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Shirley & Gerry Hurley - Transplants That Take

by Tamara Blodgett



No strangers to rural life, Shirley and Gerry Hurley feel right at home here in their new digs in paradise. Married 32 years with 6 grown children between them, they have spent the largest portion of their lives living on Orcas Island. Orcas is one of 172 islands in the San Juan Island Chain of the North Puget Sound Region located near Seattle. This once rural area is now home to more of the 'up-and-coming' which made the Hurleys' feel like going! They found their slice of heaven by chance on a semi-recent visit to Homer. While looking for administrative work in Homer, she and Gerry took a trip to Seldovia and were enraptured with everything about it. It reminded them so much of the San Juan Island area of yore.

Gerry had always wanted to move to Alaska but work always stood in the way. Now that "retirement" is looming, he and Shirley were ready to take the plunge. The Hurley's found Seldovia to be very similar to the way Orcas Island way of life. The friendliness of the people, the weather, that rugged coastal feeling that is the very essence of what Gerry remembers nostalgically, was a crucial draw to the area. Where else could you get just the right-sized house with the Seldovia Slough

The Hurley's cleverly devised a way to make a living while maintaining a Seldovia residence that fit their every need. After deliberating, they decided that a highly customized, one-room bed and breakfast would suit their needs perfectly. The name of their B&B is Woolloomooloo Inn. Woolloomooloo is the name of their construction company in Washington State. This sentimental name selection comes from Woolloomooloo Creek that runs through their ranch property. The Hurley's leave behind this 35-acre ranch in Omak, Washington. Omak is where Shirley worked for 3 years as an administrator for an assisted living facility for Alzheimer's patients (while Gerry commuted to the ranch on weekends from Orcas!). Meanwhile, Gerry is winding down Woolloomooloo Construction to concentrate on their new adventure(s) and see if he may find some time to...fish!

Currently, the pair is focused on getting settled into their new cabin. A stroke of providential luck, finding the perfect cabin in just the right location, they are making some key changes in preparation for opening their B&B this fall. As a matter of fact, Ivan the Gorilla (pictured in the photo) has been a most superb

access a stone's throw away? The Hurley's have always loved rural locations. Their Omak ranch in Eastern Washington was a 4.5-mile snowmobile ride into town! Now, they have decided they need to be in the "city"! "Rural!" is obviously a perspective!

supervisor, offering not a negative comment during the course of their tasks!

They both concede that they'll miss the (familial) history they leave behind in Orcas but look forward to creating a new one here with many new pursuits. As Shirley said, "We're just two old crabs with new shells!"



Shirley & Gerry joined in on some spirited bidding at lastweeks' 2007 Craft Invitational Chainsaw Carving Contest and ended up taking home this beautiful Twin Walrus carving by Scott Hanson!

