

TIME TO 'GIRD UP'

Farmers' market, a refurbished Theatre and year-round Art Walk are just the beginning



A picturesque view on a fall day looking down Cottage Grove's iconic Historic District. DANA MERRYDAY/THE CHRONICLE

Starting today and running all weekend there is more going on than you can easily accomplish in the historic downtown of Cottage Grove. It is like that all too often 'round here. Nothing for it but to gird up your loins and wade in!



DANA MERRYDAY

In warming up for the long haul you could start on Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m. with the next-to-last outdoor South Valley Farmers' Market. There has been an air of excitement at this market's gathering on 7th Street and Opal Whiteley Park. It features great music acts, Poetry Peddler, art activities and a very informative Plastics Recycling Drop-off station – and that is in addition to local food producers with farm-fresh organic produce and excellent vendors offering an intriguing selection of wares!

The newly renovated Cottage Theatre, while not actually in the historic zone, will be offering their new production, "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) [revised]" that is based on historic plays. It's described as "A zany, side-splitting romp through 37 plays in 97 minutes. Three actors dare to do the impossible: bring the entirety of Shakespeare's work to life on stage in one fell swoop!"

The play runs Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. You can also check out the new remodel inside!

Friday brings Art Walk from 6 to 8 p.m. Instead of this being the last one for the season, be prepared as this music, art and schmooze-friendly event morphs into a year-round format. Truly exciting!

Over at the Armory, the Willamette Cascade Model Railway Club will roll out their fantastic Model Railway Show. I was there last year and promised I would try and remember to remind you about this annual show. You really don't want to miss out on experiencing the sounds and sights of the worlds these dedicated hobbyists create.

Multiple gauges of model trains navigate miniature landscapes crafted in infinite detail. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free and the show is a great family activity. You can also see the progress of the Armory restoration – beautiful!

On Friday too, brace for some down-home fun for a good cause at the American Legion Hall as the Legionnaires host their weekly Bingo night. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the action rocks until 7 p.m. Children are welcome, accompanied by a parent or guardian. We aren't talking any boring bingo either, but a variety of games that had me studying the available explanation guide: Lucky 7s, 4 corners, Crazy L, Double 6-pack, Wild 2x4... Well, you get the picture. Oh, and Blackout too.

Hotdogs, chips and sodas are available for purchase. Bingo cards are priced reasonably, and proceeds go to help the American Legion with their many worthy projects and supporting those who have answered our country's call for service. Take a chance, have some fun, and maybe come home with a bit more change in your pocketbook than you left with!

Probably the most exciting opportunity, in my opinion, is something that you can now do that you haven't been able to for over three years: Grovers have been swinging across the river for more than a century on a rickety footbridge.

You can now walk across the newly constructed J. Polk Currin Swinging Bridge (so officially named at the last City Council meeting).

This newest version of the Swinging Bridge over the Coast Fork of the Willamette River had a "soft opening" last Friday, when Hamilton Construction handed over the new bridge to the citizens of Cottage Grove. It has been a long journey of benefits, grants, rounding up water bills, and rummage sales to make it happen. The City of Cottage Grove and countless bridge fans have finally brought the dream to reality.

There will be an official dedication and ribbon-cutting at 10 a.m. on Nov. 30 – but for now, get out on your bridge and feel it move!

And if all this is not enough for you, then take a stroll around town, check out the live music and food and drink offered at some of the fine establishments around Cottage Grove. Or, just soak up some of the ambiance that comes from the old bricks and whispers of the past!

Dana Merryday can be reached at: dana_merryday@yahoo.com or 541-942-7037.

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