

ARTS & CULTURE

Home for the holiday

Contributed by Janet Hansen

Debbie Mills Hoopes is coming home to share her gift; the Cottage Grove artist is the first to exhibit at Boho Chateau in Oakridge.

Friendships made in Oakridge last a lifetime, especially those made in childhood. There's a bond of trust and respect rarely broken.

For a couple of women who grew up together as family friends in the heart of the timbered empire, it's not a stretch to say their individual creative streaks were fueled by nature, not culture.

Debbie Hoopes (pronounced "hoops") is the featured artist in the first art exhibit hosted by Boho Chateau on Saturday, Dec. 4 from 2 to 6 p.m. at 48319 E. First Street.

This exhibit was postponed and rescheduled due to the wildfires surrounding Oakridge last August, but what better time to reschedule than during the holiday season when everyone is

shopping and hearts are full of hope.

Hoopes, who resides in Cottage Grove, is a mixed media and impressionistic painter whose work mirrors the essence of rural Oregon with a contemporary feel.

Motifs of horses, trees, flowers, and women in vibrant colors and earth tones run through Hoopes paintings. Her work has been featured in shops and art walks in Cottage Grove and the Willamette Valley under her business name, The Rusty Chandelier.

Debbie grew up with Boho Chateau's principal, Janet Hansen. Hansen's parents, Jim and Jeanie Stout, moved to Oakridge from Newport in 1958. At the time, Hoopes' parents John and Mary Mills lived on Y Drive next door to Claire Crook, a popular elementary teacher.

"My mother confirmed the Mills family was the first we met when we moved to Oakridge directly across the street from them," Hansen said.

Both families later moved outside the city limits. The Mills moved to High Prairie and the Stouts to McFarland Road. Living in the country meant riding horses across the Prairie and old ranches where housing developments now stand along Mountain View and Elk Meadows.

While listening to someone explain to Hoopes where they live on High Prairie, Debbie replied, "I know exactly where you live. I rode my horse through the woods there for years."

"Debbie has always had a distinct artistic flair," says Hansen. "Physically beautiful, we always thought she'd become a model with her height, and chiseled features. It was obvious growing up she had something special to offer the world and I'm thrilled to finally host this first exhibit. That it's Debbie's work gives it special meaning."

Hoopes and Hansen attended Oakridge schools, overlapping the largest part of their education with

Hoopes graduating from Oakridge High School in 1972 and Hansen in 1975.

"Boho Chateau is becoming a hub for longtime friends to reconnect in ways we're not able to in other communities," Hansen says. "This is our home, and we all love being here whether permanently or for visits. These bonds of friendship are among the most valuable things we have, and we recognize how lucky we are to have such wonderful relationships."

Hoopes' exhibit coincides with:

- The Sugar Plum Festival at Oakridge Elementary from Dec. 4, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. to Dec. 5, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- First Street Holiday Market at the Oakridge Museum on Dec. 3 and 4, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Those interested can follow Deborah Hoopes on Facebook at www.facebook.com/deborah.hoopes.3

Follow Boho Chateau on Facebook at www.facebook.com/boho.chateau.

A Thankful Holiday Art Walk

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GREG LEE

November's Art Walk added an artistic flair to the Thanksgiving holiday on Nov. 26, giving Grovers a chance to enjoy a blend of local shopping and local talent.



Mentor Heather Greene (center) with the Design Apprenticeship Program helped present the work of 9th grader Ella Ronan (left) and 6th grader Nikolas Trout (right) with "biomimic" artwork.



Forest Rolnick-Withol shows off their paintings at The Bookmine.



Paula Goodbar showcased her talents with a "Magical Holiday Pop-up" at the Opal Center.

Harpies' anthology reading planned at Opal

Local creative writing group, the Cottage Grove Harpies, has recently published an anthology of short stories, essays, and poems written by local authors. The book is titled "Language of Shadows" and is available at Amazon and Kindle, as well as at the Bookmine and Kalapuya Books downtown.

"With this anthology, we're hoping to lure local writers out of the woodwork and to build a bit of a writer's community," said Harpy Ken Roe.

The group is hosting an evening of authors reading from the book on Saturday, Dec. 11 at the Opal Center for Arts and Education, starting at 7 p.m.

"The reading will help us spread the word about this exciting project," said James Burke, Harpies member and prolific novelist. "We're grateful to the Opal for hosting us, especially so close to the holidays."

The event is free and

open to the public, though donations to the Opal Center are always appreciated.

Questions and concerns about the reading may be emailed to cgharpies@gmail.com. More information about the Harpies can be found at www.cgharpies.com.

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