

Commentary...

Song Academy is an experience like no other

By **Chloe Gold**
Correspondent

The Americana Song Academy (ASA) is a three-day music camp where musicians come together to learn from each other, regardless of skill level. ASA takes place at Camp Caldera, near Sisters, the week before the Sisters Folk Festival, which allows performers like Martyn Joseph and Ellis to come and teach classes at the camp.

I've been playing guitar and writing my own music in the Americana Project at Sisters High School for about three years, but I've been playing music for about eight years. This year, I was fortunate enough to attend ASA with the help of the Family Access Network.

The ASA is an experience like no other in terms of how full I felt, creatively and emotionally. Prior to attending song camp, I'd gone all summer without writing an original song. To put this into perspective, my average turnaround for writing an original piece is about two weeks, as is the curriculum for the Americana Project class at Sisters High School. Approximately half a day into ASA I was sitting in Keith Greeninger's class when inspiration finally struck,

and I wrote a song — lyrics, chords, and all — in about 20 minutes. Inspiration hit me so hard that I physically got up and left the class to complete the song, for fear of losing it before it could begin.

ASA is a different experience for each musician.

For Sierra Henneous, a high-school-aged musician, ASA is about "The different music and backgrounds each person brings," she said.

This year was Henneous' second year attending ASA, but she hopes to continue to return each year because, "Each day is new and different [t]here. You're different when you come back to reality."

For Brent Alan, one of the musicians hired to be a part of the house band at Caldera during ASA, his favorite part is "watching people turn their insecurities into confidence." Alan has attended song camp every year since it started in 2002. He continues to return because for him, "It's like reconnecting with my tribe," he said.

For Martyn Joseph, a guitar player and singer-songwriter from Wales, and instructor at ASA, ASA allows him to help others "Express themselves and make sense of the world while writing songs," he said.

Joseph originally played



PHOTO PROVIDED

Chloe Gold, right, experienced the Americana Song Academy at Caldera in the runup to Sisters Folk Festival.

at the Sisters Folk Festival in 2010, as well as 2011. He continues to come back because he just loves Oregon.

"We're here doing this wonderful communal stuff in a poetic landscape," he said.

For Ellis, a musician from Minnesota, ASA is about slowing down and meeting new people, as well as seeing old friends. Ellis feels as if there's "something healing here. It's like a retreat space where the creative cup gets full."

Experienced or inexperienced, young or old(er), the Americana Song Academy is an enriching experience for all musicians, regardless of skill level. The ASA has a

closing ceremony it does each year, and the calm that I'd felt throughout the week intensified as I stood in the circle of musicians and listened to Ron Artis II play the final song of camp. As the song came to a close, we all thanked and complimented each other, with genuine compliments. There was an energy about the circle that was difficult to part from, because it felt warm and embracing.

As I left ASA that morning to return to school, I did feel different as I came back to reality, just like Henneous had said. I felt reset as a musician, and as a human being.

Learning about bee conservation at Museum

As a gardener, there's a lot you can do to protect native bee species.

Learn more at the High Desert Museum presentation *Bee Conservation: Challenges and Opportunities* on Wednesday, September 25. Participants will hear from Dr. Jim Cane of the USDA Bee Lab in Logan, Utah. He'll dive into floral use, pollination biology and more, making local gardeners better-informed advocates for bee conservation on wildlands. It just might help you become a better gardener, too.

Bee Conservation: Challenges And Opportunities runs from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$7; Museum members receive a 20-percent discount.

RSVP/register at <https://highdesertmuseum.org/events/bee-conservation>. For more information call 541-382-4754. The High Desert Museum is located at 59800 S. Highway 97, Bend.

HOLLAND: Executive director looks to make program 'exceptional'

Continued from page 1

A new strategic plan is needed for 2020-22, based on data from a needs assessment completed this past May. Holland said that most items in the 2017-19 plan have been accomplished and now the board and staff can look at the next steps to take. She would like to see the district conduct an annual needs assessment.

"I am excited to work with the school district to address

the needs of our youth," Holland said.

A 2002 graduate of Central Washington University in Recreation Management, Holland is a native of Florida. Her dad being in the Navy, they lived in California before going to the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station in Washington state.

Holland and her 11-year old son, Cal, were fortunate to find a house in the Village at Cold Springs, close to work and school. Cal is in the sixth grade at Sisters Middle School and says his favorite class is Spanish. He enjoys baseball, video games, and spending time with his dog, Griffin, a

4-year-old German shepherd/golden retriever mix.

"I love Sisters," Holland exclaimed. "Everyone is so welcoming and kind. Our neighbors have been so welcoming."

She loves living in a small town where she can walk to coffee on Sunday morning. She looks forward to experiencing more of the community, the county, and the wilderness as she gets out and about.

"I feel incredibly blessed to be part of SPRD. I appreciate everyone's welcoming from the very first day on the job. The staff has been wonderful," she concluded.



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