

## ***Bearfootin' Bear: Audrey Hepbear***

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On May 10, the Bearfootin Bears returned to downtown Hendersonville. The painted bears, sponsored by local businesses to raise money for nonprofits, will be displayed downtown until they are sold in October at the 11th annual Bearfootin' auction. The Times-News will profile each bear here in the Community section leading up to the auction in the fall.

What was the inspiration behind the design of the bear?

Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill: Each morning at the Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill, we serve a three-course gourmet breakfast called "Breakfast at Tiffany's" with everything from fruit to dessert. After brainstorming with BJ Ramer with Team Ecco, the design of having a bear with pearls seemed natural.

How did you execute creating your design on the fiberglass?

Leven: The design was executed by first sanding and cleaning up the bear, followed by sketching the design on her with chalk. This was my 13th bear to paint and I found that by painting the bear's face first, it seems to give them a bit of personality and makes the rest of the design flow better. The medium used on Audrey and her accessories was acrylic paint. The slice of pie, blueberries, slices of lime and the book are constructed of wood.

Briefly discuss the mission of the organization benefiting from the bear. Why did you get involved with this particular nonprofit and how is it reflected in the design of the bear?

Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill: Team ECCO's mission is to introduce the children of Western North Carolina to the ocean. Since its beginning in 2001, their innovative programs have grown to a four-level curriculum which reaches hundreds of learners, and the building of a public aquarium which provides interactive programs and displays that engage all ages with information about the ocean.

Tourism in Henderson County brought the owners of the Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill and Team Ecco together. Both businesses were created by women from a vision and are currently owned and operated by those two visionaries. The Main Street Bear Program was a great opportunity to support each other's vision.

Who was involved in the overall creative process to bring this bear to downtown, and what role did everyone play?

Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill: Breakfast at Tiffany Hill was the inspiration for Audrey Hepbear. The most difficult portion of this process was coming up with the name, as there were so many good choices. Our guests around the breakfast table coupled with input from our fans on Facebook chimed in with suggestions. But it was Audrey Hepburn and my sister, Audrey Ann, who won out over the others to create Audrey Hepbear.

How do you feel all of the elements of your bear (from nonprofit beneficiary, design and sponsorship) represent the community as a whole?

Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill: Tourism in Henderson County is vital to the overall economic success of our area. Main Street is a focal point and a vital piece of that tourism. But there are many other aspects of tourism in Henderson County. Bringing the Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill in Mills River to Main Street is just another way to showcase other tourism elements in Henderson County.



### **Facts**

#### **Bear: Audrey Hepbear**

Sponsor: Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill

Nonprofit: Team ECCO Ocean Center & Aquarium

Artist: Donna Leven