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SMS eighth-graders 'visit' Ellis Island ferry

Eighth-graders from Siuslaw Middle School went to Ellis Island.

Sort of.
Thanks to an arrangement with SEAcost Entertainment Association (SEA), the local students were able to interact with a live performance about immigration in the early 20th century, titled "The New American" by Rachel Atkins of Living Voices.

"For me, working with Living Voices has been one of the high points for our concert season. They brought a dramatic, artistic element to enhance the students' year-long studies about immigration," said Rachel Pearson, SEA's education outreach coordinator.

Living Voices is a non-profit educational group from Seattle that presents solo performers and integrates audience interaction to teach history.

Oftentimes they use archival film as their stage's backdrop.

SEA is the Florence-area non-profit that brings high-caliber arts and entertainment to the Florence Events Center.

"They turn history into a moving, personal journey to help young audiences understand and access the past," explained Pearson.

"The project furthers the students' studies this year on the history of immigration, and allowed for an informed discussion and comparison of historical immigration to the issues of immigration today," she said.

The imaginative story began in 1912 in rural Ireland where students met Bridget Rose Fitzgerald.

The Fitzgeralds barely managed to hold onto their farm in bad times.

Her father sent Bridget to America in hopes she would be able to send back enough money to save their home.

Bridget was placed in steerage on a steamship headed for New York.

At Ellis Island, she was tagged and numbered, along with thousands of immigrants crammed into a huge, noisy facility.

After a barrage of tests and a long list of confusing and embarrassing questions, Bridget was taken to Manhattan where she began work at a sweatshop.

After many challenges, and



COURTESY PHOTO

Maggie Doud, Sandra Kuhlman, Rachel Atkins as "Bridget Fitzgerald," Ernie Doud and Heather Wiggins, eighth-grade teacher at Siuslaw Middle School

after studying and passing the citizenship exam, Bridget fully embraced her new homeland.

Through it all, students learned what American liberty and opportunity mean to people around the world.

"During the production, students had so much fun that they probably didn't realize all the lessons they learned about history, cultural differences, character development, and the immigration process," said Pearson.

Eighth-grade history teacher Heather Wiggins was provided a teacher's guide for pre- and post-performance instruction to assist students in gaining a greater understanding of the process of immigration and assimilation of the early 20th century, and then to draw parallels between then and now.

Included were hands-on activities to reinforce new concepts through a variety of media: writing, art, presentation and discussion on topics emanating from the presentation.

Partial funding for this SEAcost arts and culture outreach came through a \$1,000 grant provided by the Lane County Cultural Commission.

Last year, SEAcost contracted with Theatretworks

USA to present the Lewis and Clark expedition to local grade-schoolers.

For more information about SEAcost Entertainment Association and the remaining

performances of its 2014-2015 concert series, visit www.SeacoastEA.org.

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Home and Garden Show set for March 6 through 8

The 19th Annual Florence Home and Garden Show, set for March 6 through 8, has filled all its available vendor space, according to organizers.

"We were full by the end of January," explained Show Director Jon Thompson.

"We've been told numerous times that our show is one of the best, even in comparison to much larger venues."

Custom wood products, kitchen ware, hot tubs, spas, skylights and dozens of vendors featuring products and services for both the home and garden will pack the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St.

Laurel Bay Gardens' centerpiece landscape design, "Garden of Artful Delight," will highlight this year's show.

The landscape design will feature local crafted garden art, including sculptures, plants and glass art.

The urban design will highlight planting ideas to create a haven for wildlife. Low maintenance and native plant selections will give homeowners great ideas on enhancing their yards to add color, texture and wildlife habitat.

Laurel Bay Gardens also will feature a new line of certified organic compost and soils, colorful outdoor pottery, statuary and water features.

Gibs RV, featuring homes on wheels, will join Cedar Works Spas outside the Florence Events Center.

Show hours are from 2 to 6 p.m. on Friday, March 6, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 8.

Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children 12 and under. Admission is free from 4 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, and half-price coupons will be available at Bi-Mart two weeks prior to the show.

Coast Radio and Siuslaw News present the show.

WORD ON THE STREET

How do you feel about Gov. Kitzhaber resigning?



"I think he did the right thing. There was too much controversy in what was going on in his personal life involved with his political life."
—MARCIA LEAMING, 63
OAKRIDGE



"I think it is a good idea. There is too much controversy about his fiancée. They have gotten into trouble that is just going to continue. We don't need another leader we can't trust."
—BEVERLY PERRY, 86
FLORENCE



"I'm very happy we have a new governor. I think the last one was shady and so is his fiancée."
—KRISTINA WASHINGTON, 42
FLORENCE



"I haven't really lived here long enough to know anything about him, but yes, that is what should have happened. Even if he's not guilty, she was."
—BARBARA MUSSON, 68
FLORENCE



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