

# Ballantine Collection

## Johnny Appleseed of Public Art

By Dan'l Lees

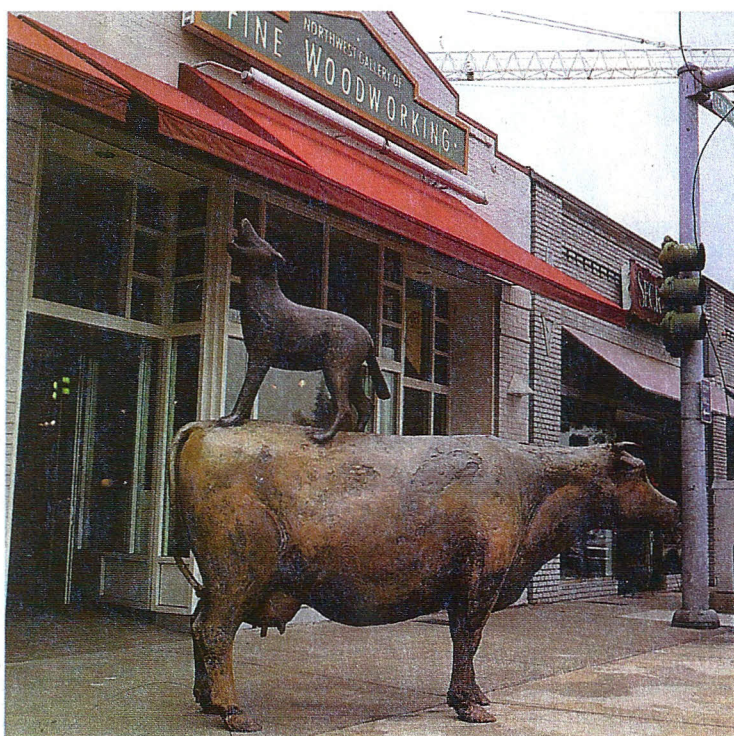
Across Lake Washington from Seattle, snuggled between Bellevue and Bothell, is a dynamic community that is changing its image. Big-time.

All around Kirkland one finds world-class high-tech companies eager to make their town stand out on the map. Kirkland's previous claim to fame—home of the 1982 World Little

League Champions—didn't get much play at DaVinci's restaurant on Lake Street or the ubiquitous Starbucks coffeehouses around town.

In the last decade, however, Kirkland has established a new identity as a first-rate arts town with 16 galleries, 20 public sculptures and a 400-seat Performance Center that opens in mid-1998. How did this corporate-based city become the jewel in the arts crown of Puget Sound?

Much of the credit for the renaissance belongs to a low-key entrepreneur with a passion for



BRAD RUDE'S BRONZE COW AND COYOTE IS LOCATED NEAR CENTRAL WAY AND LAKE ST.

art. The artistic seeds he has sowed since his arrival in the mid-1980s are emerging in the form of large bronzes placed throughout Kirkland. Public parks along the lake and the downtown sidewalks are blossoming with sculpture, and even those who were initially skeptical are now caught up in the civic spirit these artworks reflect. Those who've been touched by this man-who-makes-the-city-beautiful have been energized by his fresh ideas to revitalize the downtown. Thanks to him, Kirkland will enter the next century as one of Puget

Sound's most art-aware cities.

Who is this Johnny Appleseed of art? On the base of nine of Kirkland's monuments is a bronze plaque that reads "On loan from the collection of William G. Ballantine." Those in the know say the new energy in the downtown and its

public art renaissance can be traced to this 46-year-old visionary who has adopted Kirkland as his home. As a partner of West-Water Development Company, Ballantine's business is commercial and retail properties. With his associate, builder Don Stabbert, he has dramatically increased the office and retail space in the city.

During a breakfast of dry whole-wheat toast and a pair of turned-over fried eggs at Hector's, Ballantine talked with obvious passion about his past and future contributions to public art in Kirkland.