

Taking care of artists is a top priority for Sisters Folk Festival

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

The life of a traveling musician can mean weeks on the road, away from the comforts of home and the support of family.

Sisters Folk Festival has been very intentional all the way back to the birth of the event about making the stay for the artists not only easy, but enjoyable.

Creative Director Brad Tisdell said, "When it's all said and done, this community of artists is relatively small, and festivals take on a certain reputation. I think if we treat artists with the respect that they deserve and provide them everything they want and need, they will then be in a position to give their best performance."

Tisdell said that some of the most important needs include paying them what's fair, providing the best accommodations the festival can afford, communicating in advance about what they need, and being attuned to how things are going once they arrive.

"We look to welcome the artists in a way that, right from the beginning, they sense our kindness, care, and community which, hopefully, sets up their entire time here to be very positive," he said.

Tisdell said that this level of care means artists can actually "dig in" to the community and eventually go out

and tell their friends about what a good experience they had in Sisters.

"We are told by many artists that Sisters is one of their favorite, if not *the* favorite festival, they come to and I think that the foundation for that is in our hospitality and care," said Tisdell.

AJ Lee of AJ Lee & Blue Summit was quite pleased with the food and drink supplied by the Festival in the greenroom. Lee joked, "The perpetually full candy dish has actually been my downfall, but seriously, the hospitality has been amazing."

The group stayed at Black Butte Ranch, and, according to band member Chad Bowen, the accommodations and food are the best they've experienced.

Lee said that she and Bowen had been discussing earlier in the day just how hard it is to travel and how easy things were going during the Festival.

"The food has been great, and even little things like being able to relax in the ambience of the courtyard with the decorative lights has been so nice," she said. "In our take, we said to each other, 'This is all worth it.'"

Two longtime volunteers for the Festival who are integral to the care of the artists are Marilyn Cornelius and her daughter Ceili, who act as the greenroom supervisor and greenroom lead, respectively. The greenroom is the

headquarters for artist nutrition and refreshment.

Marilyn, who describes herself as "one of those nurturing types of people" grew into the role of overseeing the nourishment needs of the artists as the Festival itself evolved. She has worked in some capacity of such care since the very start of the Festival back in 1995. Ceili, who was born in the earliest years of the Festival, tagged along through her childhood and as she reached adulthood took on bigger and bigger responsibilities.

The pair work closely with local food and beverage providers to stock the tables in the greenroom including, but not limited to, Sisters Coffee, Sisters Bakery, and Oliver Lemon's. Caterers are also hired to help ensure the variety of food needs required by the artists.

"We make sure that there is something nutritious and enjoyable for everyone," said Marilyn. "Our goal is that we become known as being a notch above what the artists experience at other places."

Ceili added, "Not a lot of festivals provide entire meals."

In total, about a dozen volunteers work together to support the greenroom, according to Marilyn.

"It's different from some

See **HOSPITALITY** on page 23



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

Emily Scott Robinson knows that the road can be a grind. She expressed her appreciation for Sisters' hospitality.

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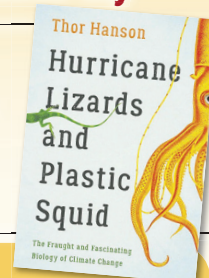
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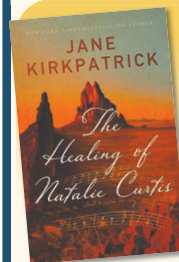
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