

# Life *in the* Valley

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## Life and love through a theater lens

ANNETTE UTZ  
FOR THE STAYTON MAIL

Moving day is not the most pleasant of occasions, even in the best of circumstances.

Aumsville Community Theatre presents the promises and pitfalls of the experience with its tender comedy "Things My Mother Taught Me," opening May 6.

Olivia (Stephanie Bednarz) and Gabe (Jason Miles) have just packed up all their belongings and driven half-way across the country to move into their first apartment together. Gabe has also packed a surprise for Olivia as part their new life: an engagement ring.

When both sets of parents suddenly emerge to offer assistance, things become much more complicated and it sets off a series of unfortunate situations. The introduction of a quirky building superintendent (Terri Swanson) doesn't improve the scenario. Throughout it all, however, touching, supportive exchanges help ease the bumpy road.

Shannon Rempel, who co-directs with Beverly Wilson, said they have taken a slightly different approach with this version of the show.

"We've all had parental figures of some sort and, in practice, have all thought we were never going to be like them. Then, as real life happens, we find ourselves doing just that," she said. "In this case, Stephanie's parents (Linda Cashin and Craig Kalepp) are in their forties and Gabe's parents (Darlene Delaney and Richard Leppig) started later in life and are now in their sixties. What we have, then, is actually two different generation gaps."

She noted that the cast cohesiveness is what has makes it work.

"We have a great combination of characters and a good balance of seasoned actors and newcomers," she said. "Together, this cast has really become a family. They have been working really hard and are very supportive of each other ... I think the audience will find their interactions endearing and true. It's all about growing up and putting into practice what we've learned."

Jason Miles is one of the newcomers involved. While he has done some improv with the group, this is his first role in a stage play.

"It's been a lot of fun. I've done some of ACT's murder mysteries but this full performance is more like a full-time job," he said. "It's been a ball though and the everybody has been really supportive."

Bednarz echoes the sentiments about the cast unity.

"It's been an incredible experience, especially working with Jason since we are actually a couple," she said. "It's been great to work with him, help him grow into his role and fall in love even more with him on stage."



Terri Swanson as Max, from left, Richard Leppig as Wyatt Lawson, Darlene Delaney as Lydia Lawson, Jason Miles as Gabe Lawson and Stephanie Bednarz as Olivia Keegan, rehearse "Things My Mother Taught Me" at the Aumsville Community Theatre in Stayton on Thursday.



"Things My Mother Taught Me" runs May 6 - 22 at the Aumsville Community Theatre.

"ACT is like a family to me. We all work really well together," she said. "I've learned a lot about the people around me and developing relationships and it's reflected in the play. For example, there's a lot of tension between my character and her mother. We want so badly to be different from each other but eventually we end up accepting each other for who we are."

Miles believes that guests will come away from the production with more than they anticipate.

"I think the audience will go in expecting to be entertained, but I think



While Jason Miles has done improv with the group, this is his first role in a stage play.



Co-director Shannon Rempel said the play is all about growing up.

### If you go

**What:** "Things My Mother Taught Me"

**When:** 7 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays, May 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 (sold out), 21; 2 p.m., Sundays, May 8, 15, 22. Doors open one-half hour before performances.

**Where:** The Little Red School House, 151 W. Locust St., Stayton

**Cost:** \$15.75 adults, \$12.75 ages 60+, \$6.50 ages 4 - 12, free for those 3 and under. Tickets available via PayPal or at the door.

**Contact:** For information or tickets, call (503) 385-6635 or visit [www.AumsvilleCommunityTheatre.com](http://www.AumsvilleCommunityTheatre.com).

they're going to end up laughing more than they thought they would," he said. "More than that, it's also very touching and something we can all

relate to. Life happens, and it's about how we deal with it."  
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## Winegrowers

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vines, wine barrels and bottling equipment, and representatives of wineries on hand to explain their uses. Wineries included AlexEli of Molalla, Aurora Cellars of Aurora, Christopher Bridge of Oregon City, Forest Edge Vineyard of Oregon City, Hanson Vineyards of Woodburn, King's Raven of Oregon City, Pheasant Run of Aurora, Piluso Vineyards of Aumsville, Pudding River Wine Cellars of East Salem, Silver Falls Vineyards of Sublimity, St. Josef's Winery of Canby, Villa Catalana Cellars of Oregon City, Vitis Ridge of Silverton, Whiskey Hill Winery of Canby and Wooden Shoe Vineyards of Woodburn.

"I think it's marvelous to bring all of these wineries together and give people a chance to taste wines from wineries that they probably don't get to visit," Mason Branstetter said.

"People don't usually think of the East Valley for wineries when they want to visit wineries," Marcia Branstetter said.

Brian Deckelmann from Vitis Ridge was explaining an automated grape harvester to Betty Larsen as she marveled at the huge piece of machinery. Nearby, Sean Driggers of Pudding River Wine Cellars was pouring samples of pinot noir from barrels and explaining his wine to Mason and Marcia Branstetter.

Clint Burfitt of Salem came with friends to enjoy wines, the drive and the weather. Burfitt said he enjoys wines but has never been to the wineries in the East Valley. "I think the great thing about coming to this event is that there's a huge variety of the same wine (pinot noir) and you can taste them all and compare," he said.

Chris Coon of Salem came with his wife because he had read about the event in the Statesman Journal.

"I've tasted a few of these wines before, but there are some newcomers and we wanted to check them out," Coon said.



Vitis Ridge's Brian Deckelmann explains an automated grape harvester to Betty Larsen.

### More online

To find out more about the Cascade Foothills Winegrowers, about its member wineries and events, go to [cascadefoothillswine.com](http://cascadefoothillswine.com).

"I like it a lot and I like the fact that it's in the Festhalle and that all of the wineries are here — and someone close to each winery or involved in making the wine is here pouring for the wine. So you get to learn a lot about the wineries."

"This event is our coming out ball, so to speak," said Jason Hanson, owner of Hanson Vineyards and also president of the Cascade Foothills Winegrowers.

The association had sold about a hundred tickets through its website before the event and about hundred people just showed up and purchased tickets at the door, Hanson added.

"We didn't know what to expect but we're pretty happy with the turnout of 200," Hanson said.

After 15 years as the East Willamette Wineries Association, the group started a conversation two years ago as some members felt like the term East Valley was generic.

"It wasn't descriptive of who we are," said Hanson. "So we spent a year soul searching and brainstorming and worked with Ferment Marketing and thought that the name Cascade Foothills Winegrowers was apt. We're in the foot-



PHOTOS BY VICTOR PANICHKUL/STATSMAN JOURNAL

Cascade Foothills Winegrowers poured wines for visitors at their launch party at the Mt. Angel Festhalle.



Mike Hinds of Hanson Vineyards visits with a guest at the Winegrowers launch party.



Jason Hanson visits with Manny Rodrigues, owner of Creekside restaurant in Silverton.

hills of the Cascades and we're all winegrowers," Hanson said. "We're small family farms growing grapes and making wines."

"We're trying to create more of a wine

culture in this part of the valley, and to also create awareness that there are wineries here," Hanson said. "That's the organization's mission."