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Searchers have located a 61-year-old man who became lost in the Uinta Mountains at about 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Tremonton resident Steven Wiscombe was found near where he became separated from his son and grandson while hiking Kings Peak, the authorities said. [Read more...](#)

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Local artist shares passion for public art

Parkite Greg Ragland unveils aquatic art; vegetable sculptures
 Alisha Self, Of the Record staff
 Posted: 07/06/2010 04:31:41 PM MDT

Greg Ragland cringes a little when he thinks about his sculptures being pounded by hail, bumped by a wheelbarrow or clambered over by hordes of rowdy children. When it comes to public art, though, that's the nature of the beast. "I think that there's a letting-go process," he says. "You put them in their location and you have to trust in the community to embrace them and nurture them. It's difficult, but it's kind of the final product that the piece turns into. It becomes part of a community and the things that happen to it show a sense of love and commitment to the piece."

Ragland, a Park City resident whose work is represented by Phoenix Gallery, has completed three major public art projects in the past 14 months: "3 Hummingbirds in Blue," a 20-foot steel and fiberglass sculpture installed near Hotel Monaco in downtown Salt Lake City; a series of sculptures for the People's Portable Garden at 877 South 200 West; and, most recently, a huge acrylic painting that graces the entryway of the Park City Aquatic Center.

"I love public art because I think it really brings people together," the artist says. "It becomes everyone's art. As time goes on, people start nurturing that sculpture or piece of art and take ownership of it. It starts creating a sense of community and sparks dialogue between people that might not ever speak."

Ragland's project for the Aquatic Center was commissioned by the Park City School District to enhance the experience of patrons of all ages. The



6-by-3-foot relief, which was installed last month, features a swimmer mid-butterfly stroke with a few goldfish splashing out of the water.

"The requirements for the project were interesting because it's in a wet area and they needed a material that would hold up under those kind of circumstances," Ragland explains. He first created the image on a smaller scale, then he scanned and printed it on a PVC product designed to withstand moisture.

For the People's Portable Garden, Ragland grappled with a different set of challenges. He wanted to capture the essence of a community garden with pieces strong enough to endure the elements as well as human-induced wear and tear.

After all, the three sculptures a set of four human-sized bell pepper slices, a peapod bench and toothpick-like pillars stacked with cherry tomatoes are too irresistible not to touch. Ragland created the larger-than-life pieces out of cast, fabricated and painted aluminum.

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The garden is a joint project of the Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City and Wasatch Community Gardens that allows people to grow their own vegetables while learning about gardening and nutrition. In return, they are expected to help with the upkeep and maintenance.

"It allows neighbors that might never know each other to come together, and I think public art does the same thing," Ragland says.

He wanted to reflect the cooperative element of the garden in his art. The bell pepper slices called "No Salt Just Pepper" lean on each other to emulate how the community depends on the garden and vice versa. "I also wanted to make sure that the garden is bright and cheery and fun whenever it's in the non-growing season," he says.

Ragland has received his public art commissions through submitting his qualifications and ideas to various community groups and committees. He typically shows his work paintings and sculptures in a variety of media in galleries and exhibitions, but he is drawn to the communal aspects of public art.

"I really enjoy the public aspect because it really gives people an opportunity to experience art without going to a gallery or museum," he says.

It also presents unique challenges that he doesn't encounter when working on a smaller scale. "It's quite a process doing public art," he says. "You really have to figure out how something will permanently go together and how it will stay together through things that are unexpected. There are a lot of things that complicate the creative process in a positive way and force the artist to think about all aspects at once."

Any difficulties are worth the outcome, though, he adds. "When you start doing pieces that are larger than life, it has much more impact than smaller or life-size pieces."

For more information about the artist, visit www.gregagland.com.

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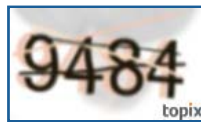
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