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Live from Wonder Valley, it's Fringe Fest

By Kurt Schauppner May 19, 2022 9:38 AM The Desert Trail

WONDER VALLEY — Music, poetry, tarot cards, performance art and short movies were all part of the mix when the Hi-Desert Fringe Fest returned to in-person performances Saturday, May 14, at the Tower Homestead.

Jenn Henry performs a Pa De Poubelles with a trash can at the Hi-Desert Fringe Fest Saturday, May 14, in Wonder Valley.

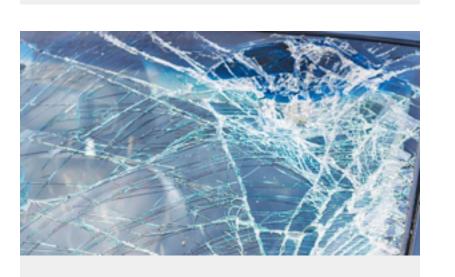
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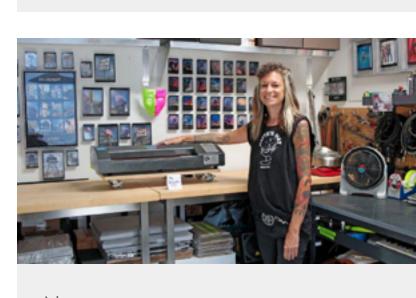
Organizers will likely have to find a new home as property owner Robin Anaya has said she will not host the event again.



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Facebook message Monday morning.

"Now that I experienced what Fringe is about, I choose not to take part in hosting a place for this group," she wrote in a

"I am a Christian and I love all he stands for and the foul language, blasphemy, tarot card reading (I was never told about) are choices I don't want to listen to nor be associated with," she wrote. "So this is why I choose not to host another Fringe Fest."

Writers from local magazine Cholla Needles and The Desert Split Open poetry reading series shared their work.

Catherine Barnes and Patricia West-Del Ruth both channeled multiple characters when telling highly personal stories. Dancer Jenn Henry shared the stage with a trash can while performing a piece titled "Pas De Poubelles."

Roy Boucher, who held ongoing tarot card workshops, also shared a pair of short movies, including one about an

awkward event at a birthday party. Allen Merritt channeled Oily Bob Brown to talk about the signs people encounter in the world while Sue Neal channeled

Lilith who, according to Jewish folklore, was Adam's first wife. The festival, celebrating its fifth year, was created by Miri Hunter and Ann Van Haney. It was performed at the Joshua Tree

Retreat Center on multiple days for two years before moving online in 2020 and 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monday morning, Van Haney said she thought this year's festival, a one-day event, went really well.

"It was a really successful return to an in-person event," she said. "We had a really appreciative audience. Our hosts at the Tower Homestead were wonderful to work with."

She estimated that about 50 people attended over the course of the event, which started at 3 p.m. and ended a little after 10.

"We'll start planing for next year," Van Haney said. "We want to do a longer festival next year, possibly returning to three days. We would love to be in a place where we can have multiple performances taking place simultaneously."

She added that she got some good feedback from audience members.

"People loved having an in-person event again," she said.

One person who enjoyed the day was audience member and presenter Rich Soos, founder of Cholla Needles magazine.

"I'm usually in bed early and seriously thought I was going to leave around 8," he said Monday afternoon.

"But since I was there earlier and found the event exhilarating and inspiring, I stayed till and the end am very happy I did. The performers were all varied and professional and energy was contagious. I actually stayed up two hours after getting home at 11 — took that long to wind down from all the adrenaline."



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