

The High Desert

PALETTE

Nov. 2021, Vol. 2, No.3

EXCLUSIVE

Heirloom Art
pg. 16



DID YOU KNOW?

Oculus, Pg. 12

THE MANHATTAN DOLLS

A Sentimental Journey, Pg. 6

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WELCOME TO *The High Desert Palette*

Welcome to *The High Desert Palette*! In our first year's nine issues, we brought work from local artists to these pages to share – from painters to blacksmiths; writers to culinary artists; photographers to musicians – and we've barely made a dent in the list of talented creatives in the area.

Art is meant to be shared: every page will share something intriguing and creative, and every issue is something that you can share with others after you've read it.

You can share with us your knowledge about more artists and creatives, so that our future issues will bring their work to the fore and for writers, share your writing in these pages.

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Nov., 2021
Vol. 2 No. 3

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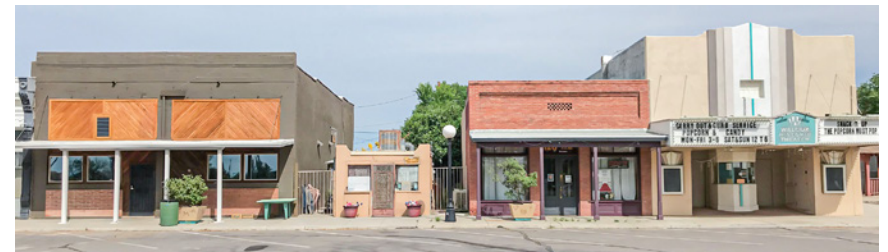


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On the Cover -
Seth and Amber Boothe

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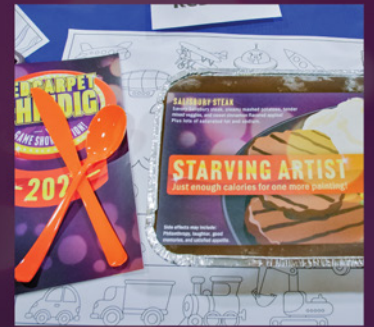
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THE MANHATTAN DOLLS

A Sentimental Journey By Peter Spitzer

Over the years Willcox Theater and Arts has hosted many music groups and artists; varying from folk and country to classical, but few have captured the attention and admiration of our audiences quite like The Manhattan Dolls. They offer a sound nostalgic to many, barely tapped into by modern artists, by delving into the classic sounds of the 30s, 40s, and other bygone eras of music. Though sounding like an obvious and simple idea for a music group, much of what

formed the dolls came from hard work and a bit of luck.

Founding the Dolls

When Heather Stricker, the founder of The Manhattan Dolls, headed to New York to visit a friend she had no idea it would end up being home for the next 11 years. While there Heather decided to do a few musical auditions, landing her a spot in an off-Broadway showcase musical, "I don't know how I booked it, I only had like four auditions. But I ended up going home to Tucson and two weeks later I was living in New York."

Eventually Heather joined the USO (United Service Organizations) based out of New York. With them she toured around the country doing similar vintage music to what The Manhattan Dolls do today, "We went to military bases around

the country. We would perform to active duty, military families, and veterans, but eventually the USO decided to switch to more modern music. I had really fallen in love with the vintage music. So when they switched, I almost saw it as an opportunity to keep this music alive to pass it on to the next generation.

The love for vintage music fostered during her time in the USO, a spot of bad luck, and a little nudge from fate spurred her on.

"It happened that in 2009 I was doing an audition for this World War 2 style musical. I didn't even make it to the call backs. So, I'm walking home feeling down thinking, 'Well I should just make my own group' and a pigeon pooped on me. And you know they say, it's good luck. So I took that as my sign. I walked home to Queens to think it through and by the time I

went to bed that night I had named the group, brought someone on to help me, and we had made a website."

What Makes a Doll

Fast forward to today. The Manhattan Dolls have now existed for over eleven years, traveling around the country and having relocated from New York back to Heather's home town of Tucson.

"By the time I went to bed that night I had named the group, brought someone on to help me, and we had made a website."

Throughout this time the Manhattan Dolls have expanded their shows and repertoire, meaning each doll has to have a wide variety of unique skills.

Heather explained, "I'm going to be honest, it's hard to find the perfect doll because we ask so much of them. They have to be able to sing solo and sound great and have to be able to



hold these really tight harmonies. We also ask them to dance and kind of uphold this vintage style, which takes a special kind of girl who loves and understands the music. On top of this we do a lot of public speaking for military and veterans, so I look for girls who are well spoken, who are sociable, and who are kind. I want someone who really cares, and I feel so lucky because right now we have nine singers who really are the most wonderful people."

Keeping the Music Alive

When it comes to shows, the Manhattan Dolls have done just about everything. With shows including an entire big band at a military base, to smaller private shows for parties. Their style has expanded from just 30s and 40s music to include the 20s and 50s. They have even added a new show titled Good Morning Vietnam,

delving into the 60's and 70's.

Throughout their shows is the mission close to Heathers heart, "We really just want to keep this classic music alive and introduce it to people who may have not heard it. We love seeing the younger generation at our show because they always have a great time. And if you touch one kid with this music, they'll spread it around and hopefully develop a love for it like we have."

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Daily



Live on Stage - The Manhattan Dolls

Join us with Igor Glenn for his 4-octave voice which includes skilled yodeling and his story songs covering the U.S. borderlands from the Deep South to the Wild West.

Nov. 19th



Smartmaker

Join instructor Paola for a STEM oriented workshop designed to get your gears turning!

Nov. 19th

Paint Night

Paint along with a talented instructor as she walks you through a step by step tutorial on how to paint.



Nov. 20th

Matinee My Way - Free Willy

Enjoy a sensory friendly movie where the lights are turned up, sound turned down, and you are free to be yourself.



Nov. 26th

Kids Art Club

Do you have a creative kid? Maybe a kid that would be interested in monthly artistic activities? Well this free art club is for them!



Dec. 3rd

Jam Session

A group for adult musicians to meet and "jam" together for the purpose of entertainment and proficiency. - no electric amplified instruments and no drum kits.



Dec. 7th

DID YOU KNOW?

Oculus

By Joshua Allred

Virtual Reality has become increasingly popular and accessible in recent years; but many don't know that this increase in relevance started with one teenager's unique hobby.



At age 17 Palmer had created his first prototype. Over the next three years his hobby evolved from a passion project to a business. In 2012, at only 19, Palmer launched a Kickstarter for his Oculus Rift, raising 2.4 million for the project. The Oculus Rift DK1 was born.



Palmer Luckey

For Palmer Luckey, a love for technology and immersive gaming made virtual reality a natural hobby. At the age of 16 Palmer began experimenting on VR headsets of his own from prototypes and failed models of the 80s and 90s in his parents garage.



Oculus Rift DK1

From 2012 to 2014 Oculus went from supporting a meager 10 employees to 100 and developing two headsets before being acquired by Facebook for \$2 billion. Oculus continues to work independently, improving on and further developing the passion project of a teenage wizkid.



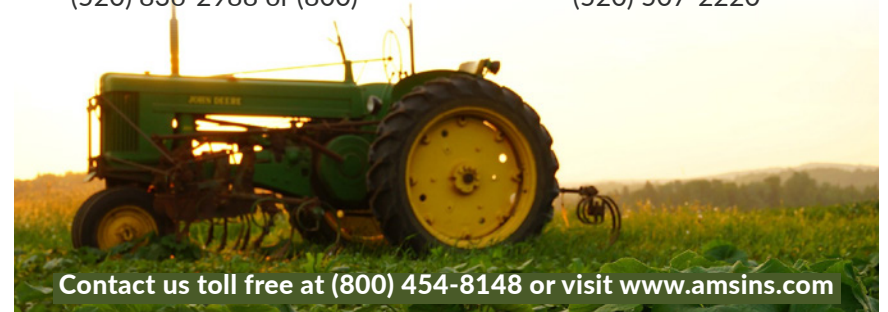
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2021-2022 SEASON OF LIVE EVENTS.

The 2021-2022 Season of Live Events is here! Prepare for classic country, fantastic guitar, finger-pickin', and fiddling-and so much more!



Cindy Rae

Enjoy the classic country sounds of Willcox' own Cindy Rae in a solo act with her Dad's Gibson guitar

Sep. 17th



Igor the Jazz Cowboy

Enjoy the "Jazz Cowboy" and his story songs that cover the U.S. borderlands from the Deep South to the Wild West.

Oct. 15th



The Manhattan Dolls

Tap your feet to a swing-style female vocal trio with the sound of The Andrews Sisters!

Nov. 19th



Sahnas Brothers

Enjoy beautifully blended sounds of Greek culture and classical Spanish guitar!

Dec. 17th

'HEDY! The Life and Inventions of Hedy Lamarr'

Enjoy the one woman wonder, Heather Massie, in her performance of the play 'HEDY! The Life & Inventions of Hedy Lamarr'!



Jan 29th

Carolyn Camp and Joe Baker

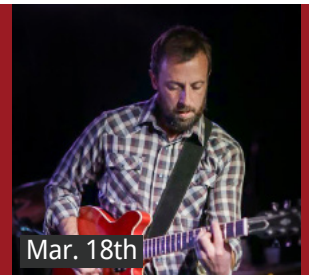
The fiddle/guitar duo trade off vocals, provide each other's harmonies and do a fair share of old-time fiddle instrumentals.



Feb. 18th

J Scott Howard

Enjoy riveting, finger picked guitar, harmonica and vocal renditions of tunes ranging from Motown hits to Texas Troubadour classics.



Mar. 18th

Sticks and Tones

Henry's piano and guitar combined with Maria's fervor on marimba, drums, world percussion, and water will carry you on a spirited voyage of heart and mind.



Apr. 30th

Learn more about our performers and their performances on our website at willcoxtheater.com and facebook page @willcoxtheaterandarts! Tickets are available for purchase on our website! Get yours today!



NAVARRETTE LEATHER

Heirloom Art
By Joshua Allred

Not all art is made to last, but for Navarrette Leather that is precisely the case. Seth Boothe and Amber Navarrette Boothe are the couple behind Navarrette - pronounced Nah-vah-reh-tee - Leather, a small

family owned and operated business dedicated to providing beautifully crafted leather accessories that are built to last.

Like most good art, each pattern Seth and Amber create starts with a concept and a sketch. As a married couple and good team they take advantage of an opportunity to bounce ideas off of each other and approach every craft as a group project, "There is not a pattern I have created or that she has created that both of us haven't looked at,

walked through, talked about, and got the way we wanted." Seth explains.

Amber emphasizes the attention to detail that each item receives when being created to provide both beauty and longevity. "We're creating heirloom pieces to give to somebody."

True to the heirloom art they create, Navarrette leather finds its name in its heritage; it's namesake being Amber's maiden name. Seth affirms, "It's family roots. We're a %100 family owned business for products that you can pass through your family."

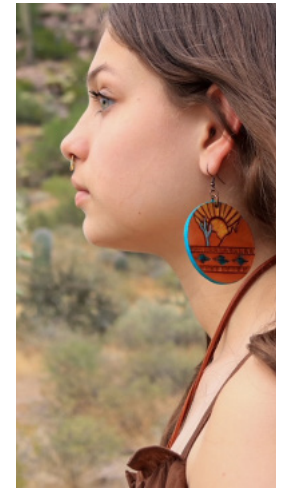
YouTube University

Amber was first to investigate leather working, spurred on by a do-it-yourself attitude, with a pinch of curiosity. "I'd been born and raised in Willcox. I love old western style tooling and leather work. So when I'd seen that in a purse, I wanted to create one."

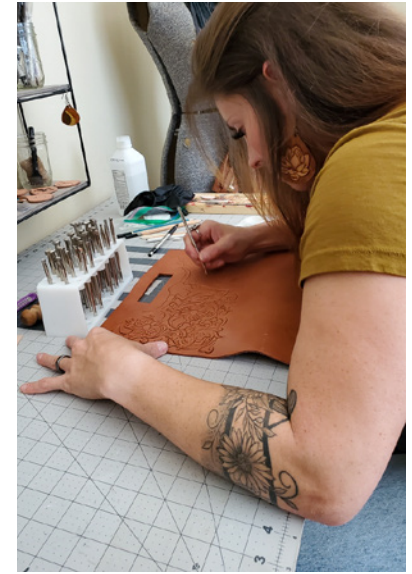
She explains her learning process as going to YouTube university. She went about teaching herself

the skills of a leather work artisan through YouTube videos and old VHS tutorials, "I didn't know how to tool! So where

“ There is not a pattern I have created or that she has created that both of us haven't looked at, walked through, talked about, and got the way we wanted.”



- Seth and Amber's daughters modeling some accessories.



do you go for the basics? Well, everybody goes to YouTube!"

A successful self-interest project snowballed into a small business and Amber's husband, Seth, joined the team. She taught him the art of the trade and he brought with him his own unique skill set to contrast Amber's more traditional style and method.

He approaches tooling like a sketch or drawing, depicting three dimensionality by cutting into his leather at various depths and using multiple dyes to imitate shading. "I've really always loved sketching. I have sketch books from when I was deployed in the military, just doodling stuff. So for me leather work is

taking the sketching and putting that on leather. That's why my tooling is different."

The Patient Process

Running a small business like Navarrette Leather is hard, especially early on. Seth and

Amber are the sole investors in their small business, having to make financial and time sacrifices all while working full time jobs to make things work, "You're having to still have

a full time job and be able to build a dream," Amber explains.

Despite sacrifices they find motivation in the passion they have for their craft, "We love this. This is a dream job that

// We love this. This is a dream job that we're trying to work towards doing full time."

we're trying to work towards doing full time."

Seth suggests that same passion is important for anyone interested in starting up a small artisan business, "You have to have the passion for it. Because it's not easy."

He went on to explain that in professional art there is a huge personal sacrifice that needs to be made before it can become a practical means for an income. More than creating products a person must find clients, gain recognition, and sometimes pay money out of pocket just to see little to no immediate return.

A small business takes time, energy, and resources. Seth advises, "You have to be patient, you have to be willing to make sacrifices to get your name out

there, and you're going to have to start small."

For Seth and Amber, the end goal is working as leather work artisans full time. Becoming full time creators is a patient process, but the journey is a rewarding one.

See more of their work:

-  navarretteleather.com
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The High Desert Palette welcomes contributions that highlight creativity and creative people in Southeastern Arizona. We seek to explore the creative impulse, showcase creative product and inspire creatives in all fields. Original contributions in artistic and/or creative fields and articles or feature interviews with the people who create them will be accepted. Let us know of creative individuals we might highlight in future issues.

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THE VIRTUAL WORLD IN WILLCOX

By Gayle Berry

The next evolution of media consumption, Virtual Reality or VR, can immerse you in a full 360-degree world of games, movies, education, travel and unique experiences. Graduates of Cochise College's new Certificate in Virtual Reality Development are positioned to be in the thick of this evolution. With VR goggles on, you are in the virtual world.

To create the totally immersive environments for these worlds takes specialized knowledge and Cochise College is one of the few schools to offer a Virtual Reality Development Program. First offered in the 2020-2021 school

year, the program immediately filled to its enrollment limit with Tim McDaniel, a pioneer in VR, as the instructor.

Experience in Internships

The capstone requirement for the VR program is an internship for students to put their learning to use in a real-world environment. Willcox Theater and Arts, Inc. (WTA) was lucky enough to get three of the first program's students to intern on an innovative Western Heritage project.

The project's goal is to present an 1880's Willcox experience. As a "Time Traveler" entering the 1880's Willcox VR world, you see the Railroad tracks just across from the saloon chosen as a 'typical' period friendly establishment. As you move into the saloon you can interact with objects the interns programmed such as a gas lamp, a deck of cards, and horseshoes. Outside you hear the train whistle.

Tim McDaniel was excited for the WTA internships. "The vast majority of VR partners have been defense industry related. With Studio 128 at WTA, we have the freedom of having a public facing Arizona organization," McDaniel said.

This project will further develop the use of VR for showcasing WTA's Heritage, building on the base established by the Cochise College Virtual Reality Development Program Interns Danelle Farrington, Catherine Elliot and Rey Martinez.

A Group Effort

VR Development straddles two worlds, mixing technology and creative expression and is highly collaborative. The VR Interns at WTA found their internship challenging and rewarding: working as a team and learning what aspects of VR Development they enjoy – or don't.

Danelle Farrington shared, "I never realized I'm actually apparently pretty good at debugging. I ended up being the team's debugger." Catherine Elliot added, "It's important to really talk to the other team members in the internship because they helped me a lot and I think I helped them a lot."

McDaniel summed it up, "I think it definitely put all the students in a position where they had to learn how to communicate. Not only as a team, but communicate with their employer effectively."



Danelle Farrington



Rey Martinez



Catherine Elliot



Learn more about VR technology on pg. 12

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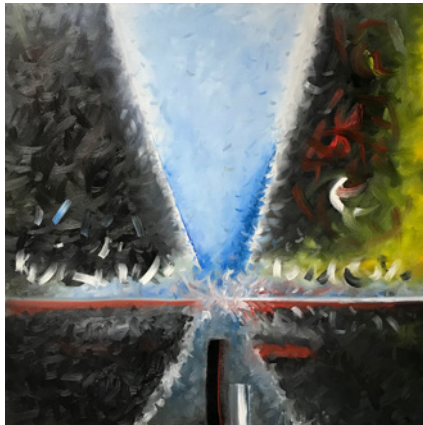
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Willcox Theater and Arts empowers our community to create, learn, experience and take part in a wide variety of creative expression, supported by our talented creative staff. Help us fan everyone’s spark of creativity and excitement in accomplishment.

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, we count on individuals and corporations who contribute each year. Ticket and class fee revenues comprise a small portion of our budget. It is through the generosity of individual donors, corporate sponsorships, and foundations that we can raise the curtain on quality arts programs. Your contributions will support our ability to keep classes, programs, and ticket prices low for the entire community—from students to seniors and everyone in between.

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