropolis area that we've delighted in utilizing, raising chickens and guinea fowl. And we are looking so forward to being able to build on the potential, from adding a gazebo to lavender fields and play architecture. It's our own world with plenty of room to grow, and we've got the imagination and fortitude to make it happen.

This first year, we've really been running in place, trying to understand the systems and stay on top of maintenance. One thing I've learned from our first year of farming is that nature reclaims its own very quickly! Right now we are busy getting fixes in and preparations in place for the colder weather before the rains hit. We've been reinforcing drive paths, clearing brush trails in the back 40, fixing fences and maintaining the barns and coops. Earlier this year we created a vegetable garden in our back yard, with a cut flower garden that is just beginning to break ground. It's been a lot of work but incredibly rewarding.

I work out of my art studio at home, focusing mainly on oil paint and doll making. My art has been described as "where Lovecraft meets Poe," "a delightful trip through the looking glass," and "something from another world." People say my work looks as though it's out of time, and I love that.

Alegre, a painting by Diana Crites

When I was a young woman, I came across a quote that hit me like a hammer; I was never the same. "This thing of darkness, I acknowledge mine" is from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. I've come to learn that living authentically means embracing and acknowledging all of you, including the parts that might frighten you. Especially those parts.

I've got doll parts and paintings in progress strewn throughout the studio, overlooked by finished dolls and clockwork pieces. My art is the most living thing about me: I turned my walk-in closet into a fabric shop for dollmaking. I collect canvases like others might collect shoes.

One aspect of my work which I feel particularly strongly about is creating memorial pieces for those who've had to say goodbye to their animals. I am one of those people who feel more comfortable with animals than with humans, and I believe the bond between person and animal is sacred. When we are forced to lose that connection, the sorrow can feel insurmountable. It's been my honor to be able to bring some healing to grieving people through art. I have created many memorial portraits, and even memorial dolls (some that have ashes interred within the doll body).

Other than my art, I love being with my animals. I have a rambunctious pack of flat-faced dogs, a herd of voracious goats, free-ranging guinea fowl, and almost more chickens than I can name. I love to care for them and improve their habitats and take walks with them in our forest. My farm was recently registered through the American Dairy Goat Association, and I'll be moving towards breeding and milking my Nigerian Dwarf goats next year.

I'd love to make connections within our community. Who raises heritage pork? Who sells alfalfa by the bale? Does anyone raise alpacas (because the time is coming fast when I am going to need a few)? I believe strongly in barter, and I'm more than happy to barter my fine art for locally-grown goods and services.

See Diana's art and reach out to her online at www.woebegoneart.com (<http://www.woebegoneart.com/>).

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

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This is Melissa Logan and Jennifer Logan, co-editors of the Beaver Creek Bulletin since February 2017. Carrying forward the work of Sharon Charlson who was editor of the Bulletin from September 1998 to August 2016. [View all posts by beavercreekbulletin](#)

