Al & Ann Stohlman Award Foundation
2018 Awards Presentation

2018 Al Stohlman Award recipient James Jackson

On the evening of Saturday, May 19, at 7:30 p.m., an enthusiastic crowd filled the atrium at Sheridan College's Whitney Academic Center – with standing room only left for the Sheridan Honors Night presentations of this year's World Leather Debut awards and the Al & Ann Stohlman Awards.

The Ann Stohlman Youth Award was awarded to two deserving young ladies. The first one to be awarded went to Amelia Rose Geist from Bend, Oregon. She is a high school senior, having created a wide variety of leather projects learned from belonging to her local 4-H club. This activity has been an inspiration for starting her own business that she plans to continue while pursuing an elementary teaching education. She plans to also teach after-school leather craft classes when she becomes a teacher.

The second youth award was presented to 16-year-old Mackenzie Matarozzo from Cullbran, Colorado. By doing leathercraft since the age of eight, she has accomplished a list of leather projects that have won ribbons at the 4-H county and state fairs, including entries in the World Leather Debut. Her favorite part of 4-H is helping younger kids start leathercraft. This tenacious young woman has not let muscular dystrophy stop her from doing leatherwork or conducting classes and demos for the club, plus establishing a miniature horse business, breeding and training them to be therapy animals for hospitals, hospices and rehabilitation centers.

The Al Stohlman Award for Achievement in Leathercraft recipient was James (Jim) F. Jackson of Sheridan, Wyoming. He has been creating with leather all his life, learning the basics of "this rewarding and complex trade" by working with his father, head saddle maker at Ernst's Saddlery in Sheridan, Wyoming. He credits Bill Gardner for giving him insight into the tools and methods used in designing and building leatherwork. He pursued a career in the Fine Arts, earning Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts degrees at the University of Wyoming. While there, he taught design classes and was curator of exhibits in the university's art museum, along with tooling belts and doing special order leatherwork for King's Saddlery.

2018 Ann Stohlman Award recipients
Amelia Rose Geist & Mackenzie Matarozzo

Moving back to Wyoming in 1989, he spent 30 years working full time for King's Saddlery, while continuing to create works of art in his home studio. The time spent working in the Kings' shop he considers to have been a privilege and honor. Over the past 35 years, he has completed works for Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, as well as for Anthony Hopkins, Ted Turner, David Letterman, Tom Selleck, Wilford Brimley, Robert Redford, Lyle Lovett, Tommy Lee Jones and many more. He has conducted lectures and demos about the process of leather carving, taught classes and seminars at the Rocky Mountain Leather Trade Show, "Gathering of the Masters", Los Angeles, the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, and most recently in Tokyo, Nara and Kyoto, Japan. In 2017 he was named Master Leather Artisan of the Year by the Academy of Western Artists. Jim has moved his workspace to the world-class Brinton Museum near Big Horn, Wyoming, where he continues to create and teach.

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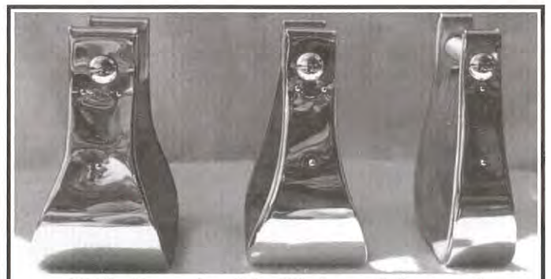
Jim's heartfelt speech struck a chord with everyone in attendance.

Amelia Rose and Mackenzie each received an education grant of $750.00, and Jim was presented with a grant for $1,500. These grants were made possible from tax-deductible donations received this year from the following individuals and companies:

Barry King Tools, Bee Natural Leathercare, C.S. Osborne, Hermann Oak Leather Co., Horse Shoe Brand Tools, Tony & Kay Laier, Leather Machine Co., Inc., Jim & Denise Linnell, Loon Creek Leather, Schwarz Custom Saddles, Slickbald Customs, Springfield Leather, Steel Stamps USA, Sullco, Weaver Leather and Y-Knot Lace.

- Contributed by Dot Reis and Tony Laier
- Photography by Gordon Andrus

Past Al & Ann Stohlman Award recipients congratulate Jim Jackson.



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Shop-Hacks Added Value to Small Leather Scraps

With Serge Volken

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

On one of those days when I had no orders – or let's admit it, none that I wanted to work on that day – I was wondering what to do with my leather scraps. Incidentally, I also needed a cup for some of my newly aquired Japanese brushes. Those of you old enough to have taken pictures before digital cameras will remember the film canisters (**Fig. 1**). Nope, those aren't mini Tupperware®!

The canisters still can be found at local photo shops developing films for the hard core, analogue photographers. They are just the perfect size for a small bunch of pencils or paint brushes. Only problem is, they tip easy, if not all the time.

After looking around in my shop I gathered a few things: a small pile of leather scraps, a film canister and a round punch that happens to have just the right diameter – big enough to punch a hole for the canister to fit (**Fig. 2**).

So, first, I gathered a pile of small scraps selected for their approximately similar size and punched a hole in the middle of each one (**Fig. 3**). Then, I glued layer after layer on top of each other. In order to have the holes match exactly I would stick them over the film canister as I was building it up. It is important to do a good glue job so that none of the layers comes partially loose (**Fig. 4**).

Once my pile was high enough to cover the canister, I used a very sharp knife that I won at the Sheridan Honors Night raffle last year. Smaller corners shaved off easily with that blade, but for larger sections I used a serrated kitchen knife that actually should have danger signs printed all over it because it can take a quite bite out of nearly anything (**Fig. 5**).

Now came the time-consuming part: sanding and shaping the whole thing, starting with very rough sandpaper and using a finer grit as I went along (**Fig. 6**). I left the film canister in the center of the leather to consolidate the whole structure, knowing some of the rings were

FIGURE 4

FIGURE 5

FIGURE 6