

Felt artist returns home to warm welcome

Renowned felt artist **Janice Arnold** returned to her hometown to speak to the Fort Vancouver Knitters Guild last week.

Arnold, a 1971 graduate of Fort Vancouver High School and a Clark College alum, now lives in Olympia. She received one of Washington's 2009 Artist Trust Fellowship awards, and her work has been showcased in museums around the country.

She will travel to Prato, Italy, in May to speak at the International Feltmakers Association meeting there.

Although her speaking schedule takes her all over, she often visits Vancouver, where her parents still live. Her parents, **Phil and Helen Arnold**, who are in their 90s, attended her talk. So did her fifth-grade teacher from Hough Elementary and a former 4-H leader.

"It was a very appreciative audience," said Janice Arnold, 56. Some groups she addresses are less familiar with felting.

"It's a little bit of an obscure art form, although it shouldn't be. It's the oldest textile known to humans," she said. "I'm always surprised by how much people respond to being able to hold a sample. In a museum, you're not allowed to touch the fabric. It's just wonderful when people are allowed to hold the material, touch it, feel its qualities and how strong it is. It is not the heavy stiff material that a lot of people assume it is when they see photos."



Janice Arnold