

DEEP ROOTS

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Cornelius added, “The second year we each booked one of our music heroes. We booked in Ian Tyson and Guy Clark. We took a big jump into nationally recognized artists. It wasn’t a regional festival anymore, which is a bold step.”

Tisdel submitted the same song again the second year and became a finalist again.

“I think that year I lost to a guy named Daryl Purpose,” Tisdel said, chuckling.

He added, “In the mid to late ’90s, I was pursuing music pretty hard professionally, as a songwriter and a performer, and I was playing to make my living. I was living in Seattle and Portland kind of in between and doing gigs at Black Butte Ranch in the summertime where my folks had a place since we were kids.”

Tisdel loved working with kids and had a consulting business, Creative Educational Resources. He attended SFF in 1997 and in 1998 he moved to Central Oregon.

“I had already started working in the Sisters schools since I had lived part of that time in Black Butte Ranch in the mid ’90s,” he said. “I connected with Debbie Newport, former SFF board member, and we created an eighth-grade leadership retreat. Then I got involved with the sixth-grade outdoor school.”

In 1999 the SFF organization took the year off after a financial loss.

Cornelius noted, “I think both Dick and I realized

that we needed some people with expertise in developing a program and bringing in sponsorships.”

Sandvik added, “We really needed to somehow tie the festival to the community. And it turns out the best way to do that is through education.”

The organizers of SFF did some restructuring and Kathy Deggendorfer came on board.

Cornelius noted, “Kathy was key in making things fly.”

“The festival was on rocky ground,” Deggendorfer said. “I didn’t want to see it go away and decided to help with sponsorships after they had pretty much decided to shut the festival down.”

Tisdel was approached by Deggendorfer and Sandvik with the idea of connecting the festival to the Sisters School District.

He said, “They came up with the name of Americana Project and Dick’s hope was, and I think it was probably Jim’s influence too, a historical cultural perspective of roots music and what that means to society today.”

In 2000 the first SFF poster image by Dennis McGregor was created, titled “Hands.”

McGregor said, “That first poster featured a guitar with several hands on the neck. The neck was of Breedlove Guitars, newly sponsoring the festival. The body was an old Martin, belonging to Dick Sandvik, co-founder. The past and the future were symbolized, hopefully giving identity to



PHOTO COURTESY SISTERS FOLK FESTIVAL

Dave Carter won the 1995 Sisters Folk Festival Songwriting Contest with his song “Gun-Metal Eyes.” The Festival helped launch Carter into a significant career in folk music before his untimely death in 2002.

the musical style the festival was featuring. The hands belonged to local friends, including Jim Cornelius and Valorie Wells Kennedy. The hands went from old to young, also symbolic of the music to be presented.”

In 2002 Painted Strings was created, which was the genesis of My Own Two Hands (MOTH).

Tisdel explained, “I was working with Kathy and we were trying to develop our ideas in the organization the best way possible. Painted Strings was a bunch of unplayable guitars that I had found at a place in Redmond, in a pawn shop. I bought them with the thought of fixing them up to let the students play. Kathy had just gotten back from the Albuquerque balloon festival and said, what if we took these and made them into art pieces and had kids as well as professional artists make them and then we’ll sell them.”

The Festival has evolved with the expansion of many outreach programs.

The local nonprofit supports The Americana Project, The Americana Song Academy, the Sisters Americana Community Luthier program, MOTH (a regional celebration of the arts and one of SFF’s largest fundraisers), The Song Academy for Youth and The Winter Concert Series.

The SFF brings attention to the rich mix of arts and culture that can be found in Sisters throughout the entire year.

Crista Munro, SFF executive director, told *The Nugget*, “One of the things that drew me to come to work for Sisters Folk Festival is the

amazing history of the organization — a 25-year history that was built over the years by a dedicated community of music lovers under the vision of a few key dedicated folks.

“I love to stand in front of the wall in our building

where every festival poster is hung — 24 years’ worth of them. Seeing how the event has grown and evolved since 1995 provides the inspiration to forge a path forward that builds on and honors the festival’s history.”

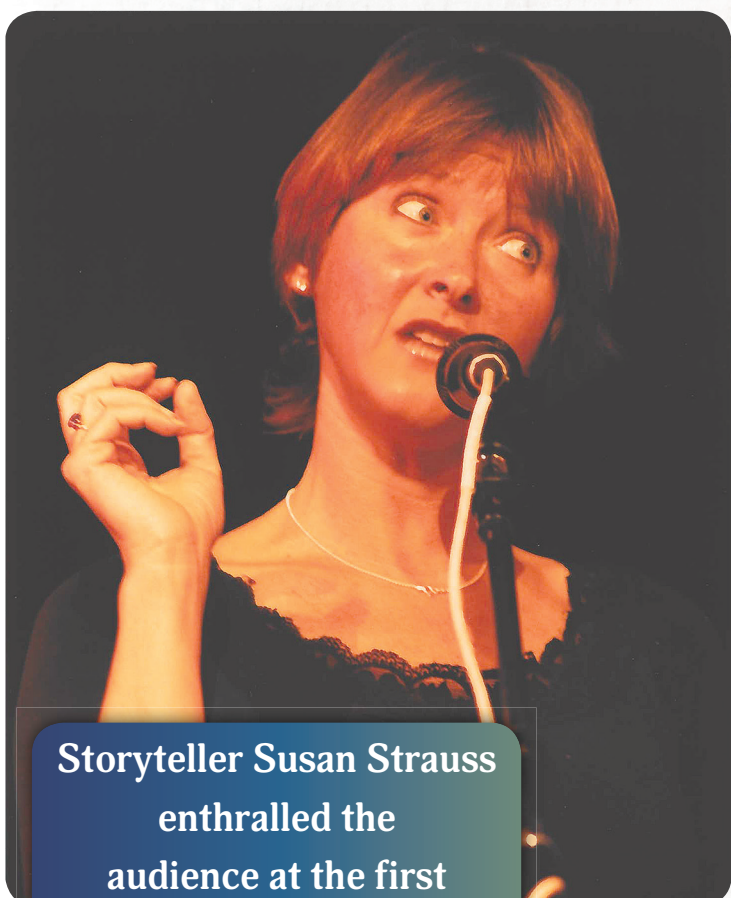


PHOTO COURTESY SFF

Storyteller Susan Strauss enthralled the audience at the first Sisters Folk Festival.

WE’D GIVE THE SHIRTS OFF OUR BACKS TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY!

A t-shirt sale to help raise funds for the Sisters Quilt Show and Sisters Folk Festival.

The t-shirts are \$20 each and available at Oliver Lemon’s in Sisters and online at oliverlemons.com. 100% of profits from the sale of the t-shirts will be shared by the Sisters Quilt Show and Sisters Folk Festival. The design features Oliver Lemon’s rooster Oliver, his sidekick chick Ollie and a little more cowbell offered up by Newport Market’s mascot.

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