

The Founder's Statement

A Vision and Hope for the Carousel of Happiness

I am writing this as a persuasion for those who come after me. I hope to explain why I think this machine, and this place, is more than its name and its genre. Yes, it is a carousel, a ride and a tourist attraction. I hope its future guardians think of it as more than that. To me it is that but more and different than that.

The purpose of the machine is to spin its riders and leave them somewhere in the circle but nowhere predictable and nowhere useful. The animals are wood and paint yet have spirits and need respect. The carousel house itself has 12 sides and is meant to amplify the happiness and give the animals a place where they can thrive. I think it would be nice if riders left the Carousel of Happiness wondering exactly what they just did, where they just spent the last few minutes of their lives, and even, what might be next for them.

I would like for everything that goes into the carousel house be placed there purposefully, to amaze, to enlighten, to bring joy to visitors.

I think it is immensely important that the ride be kept affordable and that there should never be a cost for visitors to sit in the carousel house. If we do our work well, we will create a space that will renew folks, will engage and encourage visitors to take a deep, mindful breath, and allow them to gain strength to walk out and re-engage their realities.

I think it is most important that the carousel be allowed to be itself for the reasons I have expressed above.

I hope those who follow me will remember that the carousel was dedicated to two U.S. Marines who fell in the Vietnam War. I hope that it is not forgotten that the carousel has a history of giving to people with special needs. Veterans and people with disabilities should always receive a warm welcome at the Carousel of Happiness.

I hope that the carousel will always err on the side of generosity.

It is the pretention of Nederland and its residents that this town is more than a spot on a map. And in fact I believe it is. This community, with its own characteristics, both common and special, gains its breath from its air, its beautiful environment and mountains, and its particularly wonderful people. It is my hope that passers-by will be helped by their experience of the carousel to take notice of this place, and in some way, be better people for their visit.

Is the Carousel of Happiness magic? It is to me. It will continue to be so to you and others if we recognize that its one mission is to delight, to bring joy, to bring smiles, and to give the gift of a pleasant surprise to all who visit.

Scott Harrison, November 2012