

MASTER: Navy veteran served during Bay of Pigs invasion

Continued from 1C

He and his wife Leanna do perform — he on guitar, she on dulcimer and piano, and both singing. They play at the weekly Fiddler's Nights at Avamere, a local retirement home. They have done music ministry for 45 years, at two Hermiston churches. McMasters occasionally plays other gigs around town, and the two of them perform at some music festivals throughout the year, including the Sacagawea Bluegrass Festival in the Tri-Cities and a Fourth of July festival in Fossil. They played in a country band for five years in Fossil.

McMasters had many careers before he began

making guitars.

"I signed up for the U.S. Navy, and my uncles were diesel mechanics," he said. "That's what I wanted to be."

Because of his experience in woodworking as a high school student, he was instead placed in pattern-making, as a precision woodworker. He would make wooden patterns, which would then be sent to the foundry to make sand molds for molten metal.

A native of Garfield, Washington, he served four years in the Navy, including at the Bay of Pigs Invasion in Cuba.

They were capable of reproducing major pieces of equipment — as large as a 30-foot propeller for

a ship. But a smaller item that McMasters still has holds special significance, as well. On a table in his shop, he still has the first thing he cast in the Navy — a small layout knife, with a handle fashioned into the shape of a knight's head.

He managed a Les Schwab in Fossil, and moved to Hermiston for the same job in 1977. He left, drove a truck and worked in concrete for a while, before going back to school to be an electrician. After working for several companies, he retired, and continued to work part-time, until he decided there was only one thing he wanted to do.

"Now, I spend all my time out here," he said.



Staff photos by E.J. Harris

Left: Les McMasters uses a block planer to shape the braces on the back of a guitar at his shop in Hermiston. Right: Les McMasters inspects his craftsmanship while profiling the neck for a guitar using a spindle sander at his shop in Hermiston.

WHAT TO DO

Festivals

Pendleton WinterFest
 •Saturday, Dec. 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 •Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate
www.sahpendleton.org/foundation/winterfest
 Free. The Family Day event features tree viewing and lots of holiday-related activities. (541-278-2627).

Holiday Barrel Tasting
 •Dec. 7-9
 •Various wineries in Milton-Freewater, Walla Walla region
www.wallowawallawine.com
 Some events free. Amidst the festive atmosphere of the season, winemakers and cellar staff provide samples of future releases straight from the wine barrel.

Winterfest Light Parade & Chili Feed
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; 6 p.m.
 •Downtown Pilot Rock
 Free. Enjoy the lighted parade followed by hot chocolate and a chili feed in the council chambers. (541-443-5832).

Welcome Santa Drive
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; 6-8 p.m.
 •Main Street Boardman to SAGE Center
 Free. SECO Pallets sleigh delivers Santa Claus to the SAGE Center parking lot, 101 Olson Road, for pictures, hot chocolate and goodies (541-303-3221).

Rise or Die Trying Tournament
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; 7-10 p.m.
www.prestigewrestling.net
 •Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 Airport Road, Hermiston
 \$10 via www.ticketweb.com
 Presented by Prestige Wrestling features eight wrestlers. Ticket sales benefits Cabins4Kids, to assist underprivileged kids to attend summer camp.

Melonsville Comedy Festival
 •Friday, Jan. 25; 8 p.m.
 •Eastern Oregon Trade & Event Center, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston
www.melonsvillecomedyfestival.com
 \$25/advance, \$35/priority seats. Features headliner Reno Collier, featured comedian Andrew Rivers and emcee Thomas Nichols.

Art, Museums & Authors

Art of the Gift
 •Tuesday-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturdays, noon-4 p.m.
 •Pendleton Center for the



Jill Cohn is on a regional tour performing folk-Americana. She will play Dec. 13 at 40 Taps in Pendleton.

Americana musician strums blissful folk

PENDLETON — A soul-stirring musician will perform what's been referred to as "folk Americana bliss" during a show in Pendleton.

Seattle-based Jill Cohn will play Thursday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. at 40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton. There is no cover charge.

Before swinging into the Round-Up City, Cohn will perform Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 8 p.m. at Ten Depot Street in La Grande.

In addition, while on tour promoting her new release, "Balanced on the Rail," she will play at additional regional ven-

ues in Walla Walla — Gard Vintners (Dec. 14, 5:30 p.m.), Sinclair Estate (Dec. 15, 7 p.m.), Olive Market (Dec. 20, 6 p.m.) and Northstar Winery (Dec. 28, noon-3 p.m.). Also, at Emerald of Siam in Richland (Dec. 29, 6 p.m.).

With nearly a dozen albums, Cohn has been a full-time musician since 1999. The *Los Feliz Journal* named her "Beautiful I Love You" album a top 10 indie pick of the year.

For more information about the Pendleton show, call 541-246-6772. For more about Cohn, visit www.jillcohn.com.

Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org
 Free. The holiday exhibit and art/craft sale runs through Dec. 31. (541-278-9201).

Christmas Art Show & Sale
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; Sunday, Dec. 9; 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
 •Oxford Suites, 1050 N. First St., Hermiston
 Free. Features paintings, jewelry, prints, Christmas cards, Western art and metalwork by local artists. Refreshments served

(janbeitel@outlook.com).
"Seeds of Culture: The Portraits and Voices of Native American Women"
 •Monday-Saturdays; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 •Tamástsiikt Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.
www.tamastsiikt.org
 \$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths. Matika Wilbur, a visual storyteller from the Swinomish and Tulalip peoples of coastal Washington, has been traveling and photographing Indi-

an Country as part of her Project 562. The portraits are accompanied by written narratives and audio of the interviews. Runs through Jan. 5.

Music

Funk Factory
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; 8 p.m. No cover
 •Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

Holiday Music Festival
 •Sunday, Dec. 9; 2 p.m.
 •Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
www.oregoneastsymphony.org
 \$25/adults, \$20/seniors, \$15/students, \$65/family. Presented by the Oregon East Symphony, program also features Our Songs Are Alive, the Pendleton Men's Chorus, Sisters in Song and the Pendleton Brass Quintet.

Elwood aka Colt Haney
 •Tuesday, Dec. 11; 7 p.m.
 •Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
 No cover. All ages. From the Blue Mountains of Cascadia, Elwood offers all natural folk 'n' soul music.

Live Music Thursday-Jill Cohn
 •Thursday, Dec. 13; 7-9 p.m.
 •40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton
 No cover. Seattle-based musician performs folk-Americana music.

Sum People
 •Friday, Dec. 14; 6:30-9:30 p.m. No cover.
 •Nookie's/Hermiston Brewing Co., 125 N. First St., Hermiston

The Real Deal
 •Friday, Dec. 14; Saturday, Dec. 15; 8 p.m. No cover
 •Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

Great Pacific Xmas Pageant
 •Sunday, Dec. 16; time TBA
 •Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
 No cover. All ages. Features a variety of regional musical acts amping up the holiday season (541-276-1350).

Christmas by the Campfire
 •Tuesday, Dec. 18; 7 p.m.
 •Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org
 \$10. Western musician Barbara Nelson of Pendleton gathers around the campfire with regional musicians Peter Willis, National Oldtime Fiddle champion Dan Emert and bass player Lori Brogotti. (541-278-9201). (see story this page)

Bart Budwig & his band
 •Tuesday, Dec. 18; 7 p.m.

•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
 No cover. All ages. With more than 150 national/international shows per year and seven full-length records, Bart Budwig has become a mainstay of the Pacific Northwest music scene — and beyond.

Night life

Saturday Night Trivia
 •Saturdays; 9 p.m.
 •Midway Bar & Grill, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston
 Free. Show what you know for fun and prizes.

Karaoke w/DJ David
 •Saturdays; 8 p.m.
 •Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

'80s Throwback Party
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; 9 p.m.
 •The Pheasant Blue Colar Bar & Grill, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
 No cover. Bring back the big hair and party like it's 1980-89.

Fugly Sweater & Bad Santa Party
 •Friday, Dec. 14; 9 p.m.
 •The Pheasant Blue Colar Bar & Grill, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
 No cover. Drag out the ugly sweater and get ready for a "bad" time.

Christmas Charity Pool Tournament
 •Saturday, Dec. 15; 2 p.m.
 •Midway Bar & Grill, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston
 \$10/person. Benefits Harkerider Senior Activity Center. Also features a raffle, including a Traeger grill. Taco bar for \$5. (541-567-5180).

Wino Wednesdays
 •Wednesdays, 2-6 p.m.
 •Echo Ridge Cellars, 551 N. Thielsen St., Echo

Karaoke at the Packard
 •1st/3rd Wednesday, 9 p.m.-midnight
 •The Packard Tavern, 118 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
 No cover.

Wine Wednesday
 •Wednesday, Dec. 12, 5-7 p.m.
 •The Gathering Place at Bellinger's, 1823 S. Highway 395, Hermiston
 No cover. Features tasting and music.

Christmas-themed Trivia Night
 •Wednesday, Dec. 19; 7 p.m.
 No cover
 •40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton
 No cover. Brush up on holiday knowledge. Ugly sweaters welcome. (541-246-6772).

Thirsty Thursdays
 •Third Thursday; 6 p.m.
 •Midway Bar & Grill, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston

No cover. Hosts a local brewery offering tastings and food pairings.

Get Festive Trivia
 •Thursday, Dec. 20; 7 p.m.
 No cover
 •Mac's Bar & Grill, 1400 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
 21-and-older. Holiday cheer and Trivia. Teams of 2-8 compete with other teams. Live host and prizes, including for best holiday team name and best costume.

Theater, stage, film & lectures

"Nutcracker"
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; 1 p.m., 7 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 9; 1 p.m.
 •Richland High School, 930 Long Ave.
www.midcolumbiaballet.org
 \$14-28. The holiday classic is presented by the Mid-Columbia Ballet. With limited seats remaining, people should buy in advance.

"Shamrock Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre"
 •Saturday, Dec. 8; 6:30 p.m.
 •Pendleton Underground Tours, 31 S.W. Emigrant Ave.
www.pendletonundergroundtours.org
 \$75/21-and-older. Reservations required. Interactive event also features food/beverages catered by Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery. (541-276-0730).

"How The Grinch Stole Christmas"
 •Friday, Dec. 21; 7:15 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 22; 2:15 p.m.
 •SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman
www.visitsage.com
 \$5/person. The Grinch will be on hand 30 minutes before show. Admission includes free bag of popcorn. Concessions available for cash purchase.

Hot tickets

•**Jo Koy**. Dec. 14, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Tickets (\$37-\$47) via www.ticketmaster.com.

•**Mark O'Connor & Friends**. An Appalachian Christmas. Dec. 16, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Tickets (\$29-\$40) via www.ticketmaster.com.

•**Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band**. Feb. 2, Moda Center, Portland. Tickets (\$49-\$125+) via www.ticketmaster.com.

•**The Rolling Stones**. No Filter Tour. May 22, CenturyLink Field, Seattle. Tickets (\$94-\$494+) via www.ticketmaster.com.

Want to get your event listed in our calendar? Send information to community@eastoregonian.com, or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.



Caroline International via AP

Van Morrison's latest finds him in relaxed, swinging groove

The first thing longtime listeners to Van Morrison will notice is the lack of angst — his 40th studio album is missing the usual complaints about the greed and cynicism of the music business. The next and most remarkable aspect is the relaxed, easy groove that permeates through "The

Prophet Speaks," which finds Morrison relishing his relatively recent incarnation as a jazz singer backed by an expressive, moody band.

It's rather remarkable that Morrison has been singing for well over half a century and he's rarely sounded so comfortable and unforced. He's once again using

the considerable talents of Joey DeFrancesco and his band. The results are impressive, with 73-year-old Morrison focusing on the feel and texture of each song rather than seeking the revelatory, soul-stretching crescendos of some of his earlier works. He seems to have found a style that

fits him as he ages, a blend of instruments, including Hammond organ and horns, that could have been heard in the late 1950s but sounds perfectly fresh today.

There are a few straightforward covers of old favorites, including John Lee Hooker's "Dimples" and Solomon Burke's "Gotta

Get You Off My Mind," that let Morrison pay tribute to departed performers he used to share with. A half-dozen new songs — including "Spirit Will Provide" and the title track — conjure up Morrison's more mystical approach to lyrics and arrangement. — *Associated Press*