

'Angel' brings Twain to life

by BARBARA BROWER
Staff writer

Mark Twain had a dark side, says Larry Leedy of Boring.

Tales that Twain is best remembered for, tales such as Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, take us back to our childhoods and make us smile. But Leedy will touch on some of Twain's more serious writing as well when he stars as Samuel L. Clemens in a Sandy Community Players production of "On the Verge of Becoming an Angel."

The play, a comedy/drama that Leedy wrote, will be featured Saturday and Sunday at Heritage Square Theater in Sandy.

"The title of the play comes from a comment he had about old age," says Leedy, 25.

"After an examination, his doctor told him that he was on the verge of becoming an old man. Twain replied that he didn't believe that, because he had been on the verge of becoming an angel all his life and it hadn't happened yet," explains Leedy, who says Twain is one of his favorite writers.

As the play opens, Mark Twain sits in his Hartford, Conn., library, where he is near death. As he begins speaking to the audience about his life and writings, the characters come to life on stage behind him. Later in the play he talks about what he feels and thinks.

"He spent his last few years writing about the 'damned human race.' His writings reflected pessimism and bitterness, but not many people know that was after his wife and two daughters had died. His only son had died, too," Leedy says.

During the first act, Twain's flippancy and humorous side will be presented. The second act will examine beliefs that were important to him later in life, says Leedy, who studied the writer under Hal



Photo courtesy of Larry Leedy

Ryan Atkins, left, plays Huckleberry Finn and Brian Miller, right, plays Slave Jim in Larry Leedy's play, "On the Verge of Becoming an Angel," a play that acquaints the audience with many of Mark Twain's 36 books.

Holbrook in a Los Angeles, Calif., workshop. Holbrook, the actor who does the one-man nightclub act, "Mark Twain Tonight," discussed with Leedy the writer's more serious writing. And Leedy learned makeup techniques from Holbrook's makeup artist. His makeup takes four to six hours to apply.

Holbrook most often performs the humorous writings because it is what people most often want to hear, says Leedy, who studied not only Twain's writings, but also his wife's diary and his surviving daughter's autobiography to be able to write the

play objectively.

"He was kind of a sinner," admits Leedy. "He drank heavily, he smoked cigars constantly and had a very bad temper. During the play Twain will talk about his views on religion, his reaction to the death of his wife and daughters, and about how we are all going down the tubes. It is sometimes cutting, sarcastic and dry," he says.

The fascination with Mark Twain began when Leedy was 10. On a family vacation he visited the famous writer's home in Hannibal, Mo.

"I visited the house where he was

born and raised, the museum there, and went into the caves he wrote about in 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' and mentioned in 'Huckleberry Finn,'" Leedy says.

The combination of that vacation and reading those two books captured Leedy's heart forever. While enrolled in Mt. Hood Community College's drama program, Leedy auditioned for the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and was one of five students accepted from among the 6,000 Northwest students who applied.

Leedy moved to California for three years, and during that time he began working on his characterization of Mark Twain. He also kept busy designing sets, directing theater companies and working on Hollywood films, including Steven Spielberg's "Poltergeist."

He returned to MHCC, where he had majored in speech, to begin working on a teaching certificate. While there he developed scripts and acted them out in competitions. Leedy took his Mark Twain program to national college tournament at Cal Poly Technic and earned third place in spite of being the only entrant from a two-year college.

After five years of work, the playwright is ready to perform the full-length comedy drama at Sandy's Heritage Square Theater. Leedy likes the "intimate" 125-seat theater because it allows him to interact with the audience, he says.

"The audience will almost feel as though the actors can reach out and touch them," says Leedy, who promises play-goers some fun surprises.

The playwright and actor hopes to perform the play throughout Oregon. Proceeds from the show will go to the Sandy Summer Youth Theatre Program.

The play begins at 8 p.m. on April 25 and at 2 p.m. on April 26. Tickets are \$5.

Investigation ends in police dog shooting

The Sandy Police Department has completed its investigation of the shooting of a police dog and has referred charges to the Clackamas County district attorney's office, according to Chief Fred Punzel.

No arrests have been made.

The charges filed by the Sandy police include criminal mischief, a class C felony, and cruelty to animals, a misdemeanor.

Penalties for a class C felony include a maximum five-year jail sentence and a maximum fine of \$100,000.

Previously Punzel and the district attorney's office had

discussed the case and cruelty to animals seemed to be the only charge that applied. "I was not willing to settle for a misdemeanor when Carl (Faught, police officer) was in jeopardy also," Punzel said.

But when he received the veterinarian's bill, which was over \$970, Punzel said he realized the dog, Moose, also could be viewed as property.

Punzel said Moose is progressing well and is riding with Faught on patrol, though it will be about a month before he can return to active duty.

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Seniors

Continued from Page 1.

senior citizen and recreation programs. Reber said it is possible some people would lose their jobs.

One program offered by the senior center is a Meals on Wheels lunch served to 25 homebound people a day. Volunteers deliver the meals and are not reimbursed for gasoline.

The center also provides 300 to 500 rides a month, taking senior citizens to doctor's appointments, shopping and to the senior center. With limited public transportation in Sandy, those people would have a difficult time without the senior center's program, Potter Marquardt said. They are "extremely transportation disadvantaged," she said.

The senior center also offers outreach services that help keep senior citizens in their homes. Potter Marquardt said it is better for individuals and society to keep people

functioning independently in their homes instead of institutionalizing them.

The senior center also serves as an information and referral service, helping needy senior citizens locate health care, fuel assistance, food stamps or housekeeping services.

Health clinics are offered regularly, covering topics such as vision screening, foot care and blood pressure checks.

Programs to keep senior citizens active also are offered. Activities include a choir, band, craft classes, exercise classes and outings. Potter Marquardt said it is important to reach out to some senior citizens to keep them involved, which leads to better health.

The Senior Center grew out of the efforts of the Sandy Golden Age Club, which in 1970 began to makes plans

for a center. In 1978 — with help in financing from federal sources and the city of Sandy — the Sandy Community Senior Center, at 38348 Pioneer Blvd., became a reality.

The Golden Age Club membership and the active participants in senior center programs are essentially the same. Members of the Golden Age Club have raised money to purchase much of the equipment at the center, Potter Marquardt said.

Reber said the city is committed to the Loaves and Fishes nutrition program, which is operated out of the kitchen at the senior center. Beyond that, he would not comment on possible cuts.

"The ability to provide some basic services depends upon how involved volunteers become," Potter Marquardt said.

Program cuts in the Sandy Recrea-

tion Department could be more severe than at the senior center.

The recreation department offers a year-round program of activities for people of all ages.

Workers

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registered residents.

"Migrant workers have helped us to become No. 1 and we ought to help them," he said.

Andre Iseli of Iseli Nursery in Boring, said he would be helping his many foreign workers obtain legal status by providing access to the documentation they will need to apply for residency and citizenship.

Kinen said he also has been helping Schmidt's employees prepare to apply for legal status by informing them in meetings, consulting lawyers and communicating with Catholic Family Services, which will be helping immigrants fill out forms.

An early draft of the new rules defined "perishable commodities" as Christmas trees, cut flowers, herbs, hops, horticultural specialties, Spanish reeds for musical instruments, spices, sugar beets and tobacco.

The draft list excludes dairy products, cotton, earthworms, fish, oysters, rabbits, hay, honey, horses, soybeans, wool and sugar cane.

Roads

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mittee member.

Much of the debate Thursday centered on services for senior citizens.

Councilor Jim Duff said he objected to "emasculating" the senior citizen program for a "small" contribution to the street fund.

Councilor Dick Harrison agreed with Duff. Senior citizens worked to help the city pass a tax base in 1984, Harrison said. "We promised that group services."

City Councilor Mort Spence said the program for senior citizens shows "we are a caring city." Wesselink's proposal cut the "heart" out of the program, Spence said. "His suggestions constitute mayhem in this budget."

Mel Haneberg, a member of the

budget committee, said the city's budget had tentative approval before the gas tax issue came up. He said he supported the original budget and not Wesselink's compromise.

Duff, Harrison, Spence and Haneberg voted against the revised budget proposed by Wesselink. Wesselink, Buck, DePaape, Bryant, Brad Picking, Marge Frederickson, Brad Paluck, Mike Murray and Kaye Morrison voted for it.

Those voting in favor of shifting money to the street fund said the City Council has made street improvements a top priority. The money for those improvements must come from cuts in the budget if a gas tax is not enacted, they said.

Reber told the group that cutting

the program meant cutting employees, but he declined to say exactly how the cuts would be accomplished. Wesselink had a prediction, however.

"There will be very little going on at the senior center," he said. "With volunteerism, we may be able to keep some of those programs going."

The people of Sandy and those in outlying areas may have a chance to reinstate recreation programs. The budget committee voted to recommend formation of a special recreation district to finance such programs. Reber said the City Council may also decide to add services for senior citizens in the special district. Funds to finance such a district would have to be approved by voters.

Sandy Library has new hours

The Sandy Public Library will have new hours beginning May 1. The library will be open noon to 6 p.m. Monday; noon to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

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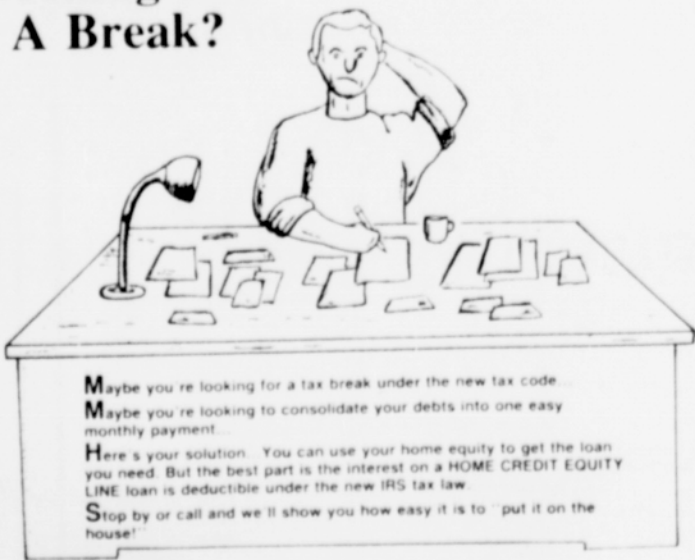
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