

Sisters Folk Festival art is part of the fun

By **Jim Cornelius**
News Editor

The art that promotes the Sisters Folk Festival each year is much more than a simple poster advertising the event. The poster painting by Dennis McGregor captures the spirit of the event and the role of SFF in the community. And McGregor’s work is loved and collected just like the music is.

McGregor has been the SFF poster artist since the 1990s.

“I’m enjoying it more now than I ever have in the past, and every year it’s more so,” he told *The Nugget* last week.

Festival organizers give McGregor full rein to create whatever image inspires him.

“It’s a dream job,” he said. “I just do whatever I want to do.”

McGregor acknowledges that he put some constraints

on himself in the festival’s early years, based on his background as a graphic designer where “there was little room for creativity.” His early posters, he says, were “pretty literal and conventional,” featuring musical instruments.

But as the festival itself grew and evolved and expanded its boundaries, so, too, did McGregor’s art.

“It became a whole different thing that encouraged creativity, kind of ‘hang it out there...’” he said.

McGregor reckons that the 2014 painting of “Buck” for the poster was a turning point toward a whole new level of creativity. The poster featured a buck deer with a pompadour (pompadour) and an earring (deering). The artist thought he might be pushing things a bit, but it turned out that Buck was a huge hit, probably the most popular poster ever.

That was encouraging.

This year, McGregor tapped into Sisters Country’s obsession with dogs to create a musical canine campfire howl-along. It, too, has been a hit.

The artist assembled friends at his home east of Sisters for a couple of photo shoots.

“Just to get the instruments in the positions they would be in was a huge help right there,” he said.

The shoot created an unexpected demand on the artist.

“Every guy, every friend (was) saying ‘What kind of dog am I going to be?’” he said. The other question that came up repeatedly was, “Can my dog be in it?”

McGregor is emphatic that there is no symbolic content in which person turned out to be what dog.

“There’s no connection, but I must say that the banjo player looks a bit like Willie Carmichael,” he said.

He also acknowledged that one dog in particular has a specific identity — the accordion player is a friend’s dog that recently died.

The Sisters Folk Festival’s “merch” — hats, T-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. — traditionally picks up motifs from the poster art each year. That posed a bit of a creative

challenge for McGregor to design around.

“I couldn’t draw the whole herd of ’em around the fire (for a T-shirt imprint),” he said.

He thought about doing a dog picking a banjo in a rocking chair

on the porch — but that didn’t reflect the high-energy nature of the festival.

He ended up with a guitar-sliding dog leaping through the air with a paw over his head.

“It was actually the famous Springsteen shot from ‘Born in the USA,’” he told *The Nugget*. “I pulled my album out and made the dog’s body exactly like Bruce. This is a badass dog — this ain’t no



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sisters Folk Festival went to the dogs this year.

laid-back dog on the porch.”

Naturally, McGregor calls him “Springsteener Spaniel.”

McGregor’s posters can be found all over Sisters. Sponsors receive hard-board posters each year, and many display them in their businesses.

“I love it when they find permanent places in public spaces,” McGregor said. “That, to me, feels like success.”



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The artist’s friends modeled for the poster image.

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Over a two-decade span ranging from ages 50 to 70-1/2, investors will face multiple milestone decisions that will likely impact their retirement savings and portfolio. As you navigate through each decision, you'll need to be aware of how rules governing Social Security, Medicare and your taxes will come into play. Take steps now to be prepared as these milestones approach:

Age 50: Give your retirement savings a boost by making “catch-up” contributions. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules for 2016 allow those 50 and older to invest an additional \$1,000 per year (for a maximum of \$6,500 per year) in an IRA, and another \$6,000 per year (to a maximum of \$24,000) in a workplace retirement plan such as a 401(k).

Age 55: This may be the first opportunity you have to make penalty-free withdrawals (income taxes still apply) from employer-based qualified plans. To become eligible, you must first retire from your employer in the year you turn 55 or later. While tapping into your retirement income may make sense for you, consider the impact early withdrawals could have on your long-term financial security before taking action.

Age 59-1/2: At this age, you have more penalty-free access to your retirement assets — meaning you can take distributions from IRAs and potentially from qualified work plans (check with your Human Resources Department to see what rules apply to you). Keep in mind that withdrawing from your nest egg early is a risk to your long-term financial situation. Taxes are due on distributions attributable to pre-tax contributions and earnings.

Age 62: You first become eligible to claim retirement benefits from Social Security at age 62. The earlier you claim benefits, the lower the monthly payout will be. Many investors choose to claim at a later age, because you can receive a higher monthly benefit. If you do decide to claim benefits at age 62 while you continue to receive a paycheck, your Social Security benefits may be reduced until you reach full retirement age (defined below).

Age 65: You qualify for Medicare coverage starting at age 65. You'll automatically be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B if you're receiving Social Security at this time. Otherwise, you need to apply for it. Your application window is the three months either side of your 65th birthday month. Medicare is complex, so make sure to research what options are available to you.

Age 66-67: Depending on your birth year, you reach what Social Security defines as “full retirement age” at 66 or 67. Visit www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/retirechart to learn what age that is for you. If you wait until now to receive Social Security benefits, you'll have more ways to structure your benefits. Married couples in particular tend to have many options, so be sure to coordinate your decisions with your spouse.

Age 70: Your maximum monthly benefit is available after your 70th birthday. If you haven't claimed Social Security benefits, you should do so as there is no advantage to waiting beyond this date. You may want to consider donating your benefit if you have other investments that cover your expenses.

Age 70-1/2: By April 1 of the year after you turn 70-1/2, you are required to take a minimum distribution from traditional IRAs and workplace retirement plans. The IRS calculates the amount you pay (called Required Minimum Distributions or RMDs) using the Uniform Lifetime Table and your age at the time you're talking the distribution. Instructions for calculating RMDs can be found in IRS Publication 590 at www.irs.gov. Distributions must be taken from each account that is subject to this rule. Failure to do so can result in penalty of 50 percent of the amount that was required to be distributed.

If you have questions about making these milestone decisions or want to get an objective opinion, consider hiring a financial advisor. Find an advisor who will look comprehensively at your financial situation and your retirement goals, in order to help you make decisions with increased confidence.

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