



Feature Friday:



**Written by Ruth Mayo
Photos by Celia Austin**

Sandalwood and Sage has been at its current location on downtown Main Street in Norman for about seven years, and part of the Welcoming Project for so long the well-worn Welcoming Sign has had to be continually taped back up!

Entering the shop the first thing you notice, besides all the incredibly unique items, is the warm welcome. You can find Natasha Rice or Deborah Clark, the owners, in the store most days, greeting every customer with a smile. Sandalwood and Sage is one place where everyone can relax and enjoy their shopping experience.



Natasha Rice, co-owner of Sandalwood and Sage

Between the two of them, Deborah and Natasha have about twenty-two years of retail experience. Deborah owned Prairie Moons, which specialized in southwestern gifts and imports, and Natasha owned Mystic Forest Treasures. That may explain Sandalwood and Sage's enticing mixture of southwestern style and progressive spiritual interests. The store offers not only a safe haven for those with different beliefs and interests, but also items that cannot be found at just any store in the community.

This is one shopping experience that truly offers a little *something* for everyone. With a surprisingly wide variety including gems, jewelry, clothing, rocks, birthday



cards and books on topics ranging from Wicca to Yoga, finding a unique gift or must-have item is an easy and exciting endeavor.

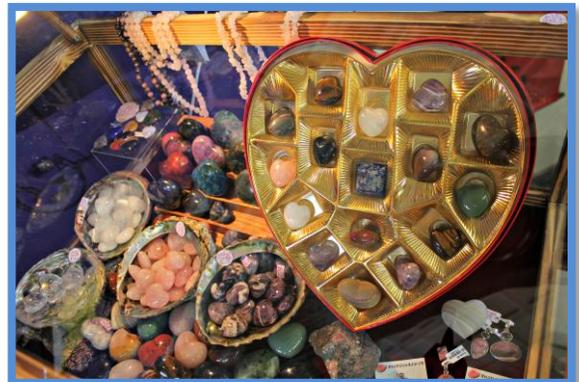
Several classes on many topics are open to the community, such as the popular TED Talks discussion group, or Pathways, a pagan and earth-centered monthly meeting. There are also classes and meetings for those with other interests, including art workshops and much more.



On the second Friday of every month Sandalwood and Sage, with many other stores on downtown Main Street, participates in the Art Walk. The Art Walk allows Natasha and Deborah to both give back to their community and spend some quality time with their customers. Sandalwood and Sage usually begins at 6p and ends at 10pm. During the event, the store showcases local artists from different backgrounds and usually has live music as well. Each month a new artist is showcased. March 13th, 2015, local potter Dan Harris was featured at the store. Ladies at Play, who play folk and Celtic music, performed too. It is a wonderful chance to see some of the amazing local talent and meet new people. It's always a fun event, so mark your calendars for next month!



Natasha and Deborah have created an environment that is welcoming to all members of the community because they truly believe in and embrace diversity. Natasha emphasized the importance of the Welcoming Sign in their store. Firstly, they wanted to be sure that their store was supportive and safe for everyone. Secondly, the sign provides a chance to stand beside their beliefs and who they are. Hopefully by doing so, it will work to unify and improve a community that they love. Natasha described how seeing the signs around Norman made her feel, and I believe it's a feeling with which many can relate. It makes your heart happy.



Please join The Welcoming Project at Sandalwood and Sage to celebrate our 4th anniversary on May 2, 2015 from 2-4pm.