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2 plays to debut; comedy on agenda

by SCOTT NEWTON

Sandy High School's drama instructor, Chris Harris, has produced some serious works. Now it is time to lighten up.

He will direct "Out of the Frying Pan," which is about would-be actors and actresses in New York City who are trying to find work and make ends meet.

On alternate nights Karen Campbell, who is in her first year of teaching at SUHS, will direct "Feiffer's People," which is a series of short scenes dealing primarily with relationships between men and women.

Why were two comedies picked to run in the modified-repertoire series? "Karen picked hers first, and she picked a comedy. There was no way I was going to do another serious one," said Harris, whose last two productions have been "Diary of Anne Frank" and "Wait Until Dark."

Campbell, who taught in Estacada last year, teaches freshman drama classes two periods a day, and reading — for students who are two or more grade levels behind — four periods a day.

The demand for another teacher was there, said Harris, who teaches three freshman drama classes a day. All five classes have from 28 to 30 students apiece.

The overall program has quality as well as quantity, he believes. At the Mt. Hood Conference drama competition last month, half of the finalists were from Sandy High.

Campbell and Harris both said they have some talented freshmen. Campbell also got veteran Suzanne Delaney, who has earned a special place in her heart.

An illness and later a death in the family caused Campbell to miss rehearsal time. The students, partially under Delaney's leadership, worked on the things she had discussed with them two weeks earlier.

"One of the things they said when I got back was, 'Hey, you had enough to worry about,'" said Campbell. "These are real professionals."

"Feiffer's People" was written by Jules Feiffer, a cartoonist who is regularly published in The New

Yorker magazine. One of his main characters is Bernard Mergendeiler, who is "never quite successful with women." Bernard is played by Andy Dietterich, who "does a wonderful job."

Eric Hodgson plays Huey, who is the opposite of Bernard and always knows the right thing to say.

Other people in the cast are Sarah Krick, Cindy Hall, Sean McNeerney, Don Logan, Tom Vaeretti, Eric Ruch, Tim Callister, Myssi Loflin, Paula Ledwidge, Tiffany Griffin and Tish Orr.

Campbell studied drama at the University of Oregon, and has worked with the Gresham Community Theater group, the Portland Shakespearean Company and the now-defunct Timberwood Theater Company. She once played the part of a witch in Shakespeare's Macbeth, which was performed at Civic Theatre.

For Harris, who is in his second year at Sandy High and has experience with Robert Redford's Sundance Theater, this is the most relaxed he has been going into a play. "Normally, at this point, I'm a nervous wreck."

Harris has veteran Tom Russell to fall back on. Russell, Howard Bickle and Jesse Berger share an apartment with Denise Lewis, Dawn Thomas and Heidi Beck. The apartment is immediately above that of a successful producer who is getting ready to put together a road crew. The plan, of course, is to get the producer upstairs.

Russell Benton is the producer. Debbie Lamm is the landlord who is kept waiting for the rent, and Darlene Lamb is the mother for whom a front must be kept up. Other cast members include Kris Kruger, Denny Hodge and Carleen Whitlock.

"Both shows could have been cast a number of different ways," said Harris, who added that a lot of good students didn't get parts. About 60 students tried out for the 26 parts in the two plays.

"Feiffer's People" will play Feb. 28 and March 2 and 8. "Out of the Frying Pan" will play March 1, 7 and 9. All performances are at 8 p.m. in the SUHS commons.

Purple Heart better late

10th anniversary celebrated

Members of the Sandy VFW Post 4273 and Auxiliary had two good reasons to celebrate last week. They observed the 10th anniversary of the founding of the post, and one of their members was presented with an honor that was past due by 35 years.

Virgil Irelan received his Purple Heart Wednesday night at a ceremony at the VFW Hall. There was an open house and dance, and dignitaries included Ruth Loundree, past mayor, Deane Wesselink, mayor, and Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Bell of Echo, commander and auxiliary president for the state of Oregon.

Irelan, who moved to Sandy in 1956, was drafted in 1945 and received the Asiatic Pacific Theater Service Medal, the Victory Medal, and the Army of Occupation Medal (Japan). After being out of the service a few years, he re-enlisted, earning the Korean Service Medal.

In 1950, after 31 days on the front lines, his unit moved to "break out" the Pusan Peninsula. He was shot through the forearm and was permanently disabled.

Securing the Pusan Perimeter was considered the turning point in the war. The North Koreans lost about 58,000 soldiers and the U.S. gained room to maneuver.

Irelan, it seemed, could have done without all the attention members of the local post bestowed upon him. "I just made a remark, I never did have one," Irelan said.

Bud Pullen took it from there. "I wrote everybody there was. Whenever I'd get another lead, I'd write to them."

One of Pullen's goals when he was commander of Post 4273 was to get Irelan his Purple Heart. It was a job that took almost three years. Clifford Olson, commander-in-chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was in Sandy about a year ago and gave Pullen some ideas on who to contact.

"Bud did a hell of a job, I'll tell you that," said Al Russell, senior vice president.

Russell, who estimated that 200 to 250 people attended the open house Wednesday, can remember when they wore hip boots to work

on the basement of the building. "It was just a mud hole, that's all it was," he said.

They paneled the basement, put in rest rooms, plumbing and a kitchen, and saw membership grow from 10 to 385. All are veterans who served on foreign soil during a time of conflict.

"You do this for the same reason you went to war, you fought," said Russell. "to put something back in the community. Every function we have, we always have a project we contribute to."

"I'm proud of this post. I'm proud of the people we're associated with," he said.

When Pullen was commander, he was twice selected for "all-state" honors, which are awarded for membership, being active in the community and conducting safety programs. Only 12 commanders out of 147 earn the honor each year.

Les Jordan was also an all-state commander, and Don Blair said Al Gunderson, commander, is "definitely in the running."

Blair pulled out a scrapbook that

was full of canceled checks made out to various groups, ranging from Sandy High School musical groups to Mt. Hood Hospice and the Kiwanis Club's Christmas basket drive. There were newspaper clippings telling about post and auxiliary functions including bicycle rodeos, Memorial Day services and donations to cancer research.

"This is the Veterans of Foreign Wars," Blair said, tapping the cover of the scrapbook.

He pointed out that Buddy Poppy sales raise money for a relief fund for needy veterans, their widows or children. Russell said the local post has conducted two full-dress military funerals in the past month.

"We have one of the most popular and growing posts in Oregon," Russell said. "There's a reason why all these dignitaries come to Sandy."

Sandy VFW Post 4273 and Auxiliary will soon have another reason to celebrate. They soon expect to have the money to buy the building they are in.



Al Gunderson got Ruth Loundree in the limelight again.



Virgil Irelan, left, was presented with a Purple Heart by Bud Pullen.

Resort fights growth plateau with service

by MARTY MORRISON

Times are changing in the ski industry, and as a result of those changes skiers' needs are being catered to more than ever.

"Presently the ski industry is in a no-grow situation," said Bill Conerly, public relations coordinator at Timberline ski area.

According to Conerly, over the last several years the ski industry has been unable to keep up with the rising costs of operation and insurance.

"Therefore, we want to start taking better care of the skier so they will continue to ski, and ski safe and in control," said Conerly.

Several years ago, both Timberline and Mt. Hood Meadows initiated public relations programs, with "ski hosts" to help assist and educate the skiing public.

This season, however, marks the beginning of Timberline's first volunteer program, which has broken new ground with its expansion.

Conerly, who has been the only ski host at Timberline for the past five years, said the ski host program is designed to satisfy two major needs of the ski area.

"Our ski hosts work to help our people have a good time by being friendly and cheerful, and make our skiers' visits more comfortable so they will come back again. The second aim of our ski hosts is to encourage our skiers to ski in control and observe safety and boundary signs.

Conerly pointed out by encouraging safety they will help influence the rising insurance costs, which are being felt by all ski area operators.

In addition to the more than 20 volunteers working in the program, Conerly recruited two college interns — seniors Linda Cockram from the University of Oregon and Bob Tourtillot from Portland State University — to help get the program off the ground.

"They are my core unit," said Conerly.

Both interns seek a position in the

ski industry as public relations specialists after they graduate. Conerly adds that he makes it a point to recruit students who have an honest desire to function in the public relations field in some capacity eventually, and he attributes part of the success of his program to that aim.

Kerry MacArther of Portland said

the program was a great idea and she hopes they continue it.

"I haven't needed their help yet but a couple of friends I'm skiing with received their help. The ski hosts seem to keep everything going smoothly," said MacArther.

Timberline lift operator William Johnson agreed with MacArther that

the ski hosts keep things running smoothly on the hill.

"They do a great job. And they do a lot more than just stand around chatting to people," said Johnson.

"Lots of times when new skiers are just learning, they have trouble getting off the chair and fall quite a bit, but the ski hosts help get the skiers

off the ramp. They actually help provide safety by helping the skier out of the way."

Johnson also said the ski hosts take a little bit of the pressure off him by providing assistance at the unloading ramps.

"I can keep the lift running because I don't have to go pull people

out of the way. A lot of people don't realize just how much help the ski hosts provide. They help give skiers more slide time," said Johnson.

In addition to helping individual skiers and lift operators, the ski hosts also pride themselves on the assistance they provide the three ski schools operating at Timberline.

Jeff Lockting, Timberline ski school director, praises the ski hosts and supports their efforts.

"I think it's a great idea. I think it's another way of providing more depth to the services available at Timberline," said Lockting.

"The ski hosts are able to fill a gap that the other employees are unable to fill because of the nature of their jobs, providing skiers with answers to questions that need to be answered and directions that need to be given."

Another gap the ski hosts have plugged is the communications gap between the public and the Timberline staff. The ski hosts offer the skier a much more accessible route to express their negative and positive comments.

"In addition to information assistance and guidance, we try to provide a sounding board or place for skiers to express themselves about what's happening at Timberline," said Conerly.

One improvement that is already underway as a result of the skiers' comments is improved signage for the slopes.

According to Conerly, many first-time skiers find it difficult to get around Timberline because of the physical layout of the area. He said the new signs being prepared for the slopes will help alleviate much of that confusion.

The ski host program at Timberline appears to have earned a place in the ski industry. Conerly is pleased with the progress made by his volunteers and sees a bright future ahead for the program.

"I think we've hit on a good thing, and I think what we're doing is right. I just want the ski host program to keep developing."

See related story in Sports.



The Ski Hosts at Timberline work to make skiing a pleasant experience so that the customer will return.

Photo by Marty Morrison