

The High Desert

PALETTE

Feb. 2023 Vol. 3, No. 2

JOHN RIGGS

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TO DEADLINE**
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The High Desert Palette is produced and published by Willcox Theater and Arts



WILLCOX
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Presents:

THE HIGH DESERT PALETTE

Willcox Theater and Art's mission is to provide entertainment, education and cultural programs and activities for all ages! We began producing The High Desert Palette in 2020 as a way to better embrace that mission!



The *High Desert Palette* is published quarterly by Willcox Theater and Arts, Inc. 134 N Railroad Avenue, PO Box 217, Willcox AZ 85644. It is distributed free to Willcox Theater and Arts, Inc. Guest Artist Season Patrons and Willcox area businesses. The online version is published at willcoxtheater.com.



Feb., 2023
Vol. 3 No. 2

Welcome to *The High Desert Palette*! In our previous 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 local artists and creatives, so that our future issues can highlight their work and it can be shared with the community of Willcox and its surrounding areas! Contact us at 520-766-3335 or willcoxtheater@gmail.com to discuss your ideas.

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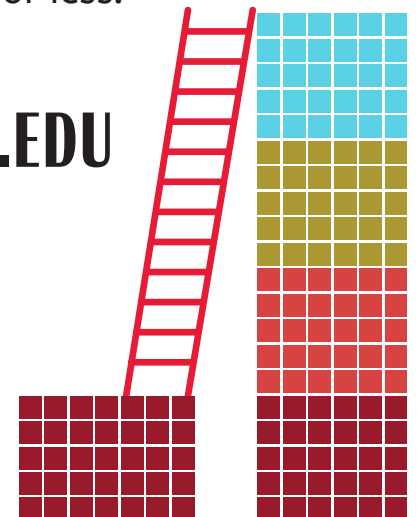
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JOIN GARY CLEMENT AS HE TALKS ABOUT HIS FAVORITE B-MOVIE, THEM.

THE MOVIE GUY

"One of the more essential films to watch from that era!"



Article by Taylor Belden

During the Great Depression, movie theaters were hit negatively, their sales dropping by 1/3. To try to stay open and turn a profit they had to get creative. One successful product of such creativity

introduced double features; and with them, 'B-movies'.

The term B-movie, also referred to as "cheapies" or "Quickies", was used in the early 1930s to identify low-budget films, usually lasting between 50 and 80 minutes. These films served as the bottom half of a double feature, which was when two movies were shown for the price of one. These films would be paired with an 'A-movie', which had well-known actors, immaculate scripts and stunning production quality. The better publicized, 'A-movie', would draw attention, while the 'B-movie', would make people feel like their purchase was worth it when money was tight.

Many theaters eventually learned they could make a better profit off of these cheaper productions, and even



did double features with just 'B-movies'. Even though these low-budget productions were popular between the 1930s and 1950s, they eventually fell out of style. Despite this, some still hold a special place in their hearts for them. This includes our favorite movie guy and manager of our theater, Gary.

Among his long list of well-liked 'B-movies', his favorite is *Them* (1954). Them follows a story about common ants mutating into giant man-eating monsters that threaten civilization due to early atomic tests in New Mexico, USA.

"I have always been fascinated by the old 1950's black and white movies termed 'B-movies', especially

the movies termed 'Monster Movies'. Science Fiction was my favorite genre and these movies fit in just fine. Growing up I found that these movies were highlights of the political paranoia of the times, but for me, it was the giant monster vs human aspect that won my heart. I first watched *Them* on a Sunday afternoon and was overwhelmed by the plot and the action. The movie started out as a crime story and then boom, giant ants from New Mexico of all places, appeared. I was grabbed by the special effects and puppetry of the ants; and the human actors were great. Now, years later, I feel that *Them* is one of the more essential films to watch from that era."

"Growing up I found that these movies were highlights of the political paranoia of the times, but for me, it was the giant monster vs human aspect that won my heart."

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VALUED VOLUNTEERS

A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT WILLCOX THEATER AND ARTS BY GAYLE BERRY



Volunteer, Abby Nichols-Keys, helping customers at concessions

Volunteering can be as straightforward as helping behind the counter in concessions or scrubbing walls on a clean-up day, or as unique as using creative talents to start a whole new program.

If you've been a volunteer or thought about volunteering, it might seem to be a pretty clear-cut thing to do. You come in and do a set of tasks on a structured schedule – maybe you are an attendant at a museum or shelve books at the library or sort through donations at a thrift store.

Well, volunteering at Willcox Theater and Arts can be a little different. WTA is a creative place and our volunteers are creative to match. Volunteering can be as straightforward as helping behind the counter in concessions or scrubbing walls on a clean-up day, or as unique as using creative talents to start a whole new program.

Volunteers have been crucial to WTA since it began in 2012. As a matter of fact, it was all volunteers who formed the organization to save the Theater and raise money throughout the community to purchase the building from the Rex Allen Museum. As they cleaned, repaired and painted the theater, installed new seats and removed junk, the Theater's new logo was born – all through volunteers.

Tom Johnson is a graphic designer who stopped to chat with the volunteer work crew one day, and wound up offering to design a logo for the Theater for the marquee. He designed the iconic "W" logo, but wasn't content to stop with just a design. Provided with steel sheet, he contacted the metal shop at Willcox High School, who volunteered their time to cut the logo as a project. With an artist friend, Tom colored and coated the logo in its beautiful weathered verdigris and copper look. Then WTA's volunteer handyman crew took over, hoisting it into place in the center of the marquee, a symbol of the Theater's rebirth and permanence in downtown Willcox.

Making Programs Possible

Volunteers were instrumental in starting many of today's popular programs. Mari DeGrazia journeyed from Tucson to Willcox one Saturday each month in 2018, to help launch our STEAM smARTMAKER program. Mari, a cybersecurity expert and dedicated digital tinkerer brought expertise in programming and using single board computers such as Circuit Playground Express to offer workshops in making and programming robots, constructing video games, programming designs for 3D printing, and much more.

Ned Robbins is the "Chairman" of the long-running Jam Session.



Tom Johnson's logo being installed at the theater

You'll see volunteers when you come to the movies or almost any program we offer at Willcox Theater and Arts. Maybe you are one of those volunteers. To all volunteers, at WTA and throughout Willcox, we say "THANK YOU! You make Willcox a better place!"

Twice a month singers and acoustic instrumentalists come together to practice, learn, perform and enjoy making music. Ned says that "Willcox is a musical town," and he just knew there were musicians looking for the opportunity to jam. Each jam session is different, with instruments ranging from guitar to mandolin, ukulele, harmonica, fiddle and even piano on occasion. Jam sessions draw not only musicians, but an appreciative audience as well.

But it's not just in creative fields that volunteers are important to the Theater. Our Film Festival and Ranching Heritage Festival depend on volunteers. From the planning committee to setup, operation, cleanup, these

Festivals use skills in planning, scheduling, marketing, social media, organization, and plain old elbow grease, all from dedicated volunteers.

Whether its professional skills, like website development or legal advice, fix-it skills that help maintain our historic buildings, a big smile at the concession stand, or helping out at a workshop, volunteers are important team members in everything we do. You'll see volunteers when you come to the movies or almost any program we offer at Willcox Theater and Arts. Maybe you are one of those volunteers. To all volunteers, at WTA and throughout Willcox, we say "THANK YOU! You make Willcox a better place!"



Volunteer, Ron Applegate, blacksmithing at the Ranching Heritage Festival



An audience applauding Jam Session performers

Join the fun and use your talents to help make your community a better place! Contact us to learn how you can volunteer.

 (520) 766 3335

 [willcoxtheater@gmail](mailto:willcoxtheater@gmail.com)



FROM DRAWING TO DEADLINE

BY TAYLOR BELDEN

Meet the man behind our big plans to expand the Willcox Theater and Arts facilities, John Riggs. His continuous passion for architecture shows in his work and life.

A TWELVE YEAR OLD'S COMMITMENT

John is a Willcox native, growing up on a cattle ranch out by the Chiricahua Mountains. From an early age he found an interest in creativity and building. "I had always enjoyed building with Lincoln Logs and other building blocks. I liked math and I liked drawing and it just all kind of came together. So when I was 12, I had decided to become an architect."

“ WHEN I WAS 12, I HAD DECIDED TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT.”

John graduated from Willcox High School, and afterwards decided to see his commitment through. He went to the U of A as one of only 54 students in the College of Architecture's first year. After he graduated he and two other classmates decided to open their own firm, Architecture One; the first architectural firm formed by U of A graduates. Architecture One became one of the largest architectural firms in Arizona and was one of the first that converted from paper and pencil drawings to digital in the 80s.

The firm was in business for 25 years, and did about 2,400 projects during that time. One of his favorite projects is what is now the insurance building at Williams Center, BlueCross Blue Shield on Broadway just west of Craycroft in Tucson. He eventually closed the



“ A LOT OF PEOPLE I TALK TO SAY ‘OH MY GOD, I HAVE TO GO TO WORK’ AND I THINK ‘WOW, TOMORROW I GET TO DO WHAT I NEED TO DO!’”

firm and is now self-employed and continues to do what he loves. “I wouldn’t even say employed. I just enjoy what I do. A lot of people I talk to say ‘Oh my God, I have to go to work’ and I think ‘wow, tomorrow I get to do what I need to do!’”

ADVENTURES OF SELF EMPLOYMENT

Despite routine and preference, self employment offered John the opportunity to learn new things and experience adventures he couldn’t have had in a firm. He recalled fondly a project

that involved designing a home for a retiring couple in Tucson. John’s work, which had typically consisted of designing the project and coordinating construction, took on a more hands on approach when the contractor hired for the project called three months in to say he couldn’t do it. He suggested the couple hire John to step in as the new contractor and finish the job. “I hung up the phone and thought, ‘oh my god, I’ve never been out in the field, running a project.’”

John did step in as to avoid the certain delay that would come from hiring on a completely new contractor. He is glad he did, and ended up enjoying having a hand in the process of building something from start to finish.

ARTISTRY IN ARCHITECTURE

From a young boy and his Lincoln Logs to a 12 year old with a commitment, on through graduation, an architectural firm, and finally self employment, John has found joy in architecture from the drawings to the deadline. Architecture is a field not often associated with creativity, but we can definitely see the artistry in John’s designs throughout the years.



EVENTS

Willcox Theater and Arts has something for everyone. Take a look – discover something new, learn a skill, or just have fun! Visit our website at willcoxtheater.com for more information and to register for events!

RECURRING:

FIRST RUN MOVIES

Catch first run movies at our historic theater any day of the week with today's latest in comfort and digital technology!

Daily @ 6:30 & 7pm.
Matinees Sat. and Sun., @ 2 & 2:30pm.
@ Willcox Historic Theater



JAM SESSION

A group for adult musicians to meet and "jam" together for the purpose of entertainment and proficiency.

Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday @3pm.
@ The Palace of Art and Theater



ACE OF ARTS

Join a talented instructor, who teaches you about different mediums in art. Bring a lunch for a nice social break!

Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday @ 10am.
@ The Palace of Art and Theater



COMING SOON:

PAINT NIGHT – ENCHANTED FOREST –

Paint an enchanted forest under the direction of a talented instructor!

Mar. 11 @ 6pm @ The Palace of Art and Theater

CRAFT CLASSES – EASTER PROJECT –

Join talented instructor, Kathleen Johnston in crafting an Easter themed project.

Mar. 18 @ 1pm @ The Palace of Art and Theater

SCIENCE ON SCREEN – THE MEG –

Learn about the fact behind the fiction with a live presentation after a showing of the movie, The Meg!

Mar. 28 @ 6pm @ Willcox Historic Theater

LIVE ON STAGE – DAVE AND DAPHNE –

Watch Dave and Daphne; a dynamic duo featuring country, bluegrass, and other energetic genres!

Mar. 31 @ 7pm @ The Palace of Art and Theater



SANCTUARY BY MARY PETERSON

Britt Flood has a goal of having one of her large-scale murals in all 50 states. With the completion of the new mural at the Elsie S. Hogan Community Library, she added Arizona to the "completed" list that already included North Carolina, Michigan, Maryland, Louisiana, Iowa, and Massachusetts.

To meet her mural goal in the competitive arena of public art, Flood has had to persevere in making applications. As a full-time artist, she has dedicated significant time to researching and submitting responses to calls for artists. "I apply for projects each week and keep thinking positive," Flood reflected. "Reading throughout childhood has had a huge impact on my creativity and I have always wanted to contribute a mural to a library."

The transformation of the large wall on the Hogan Community Library has been entitled "Sanctuary" to describe how libraries are safe havens and place of wonder and creativity. Flood described the mural as a representation of connection, both how books transport us to other lives and worlds and how we can share those experiences with others. "I really love how the native cactus varieties turned out, and how they pop out against the blue sky background. I love painting people and figures, and getting to paint the kids reading at such a large scale was a fun challenge."

“ Reading throughout childhood has had a huge impact on my creativity and I have always wanted to contribute a mural to a library.”



"Art is a vehicle for meeting new people and making new connections," Britt shared, "and the community in Willcox made me feel so encouraged and welcomed." While in Willcox, Flood enjoyed exploring Willcox and hiking at the Chiricahua Monument but she especially enjoyed the community encouragement. "Us artists love cheerleaders of all sorts while creating," she commented, "thank you to anyone who drove or walked by and gave a thumbs up or 'good job!'"

The new mural is a project of the Willcox Arts Commission, newly appointed by the City of Willcox to encourage public art and the inclusion of art in City projects.

Gayle Berry, Chairperson of the Commission, noted, "we are thrilled that one of our first projects helps the library look fresh and inviting, especially for young people."

Explore more
of Britt Flood's
work on her site!

brittflood.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.

Please contact *The High Desert Palette* at 520-766-3335 or willcoxtheater@gmail.com to discuss your ideas.

The High Desert
PALETTE

LIVE ON STAGE!

Willcox's Spring Performing Arts Series

Great live performances on a local stage! Visit willcoxtheater.com for more information and to buy tickets! All performances will be in WTA's Palace of Art and Theater at 116 N Railroad Ave, Willcox, AZ 8543.

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DAVE AND DAPHNE

March 31st at 7:00pm

The combined talent of Dave Salyer and Daphne Anderson come together as Dave and Daphne featuring classic country, bluegrass, and Old time rock 'n' roll instrumentals!



SIMPLY THREE

April 27th at 7:00pm

The electrifying trio of Glen McDaniel, Nick Villalobos, and Zack Clark, together known as Simply three, has been captivating audiences worldwide with high-octane performances since 2010 with old school training but a new school sound!



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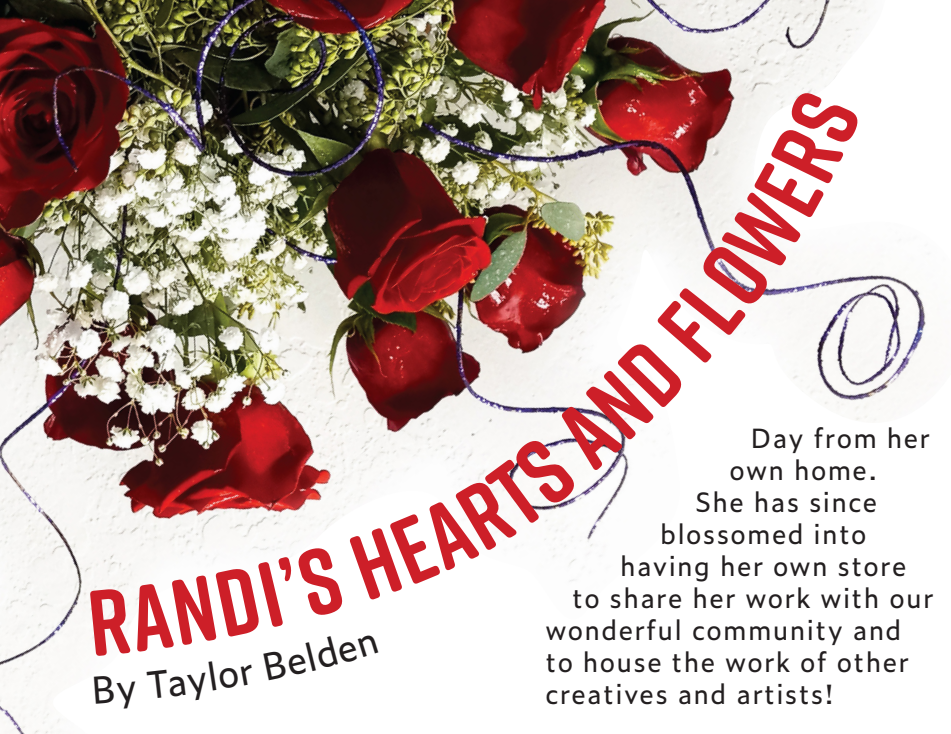
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RANDI'S HEARTS AND FLOWERS

By Taylor Belden

Day from her own home. She has since blossomed into having her own store to share her work with our wonderful community and to house the work of other creatives and artists!

OPEN HEARTS

Randi has recently moved her shop to 149 E. Maley Street to have a more open space than



the shop she originally opened in October 2021. "We moved to this place because the old place was divided. This is a better layout for us, and more open." Randi says. The new space is as beautiful as it is functional. Randi has made use of an assembled divider to separate a spacious opening shop room from a back room where she can work on her floral arrangements.

Randi's contribution to her shop are primarily her floral arrangements. "I've always been creative in the arts, but I have always loved flowers." She offers her floral arrangements as an Arizona Master Florist, guaranteeing quality. The shop is a full-service shop, which means they do weddings, funerals, birthdays, and just about any special occasion through everyday deliveries and pickup.

When asked what her favorite part of being in business is, she talked about interacting with her customers. She

enjoys when community members go to her for momentous occasions like weddings, funerals or memorials because she feels like she can help people through those times. It's a very personal thing when you want flowers for a loved one.

“ I’VE ALWAYS BEEN CREATIVE IN THE ARTS, BUT I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED FLOWERS.”

Randi displays and sells local artist's work on top of her own, believing that showcasing local talent full time is important. "I have a lot of space and I don't need it all for myself. So, I opened it up for other crafters and makers. They would have a place to sell their stuff full time instead of always sitting





at vendor booths." People who display their work at Randi's shop only need to pay a monthly display fee and Randi only takes 10% of their sales. Randi has a passion for sharing the community's talent and wants to show that our small town has a lot to offer.

ALWAYS A WORK IN PROGRESS

According to Randi, the hardest part of running a small business is dealing with the steep learning curve that comes with trying anything new. "It's always a work in progress." For Randi, the artistic side of her work is more enjoyable and comes more naturally than the business side. "That's part of it though, you learn as you go and fix as you go."

With that process of learning comes uncertainty. It can be hard to put yourself and

your work on the line! Since starting a small business from her own home, Randi has had plenty of opportunity to feel reluctance and hesitancy in putting herself out there and expanding her business. "Even after we found the building I was like, 'uh.. Maybe that's not a good idea', but it's gone good so I'm glad we did it. It's been fun." With plenty of experience under her belt, Randi encourages others looking to start a small business to just give it a shot! "Just do it! Just try it and see what you can do. I think a lot of people are reserved about trying, but you should try; Especially in our community where I feel like everyone is really supportive."

Looking forward, Randi is always on the lookout for ways

to expand her business and learn more floral techniques, but most importantly she is dedicated to maintaining a valuable shop in Willcox. "We just want to be here and serve the community!" Stop by Randi's Hearts and Flowers at 149 E. Maley Street to see some of what Willcox has to offer and enjoy its local talent!

“ WE JUST WANT TO BE HERE AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY!”

The displayed floral arrangements are Randi's own!



(520) 507-5728



Randisheartsandflowers.com

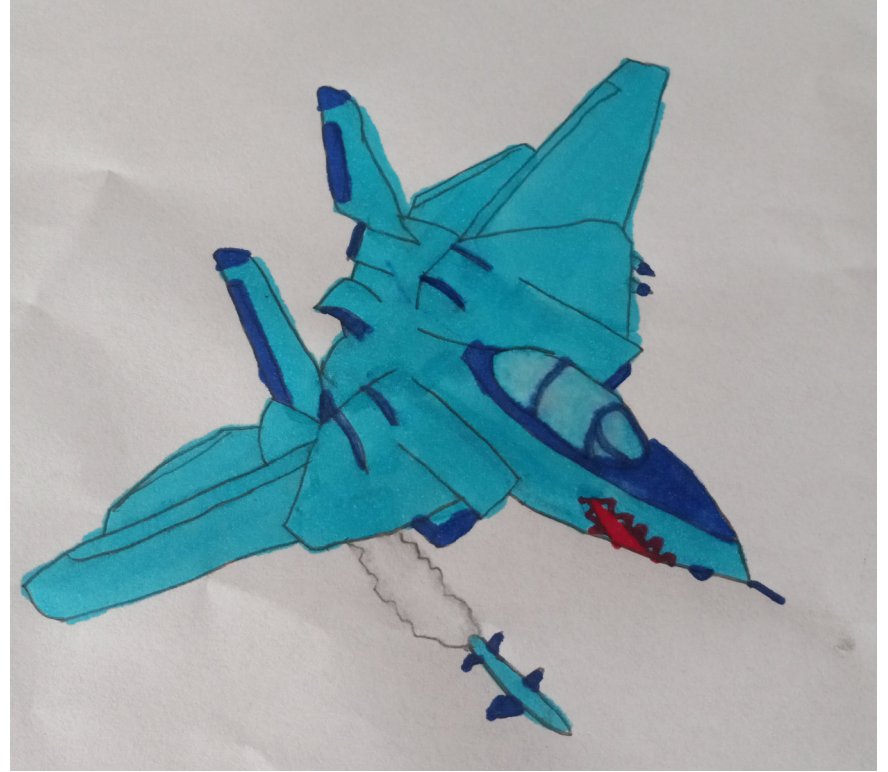


Randisheartsandflowers@yahoo.com

ART LOOK

Featured are artworks by Sam Coleman!

“Sam has always been very creative and has really become interested in painting and drawing over the last couple of years. He is a student at Cochise Elementary and enjoys their art class most of all. He started out with water colors and as he got older he learned about Bob Ross and would spend hours watching him on YouTube, then he started to practice painting landscapes in oils and acrylics, and he would enter them in the Cochise county Fair. Then he moved on to drawing and has been doing that the past couple of years. His favorite things to draw are ships and air planes.”



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