

A Review: The Return of the Vernonia Melodrama!

“Sweet Violette of Vernonia” is a Smash Hit at this year’s Salmon Festival

By Seymour Talent

Many Vernonians have fond memories of attending the yearly Melodrama presentation each summer. I have been told it was a family event that even the teenagers enjoyed. It was funny and lively and something folks in Vernonia truly looked forward to.

Well, the Melodrama has finally returned to Vernonia, with a performance that was held as part of this year’s Salmon Festival, on the first Saturday in October. The Salmon Festival is Vernonia’s Fall Harvest Celebration, welcoming the salmon back to the rivers and streams of the Nehalem Valley, with activities for the whole family like hay rides, pumpkin carving, and scarecrow building. The Melodrama was a perfect addition to this year’s festival, helping instill the feeling that folks really were visiting historic Vernonia, as they traveled back in time for a sunny afternoon of family fun.

This was my first Vernonia melodrama, and I sure had a good time! The presentation, “Sweet Violette of Vernonia” is an original production, written and directed by our own mayor, Sally Harrison. The cast and crew, all local Vernonians, built a wonderful set on a flat-bed trailer with a backdrop that showed the wooded hills surrounding Vernonia, and a small cabin where most of the story takes place.

Sharon Parrow played the heroine, the virginal Violette Sweetwater, and Ron Wright was a revelation as the well-meaning, but not-so-bright hero, Thomas Talltree. Marilyn Nicks filled the role of Stella LaBella, the saloon owner with a heart of gold who had a few tricks up her...sleeve, so to speak, and Kevin Hudson was Virgil (Bigbucks) Stonewall, the local rich man who steps in to help save the day. Of course, no self-respecting melodrama would be complete without its villain and henchman, and Sam Poetter as Victor Vambaldi and Deanna Pearl as Toadie Backbite practically stole the show, along with the Sweetwater property. The cast was rounded

out with Helen Hudson as Grandma Sweetwater; sexy Saloon Girls, Sharon Bernal and Allison McLeod; and a cameo appearance by local peace officer Mike Kay as the Sheriff.

The audience, arranged on theater seating of hay bales, were treated to an opening musical prelude, with Burt Tschache singing the “The Frozen Logger,” City Administrator Bob Young leading a sing-along of old standards like a “A Bicycle Built For Two,” and a short comedy routine by Best Girl, Coral Dawn Pearl and Bonnie Holce, who was also the piano player for the show.

The costumes were amazing, the acting was over-the-top-- as expected-- and the crowd really enjoyed cheering for the heroes, and booing the villains, and sighing for the heroine as they were instructed by the cue cards held up at appropriate times.

Here’s hoping Vernonia has a new tradition, the annual fall Melodrama-- entertainment that’s fun for the whole family, even teenagers!



Vernonia School District & Prevention Coalition

Dates: Thursday 11/19/09
Friday 11/20/09

Time: 8:30 Both Days

Nov. 19-20th

Beyond the Field

With John Underwood

Vernonia Prevention Coalition and the Vernonia School district brings to you, John Underwood from the AAII I.

This two day event is designed for Administrators, Teachers, Coaches, Volunteers and Students.

Highlighting:

- Positive Policy changes and support
- Influences of ATOD’s Free policies beyond the field
- ATOD’s effects on the Athletes body
- How to encourage while discouraging ATOD abuse.

Thursday

- 8:30—12:00 pm Coaches and Athletic Directors
- 1:00—4:00 pm Administrators
- 5:30-7:00 pm Community and Parents

Friday

- 9:00—3rd-6th Grades
- 12:30 pm 7th –12th Grades

Funding available for student transportation but apply early!

Contact below for **FREE** registration:

DeAnna Pearl
DFC Grant Director
Vernonia Prevention Coalition
1001 Bridge Street
Vernonia, OR 97064

(503) 369-7370 Phone
(503) 429-4832 Fax
DeAnna@vernonia-or-us E-mail

Registration is requested due to space limitations

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