



People sample leather tools Friday, Nov. 5, 2021, at the Pendleton Convention Center during the Pendleton Leather Show. Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Leather:

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Shaw was going to run last year's event for the first time, but then the pandemic hit and canceled nearly all events. She said she was glad to have had an extra year to prepare.

"They were all very, very pleased," Shaw said of the exhibitors

They included Salzman, of Hermann Oaks. He joined the 141-year-old company to learn its age-old tanning techniques, a style of leather work known to few worldwide, and which he describes as creating a "canvas for the artisans." It's a rare practice because it takes between a month to two months and costs hundreds of dollars. Now, he travels around for the company, educating customers about their techniques.

Only a few exhibits away, at GRS Tools, an artist used a high-tech system that looked somewhat like a microscope. It was essentially an air-assisted jack hammer that engraves designs into metal. The company ships such products to countries worldwide, including Russia and China.

"It's one of the most interesting jobs I've ever had," said Chelsey Kessler, a sales representative.

Kessler said she enjoyed the family atmosphere that surrounds the leather industry.

"This whole show is a great atmosphere," Kessler said.

It's that family atmosphere that brought the Sam Farring's family to the leather show. A retired mechanic from Prineville, he came to the event to spend time with them and support his sons, who are interested in leathermaking.

Terry and Cindy Morgan, a couple from Prosser, Washington, who have been to the leather show multiple times, said every time they attend, they see people they've met over the years through horses and ranching. They, too, said they appreciate how the event brings out Pendleton's culture and history.

"I'm so glad they keep doing this," said Cindy Morgan, who purchased materials to make a new pair of chaps. "This is central to our livelihood."



Sample stampings sit alongside leather working tools Friday, Nov. 5, 2021, at the Pendleton Leather Show in the Pendleton Convention Center. Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian



Leather tools glisten Friday, Nov. 5, 2021, at the Pendleton Leather Show at the Pendleton Convention Center. Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian



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A portrait of Herb Bork's unit rests in an album of photos from his service at Guadalcanal in World War II on Nov. 2, 2021, in Pendleton.

Bork:

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"I was very fortunate I didn't get any scars from it," Bork said of his service.

Meanwhile, he wrote letters to nine women back home. Their correspondence was "good for morale," he said, especially while other troops lost contact with their loved ones. But none of those women were the girl Bork met in college shortly before his service. The one he'd see again upon his return home.

Fortune found him once again when he traveled home on a 45-day furlough. One day, he picked up the local paper and saw the war was over. He was relieved he wouldn't be going back. That day, he recalled going huckleberry picking with family in the Blue Mountains near Meacham.

Not long after, Bork was teaching math at a school in Granger, Washington, when he met a fellow teacher. Her name was Nadene.

Leaving for a new home

Last week, Bork sat in his cluttered living room, preparing to move out after more than 50 years in his Pendleton home.

Piles of his belongings filled the room — photo albums, books, clocks, holiday decorations. In one stack, a book called "Health Secrets for Seniors" sat below a book entitled "Say No To Nursing Homes."

His phone rang. It's a customer he seems to know well. Sorry to hear about your wife, the customer said. Nadene Bork died in January, two weeks after suffering a stroke during breakfast. She was 98.

The customer's wife also recently died. The two speak briefly about losing their loved ones. The conversation stalls. They move on and talk about Bork's business. They bid each other well. Bork hung up and returned to flipping through his photo albums.

When Nadene died, Bork said he found solace and support through church. He met with a group of about 30 congregants, encouraging each other through their grief.

"You appreciate that, and you hope nobody goes through those things alone," he said.

Now, Bork is moving out to live with his son in Benton, Washington. His family doesn't want him living alone, he said. Living there without Nadene, he said he notices the empty chairs and empty tables.

Behind him is a career as a teacher, school administrator, leather worker and businessman.

"You hate to see it go," Bork said. "We had a good life here in Pendleton."

Still, Bork said he's looking forward to being around his family, including his two great grandsons, just 5 and 7 years old.



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World War II veteran Herb Bork holds a stack of letters he received while stationed at Guadalcanal on Nov. 2, 2021, in the living room of his Pendleton home. The letters, he said, were mostly written by girls from home.

Students:

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Making things is fun, she said, but she does not expect to use this skill in her career. For her, like her sister, this work is mostly a hobby.

Anderholm is one of four girls, 32 students total, in her CAD class, she said. She added that she is the only girl in her construction class, but it did not bother her.

"I'm usually put in a situation where I'm the only girl,"

she said. "I grew up with it, so I guess I'm used to it."

She added, "I know my stuff," so she said she believes people do not treat her differently than they do her male classmates. Still, she said, she would like to see more girls in the programs with her. As with her sister, who brought her into this field, she said she hopes to bring other people into it.

Working alongside her, Hannah Melville, 18-year-old senior, said she also is fine with being one of the

few female students in her classes.

"It's a little sad," she said, shrugging, "but what can you do?"

She first became interested in engineering when she was in middle school. She learned robotics, then, from John Fisher, HHS teacher.

She wants to be a mechanical/aerospace engineer, she said.

Meanwhile, 15-year-old sophomore Kaleb LaBarge was demonstrating virtual reality technology. This

equipment, which simulated welding, is used for beginning teaching or for when a student is unprepared to practice with actual welding in the school's shop.

LaBarge's history with welding began with his dad, who gave him his earliest lessons. He has helped make a ramp, a smoker trailer and parts for other school projects. This work may help him

in his intended career, millwright.

"I like building and working with stuff," he said.

Tom Spoo, principal, said he was happy to invite parents and students into Hermiston High to see "things they have never seen before." Some of these things, which are available to his students, are not offered at some colleges, Spoo said.

The principal boasted of his school, discussing the nationally recognized FFA program, welding technology, Hispanic outreach and more. This work was on display at the conference.

He said he believed people in attendance would gain a new respect for the school and its students.

"They're doing great things," he said.



Malin Tovey, a senior at Hermiston High School, takes a blood pressure Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2021, during a career technical education night at the high school. Tovey, who has taken the schools health care classes for several years, wants to pursue a career as a health teacher. Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

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