

Illinois Valley local publishes children's book

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Illinois Valley resident Jim Lettis wrote the occasional poem in high school, but never took them beyond the classroom at the time.

Now retired after 33 years of teaching, Lettis expanded his pursuit of photography, taking photos of natural scenery when he traveled, especially decorative doors.

The objects in those photos seemed to tell a story of their own; Lettis wondered what might happen if he turned those pictures into something more.

"I was looking at them and thinking, if I told a story, what would [the door] have to say?" Lettis said. "I wrote about 20 poems of stories I had. Then I was writing a poem about a castle door from France, and it just kind of took off into this other story."

Now, one of his poems comes to life in "The Squire and the White Dragon," an illustrated children's book. It tells the story of Will, an aspiring knight, who is sent to confront the white dragon and recover the king's stolen sword.

The poem was a month-long project, adjusted and tweaked after Lettis originally put it on paper. Each line has 11 syllables, part of the mental aspect he loves about poetry.

"I do daily Sudoku and I've really been hooked on that," Lettis said. "It's similar to me...trying to write a poem completely with 11 syllables in every sentence and fitting it together is an interesting mental challenge, trying to find the correct words that make sense. Even when I read some of my poems now I think, how did I come up with that?"

His poetry covers a range of subjects, from romance to the difficulties of homelessness, to the stories of a dissatisfied troll and a meeting with Smokey the Bear.

According to Lettis, he keeps a notebook by his bed in case a late-night idea comes to him. The next morning, he deciphers his notes written in the dark that could become future poems.

"Back in grade school I wrote some poems," Lettis said. "The teacher thought they were quite good but I never did it again. But almost all of these poems [originate] in the middle of the night."

As he worked on the story, Lettis said he consulted the opinions of many family members, including his wife Celia, who was also a teacher.

"Since it was a children's book I had to change the riddles again," Lettis said. "The riddles were the hardest thing to write since I'd never written a riddle before."

Lettis said he searched online for an independent publisher, hoping to get the story in print by Christmas. It took about nine months from the time he sent his poem until the time it was published.

"The illustrator was assigned by the publishing company," Lettis said. "I thought he did a really nice job. I had to tell them a detailed description of what I wanted, then they sent back the initial drawings; it's all done over the Internet."

While publishing his first book, Lettis hit a few minor snags. He said original illustrations had the dragon in all different colors; blue, grey and even pink. The process was a little slower than he hoped; all in all, however, Lettis was satisfied.

Lettis said he hopes to hold a book-signing in Cave Junction at Shop Smart and donate some of the money from books sold to a local nonprofit.

So far, Lettis said he's shown the story to some folks at the Illinois Valley Senior Center and the book is getting a good reaction.



(Photo by Darcy Wallace, Illinois Valley News)

Jim Lettis, author of "The Squire and the White Dragon."

"They seemed very impressed," Lettis said. "It's fun to think of something, all the words that connect to that particular thing, and figure out how you can connect those words together in a poem. It's the mental challenge I enjoy."

LBMS musicians host final Disneyland fundraiser

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

Lorna Byrne Middle School music groups showcased their talents Sunday, April 3 at the Selma Center as their last fundraiser before the advanced groups depart for Anaheim, Calif. this evening.

The concert band and Coro Vivo Choir are scheduled to compete April 7 to 9 in the Heritage Music Festival in Disneyland with 46 other groups. Students have spent weeks raising funds to help cover transportation and other costs through concerts, grocery bagging, pancake breakfasts and a rummage sale.

According to band director Brice Cloyd and several volunteers, Sunday's fundraiser raised close to \$1,500 towards the trip.

"I think this was an amazingly successful event," Cloyd said. "Now this is a small town coming

together."

All Lorna Byrne ensembles performed at the event, including the two advanced groups, the Cadet Band, and the new Marimba Band.

Several local musicians of all ages also performed Sunday to round out the performance list, including B Wishes, the Honey Bees, Too Far South, Zach Kay and G. R. Nelson.

"[Too Far South] probably brought in 20 or 30 people who otherwise wouldn't have been there," Cloyd said.

Nelson, a local freelance musician who has performed in venues all over Oregon, made a special appearance at the Selma Center singing and playing acoustic guitar. B Wishes included a handful of students from Coro Vivo belting out Beatles tunes and others.

As guests listened to music, they also chose from dozens of homemade baked goods from Anna Ortiz and

Tina Brick.

A silent auction and raffle for countless locally-produced items and gift certificates also kept guests busy between performances.

Cloyd and volunteers said they greatly appreciated the help and support from all sides; many parents and community members chipped in even though they didn't have children participating in Lorna Byrne ensembles going to Disneyland.

"This is for the kids," said volunteer organizer Shawn Carmody. "If it wasn't for Mr. Cloyd, very few would have the opportunity to do something like this. I feel the community can come together."

Carmody said Solis Skin Care owner Cherie Miller was a major contributor in Sunday's event. Other volunteers who helped organize included Dan Fiske, Julie Janoski and Molly Kitchens.

According to Cloyd, Lorna

Byrne is the only middle school in Oregon set to perform at the Heritage Festival this year in Anaheim. Students will be exposed to schools with concert and symphonic bands, jazz ensembles, choirs and orchestra groups with years of experience at this level.

"The kids are really excited for this," Cloyd said. "I'm not sure if they really grasp it yet."

Cloyd said that when he first told students about the trip, some compared it to the Boatnik parade in Grants Pass, which they'll perform in for Memorial Day weekend.

"This is at a completely different level," Cloyd said. "They'll be seeing buildings that are a lot more than four stories high, drive [in buses] in seven lanes of traffic...it's the cultural experience of being outside the Valley."

In January, some local students performed at a selective Oregon Music

Educators Association (OMEA) contest at the Hult Center in Eugene. But many have not yet had the chance to play at an event of this scale.

At the Heritage Festival, students will receive a judges critique and get an on-stage clinic from one of the judges to help give them more direct, hands-on feedback.



(Photo by Darcy Wallace, Illinois Valley News)

Guest artist G. R. Nelson plays guitar at the Selma Center April 3.

IVHS School Menu - Sponsored by SISKIYOU COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
25647 Redwood Hwy. Cave Junction
541-592-4111

THURSDAY, April 7 Pasta with marinara/meat sauce or bean & cheese burritos, chicken burger or cheese burger, cheese, bbq chicken or supreme pizza, Italian turkey & cheese spicy chicken wrap, or chef, anti pasta or garden salads	TUESDAY, April 12 Chicken fajitas, Rib-Que sandwich, chicken burger, cheeseburger, pepperoni, cheese or Hawaiian pizza; Italian or turkey & cheese sandwich, spicy chicken wrap; chef, antipasto or garden salad
FRIDAY, April 8 Nacho supreme, wiener wrap, corn dog, spicy chicken burger; cheeseburger; pepperoni, cheese, supreme or taco pizza; ham & cheese or turkey & cheese sandwich, turkey wrap; chef, garden or Mandarin chicken salad	WEDNESDAY, April 13 Taco salad, teriyaki beef rice bowl, spicy chicken burger, hamburger; pepperoni, sausage, cheese or Italian griller pizza; veggie or turkey & cheese sandwich, turkey wrap; chef, garden or Mandarin chicken salad

MONDAY, April 11
Beef soft tacos, chicken strips, spicy chicken burger, hamburger; pepperoni, cheese, vegetarian or sausage pizza; ham & cheese or turkey & cheese sandwich, turkey wrap; chef, garden or Mandarin chicken salad

Elementary School Lunch Menu Sponsored by HOMETOWNE INTERIORS
541-592-2413

THURSDAY, April 7 Super submarine sandwich, mandarin chicken salad, turkey frank on multigrain bread, baked RibBQ sandwich, spaghetti w/ marinara or meat sauce	TUESDAY, April 12 Ham & cheese sandwich on whole wheat, classic chef salad, hamburger on a multigrain bun, baked cheesy breadsticks w/ marinara, big chicken taco
FRIDAY, April 8 Totally tuna wrap, chicken caesar salad, cheeseburger on multigrain, totally teriyaki dippers, toasted cheese sandwich w/ tomato soup	WEDNESDAY, April 13 Super sub sandwich, hearty garden salad, chicken patty on a multigrain bun, freshly baked cheese or pepperoni pizza, baked potato bar

MONDAY, April 11
Hearty garden salad, ham & cheese sandwich on whole wheat, hawaiian burger, bean & cheese burrito, baked chicken bites w/ mashed potatoes

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Illinois Valley News
541-592-2541

		2			
4					9
8	5		1		6
		9	7	8	5
	7	1		4	
					8
			5	9	3
1		2	6		
					8

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Solution on page A-4

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

- Each of the numbers from 1 to 9 should only be placed once in each column.
- Each number from 1 to 9 can be placed only once in each row.
- The numbers 1 to 9 can appear only once in each 3x3 grid.

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