

## Only the Best at Thousand Springs

By Andrew Weeks - [aweeks@magicvalley.com](mailto:aweeks@magicvalley.com) | Posted: Friday, September 23, 2011 1:50 am

HAGERMAN • You know fall is in the air whenever there's music at Thousand Springs State Park.

There'll be music this weekend at the Thousands Springs Festival of the Arts, where people from across southern Idaho and beyond will gather for the sights and sounds of this annual fundraiser.

You can browse the booths of art and homemade crafts, visit a variety of food vendors, go for a ride in a canoe or wagon and listen to live music at this family-friendly festival Saturday and Sunday. Your little ones can have their faces painted or paint a pumpkin.

Even if you've been here before, there's something new to see this year.

"We always have new people coming, new artists," said Betsy Morishita, artisans coordinator. "I think it's always really great to get new artists in here and new ideas. We're always looking for that."

Some familiar faces — such as Heyburn resident Cindy Fulcher with her homemade soaps and Bill and Sheryl West of Jerome and their custom pottery — will return this year as well.

Sixty-two artisans will be featured at the festival. One of them, Bob Rodman of Fairfield, will display his handcrafted jewelry. Rodman started making jewelry in about 1970, when he moved here from California.

He liked Idaho. "I still do," he said. "When I heard it was called the Gem State, I got real curious."

Rodman uses mostly gold and silver but other Idaho products as well, such as smoky quartz and obsidian. "There's a lot of obsidian in the Snake River."

Rodman considers the Thousand Springs festival one of the best in the state.

"I love the festival," he said. "I think that it, at least in southern Idaho, is the most sincere show around."

Morishita said a lot of work goes into the weekend event, which she starts planning for in March.

"I think it's a unique festival," she said, "and we have a really good cause behind it."

The festival raises money for the Southern Idaho Land Trust, a nonprofit that seeks to preserve public lands.

More than 100 volunteers help run the festival, said volunteer coordinator Terrell Williams. But it's the artisans and musicians who make it a success.

"We really do try to keep the quality up," said festival organizer Julie Pence. "We try to have professional craftsmen and artisans at the show. We're not really seeking out people who do something just as a pastime."

The musicians always are a hit, she said, and add to the outdoor atmosphere. This year's headliner will be Grammy-nominated Steve Eaton. Other live music will include acoustical guitars, blues, jazz and more.

If the weather is decent, Pence expects more than 4,000 people to visit the two-day festival.

"There's always a lot of variety and the food is amazing," Pence said. "And then, of course, the setting is spectacular."

### Soap Maker

Forget the morning coffee. If you need a little boost in the morning, try showering with peppermint soap.

"It'll wake you up," said Cindy Fulcher, a former chemist who now makes soap and body lotions at her home in Heyburn.

Fulcher started last year and already has made a name for herself in the valley. Customers like the all-natural products, she said.

"There's nothing synthetic about them," she said. "I always had an interest in soap, and last year I had some extra time and so I started to indulge in it."

She'll sell a variety of her homemade products at the Thousand Springs Festival — her favorite such event in the valley — including the red peppermint soap pictured here.

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### **Potters' Clay**

Need a new set of dinnerware? If so, you'll want to see Bill and Sheryl West's assortment of pottery.

The Jerome couple started making pottery in 1975. The Wests do it all — from spinning the clay to firing the pieces in kilns.

Cups, platters and bowls seem to be most popular at their booth during the Thousand Springs Festival, Sheryl said.

The festival, Sheryl said, is all about the atmosphere. "This is the nicest in the valley. It seems more festive. There's more music and food, and some people hang around all day hiking and going on canoe rides."

### **Handcrafted Jewelry**

There's plenty of jewelry on the market today, but how much of it is made from bits of Idaho? Here's a jewelry maker who uses gems from the Gem State.

"I really like to use Idaho material," said Fairfield resident Bob Rodman, who calls himself an "amateur homemade geologist." He uses a lot of gold and silver but also emeralds, jasper, obsidian, smoky quartz and topaz.

He plans to bring about 150 handcrafted items to the festival this weekend, including gold and silver rings, necklaces and earrings.

"Women, you know, really like that stuff."

Some of the necklaces are adorned with pictures of mountain landscapes.

Rodman said the festival is a good place to meet people, enjoy the outdoors and promote his crafts.

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Photo courtesy JULIE PENCE



Magic Valley photographer Jerry Kencke visits with a shopper at the 2009 Thousand Springs Festival of the Arts. Kencke, who specializes in capturing the West's subtle beauty, makes frames that are as much a part of the art as the photos inside them.

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## If You Go

**Posted: Friday, September 23, 2011 1:50 am**

The Thousand Springs Festival of the Arts, held at Ritter Island in the Thousand Springs State Park complex near Hagerman, will be 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$3 for children ages 5-12.

Directions: Take Interstate 84 to Wendell Exit No. 155 and follow the handmade signs.

More info: For a complete list of the artisans and musicians and a schedule, visit [thousandspringsfestival.org](http://thousandspringsfestival.org).