



A Dragon The Space in Between A Phoenix



When complete, the Dragon will stand 16 foot tall, facing the Phoenix.

him. With less pain, it seems like less connection." Years ago he rode with the Patriot Guard, and, while the group warmly welcomed him, he says he still felt like an outsider because he was not a veteran. David credits his daughter with giving him a flier that led him to the Warrior StoryField worksite, and says, "It is an honor to be a part of this."

The project was conceived by the experiences of a civilian metal sculptor, Robert Bellows, who was hired to design an 8' chicken for a grocery store. While he was in his shop working on it, two friends stopped by and wanted to help. They came back the next day, and the day after that. As they worked, they began to share emotions from shared war experiences.

Bellows, a civilian, is an artist. As a young man he had his own demons: depression, insomnia, and the struggle to use his own willpower to overcome his problems. Sleeping pills and drugs accompanied an increasing inability to maintain a steady social presence. He found relief not in therapy, but through art and community. About his struggles, he says, "Depression is simply my soul begging for expression." Inspiring a team of veterans and civilians to express themselves through art is the essential heartbeat of the Warrior StoryField project. To make this happen, Bellows is donating his time, shop, tools, materials and property to guide the Warrior StoryField team through the mysterious expressive process of building a major work of art. They also accept contributions; for more information check out their website: WarriorStoryfield.org. Bellows says art can move hearts, change minds, bring understanding to things that can't be understood.

When the large chicken was completed and delivered to the grocery store, David says Bellows took on the role of the industrial arts teacher, asking, "What do you want to do today?" This is when the concept of Warrior StoryField began taking shape. Those men and women that return from war are not the same people they were before. The growing group of veterans and civilians explored the question, "What does it take for a veteran to come home?" Three entities came into focus: a Dragon, a Phoenix, and The Space in Between.

This is how the team describes these components: The first sculpture will be a 16-ft. tall Dragon. We chose the Dragon to represent the Warrior's experience in training, in service and at war.

Our challenge as artists: Can we show the Warrior's ferocity, focus and confidence? Can we show the depth of their camaraderie, dedication to mission, endurance and leadership? Can we also show the fear, moral conflict, anger, isolation and sense of betrayal which often shows up?

The second sculpture will be an 18-ft. tall Phoenix. We chose the Phoenix to represent the many transformations every warrior faces to return to civilian society.

Our challenge as artists: Can we show the vigilance, internal strength, and fierceness of character so often required to carry the experiences of war back into civilian life? Can we

show both the fear and the potential joy of taking the risk to soften a protected heart?

When complete, the Dragon and the Phoenix will be placed in a large park facing each other in an eternal stare. It is the "space in between" these powerful symbols that will become our community gathering place. Hopefully it will become a sacred field of expression, where we continue to create, show and perform art, while listening to and sharing our stories of coming home from war.

We believe that healing is an inside job. We're not looking to heal or fix anyone. By design, we have no forms to fill out, nothing to measure and no boxes to check. Instead we are creating a field of expression where each of us on the team can explore our own imagination and creativity with affirming support. Yes, healing can happen within this community, but that healing comes from connection, commitment and personal expression guided by each of us in our own time and in our own way.

The artists gather on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, often eating their lunch under the shade of a pin oak tree. This is where conversations take place. David is an experienced CNC machine operator, and has a talent for creating images on CAD. About four years ago, he created the first 6' feather for the Phoenix statue. Input from others flows freely, but David is known as "The Feather Man." The feathers on the back of the Phoenix are 14-18" long; the wings extend 5'. Once cut, each piece is pounded and braised. For those anxious to see the final product, David says the project is "proceeding at the speed of art." It's not about the final product, but the journey to get there. "The sculptures are much more than the sum of their parts."

On the web page is a photo of David holding a card. It is the business card for his brother's band, The Lyres. Before he went to Vietnam, The Lyres played local gigs, and also appeared on KWWL-TV's local version of "American Bandstand." David remembers he and his friends would go to Waterloo every Saturday to dance on the local program. David folded the card into a tiny square, then tightly wrapped it with copper wire.

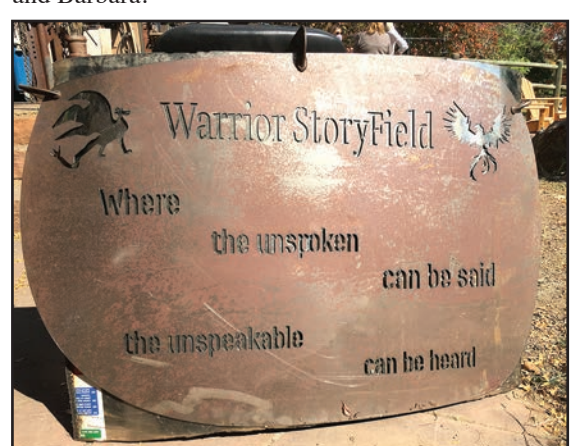
On the Dragon statue there is a hollow heart with a small door on the top. Many memories and mementos, including The Lyres' card, were placed inside the heart. That small door is no longer accessible, as the Dragon statue continues taking shape. Only those who have placed their token remembrance inside the heart know the heaviness that heart contains.

David says there is a lot of energy between the Phoenix and the Dragon. It is not a small thing to be able to cope with life after war, to unlearn things they have been taught, to rise up like the mythological Phoenix. David says civilians are very much a part of war, "We sent them there."

David and his wife, Jane, participate in the Front Range Community Djembe Orchestra, based in Longmont. The djembe (JEM bay) is a rope-tuned skin-covered goblet drum, played with bare hands. Originally from West Africa, the name translates to "Everyone gather together in peace." The drum can be very loud and a skilled drummer can create a wide variety of sounds by manipulating the tension of the drumskin. It was a moving experience for David and Jane to participate in a Djembe concert in "The Space in Between."

When he isn't doing metal sculpting or playing the Djembe drum, David gets a lot of satisfaction teaching beginning English as a Second Language classes, and he also likes distance bicycling.

Bob Schares was the oldest child of the late Herb Schares and Delma Schares. In addition to David, Bob had four younger sisters: Mary Pat, Susan, Jane, and Barbara.



Greeting visitors to the unique site in Longmont, CO, is this sign that says, "Warrior StoryField — Where the unspoken can be said; the unspeakable can be heard."



An 18-foot tall Phoenix will represent the warrior returning to civilian life.



David Schares shows his mother, Delma Schares, left, photos of the Warrior StoryField project. His wife, Jane, is on the right. Photos contributed



Many different types of feathers adorn the metal sculpture called Phoenix.

By Cheryl Parker

On November 18, 1969, 19-year-old David Schares' only brother was killed in the Vietnam War. Bob's life ended when he was 21; David's life would be forever changed.

David returned to his home in Jesup to visit his mother, Delma Schares, for her birthday in June. He tried to share with his family a little about a project he is involved with near his home in Longmont, CO. The Warrior StoryField is difficult, if not impossible, to describe. It may be easier to describe what it is not: It is not a war memorial. It is not therapy.

Their website describes the Warrior StoryField as, "a collaborative art project that seeks to bridge the gap between veterans and civilians by fostering community through the creative process. Our hope is to allow the unspoken, even the unspeakable, a voice by providing warriors with a sacred place for connection, conversation and expression that goes beyond words."

Almost 52 years after Bob's death, the pain is still there. David is just one of a tremendous number of veterans or civilians, of any age, from any conflict, to cope with loss. Some have been struggling with this burden for 30-50 years. Today, when he thinks of his brother, he imagines the kind of life he might have had. What vocations would he have chosen? Would he have found a soulmate and had a family? The brothers should be sharing pictures of grandchildren, or vacationing together. But Bob never had that opportunity. He didn't want to fight in a war. He was drafted. He gave his life. He had no choice, when his country called him, he went.

David says that since he has become active in the Warrior StoryField Project his pain has lessened. Ironically, he says in some ways he misses that full blown grief. "In some ways I am thankful for that pain, because that provides the connection I have with

Lost Innocence

Our dragon trumpets the call to war
I am in this fight
My phoenix answers
Quell the beast
I am this fight
Our Shadow
Packs my heavy load
Whispering thank yous
At my closed ears
My once-sure step falters
My innocence lost
My home lost
My trust lost
I am the beast
I am the fight
Quell me
Thank you Denny.

One of the participants in the Warrior StoryField project wrote the poem, "Lost Innocence."

More RAGBRAI memories



Staff from BCHC Family Medicine - Jesup with rider "Jim." Many riders stopped by to share their RAGBRAI stories with staff members and many friends were made!



The RAGBRAI stand was another fundraiser to help defray expenses for their trip to National Catholic Youth Conference in November. Working the stand were Kaitlyn Schug, Dalaney Donlea, Izzy Even, Will Schutte, Madison Wellman, Mallory Becker, Leah Becker, and Faith Formation Director Lori Schutte.



The Jesup Lions set up their stand at Jerry Fratzke's family farm on the Rowley Road.



The water bottle filling station was a popular attraction on Sixth Street right before the bikers turned in to the Vendor Fair on Young Street.



People lined up at the Jesup Volunteer Firemen's stand for fresh pancakes right off the griddle.



BSA Troop 21 sold beef sticks and pastries.



The egg bombs were very popular at Boy Scouts Troop 95 booth. They also offered breakfast tenderloins (served with sausage gravy on a biscuit) and a lot of their traditional menu.



The gazebo was a popular gathering place.



Jesup Bible Fellowship offered fresh cinnamon rolls and other popular "grab and go" items.