

Award-winning author, speaker Bob Welch to make Florence appearance with 'Friends'



When his 2014 debut show at the Hult Center sold out a month in advance, Bob Welch made a mental note last October: Two shows for 2015.

But that won't be the case this fall. Instead, he and his expanded cast and crew will actually offer three shows, including one at the Florence Events Center on Sunday, Oct. 18, at 2 p.m. Umpqua Bank is presenting all three events, with the cooperation of the Seacoast Entertainment Association for the Florence event.

"I'm already pumped about this fall's shows," says the author, speaker and former full-time Register-Guard columnist. "We blend stories, songs, images and — yep — s'mores to create a one-of-a-kind evening that honors the best of the human spirit. We tickle some funny bones, tug on some heart strings and generally have some fun."

Last year's focus was on community and families. This year, the focus will be "My Oregon," so-named for Welch's book series of Register-Guard columns titled as such, the third of which will be released this month.

"This is not The Welches' Oregon Vacation Slide Show," says Welch. "This is an exploration of the soul of this place we call home. An experiencing of Oregon through all the senses. An examination of the relationship between us and the land."

In the four-part show — The High

Desert, The Mountains, The Valley, The Coast — Welch and Co. will find the humor in Oregon, the heart-stirring stuff of Oregon, "the things that make us like no other place on earth," he says.

Beyond Welch's storytelling, the "My Oregon" show will feature:

- The Eugene Symphony's Dale Bradley and trio, whose music bridges his stories.
- Comedic poet David Perham, whose poetry will have the audience laughing wildly.
- The photography of six of Oregon's best: Stan Newman and Jason Friesen, Eugene; Laren and JerriLynn Woolley (Oregon Coast Photography), Newport; Jorma Meriaho, Dexter; and Eric Valentine, La Grande.
- A special video piece by AO Films' Ryan Welch, Bob's older son. unnamed-1

"Full Moon at Yaquina Head" by Oregon Coast Photography

The show will again be directed by Judy Wenger, Rose Children's Theatre director and coordinator of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Educator Preview Weekend.

"What's cool about 'Welch & Friends' is that we gather people with all these diverse talents and just let them do their things," says Welch. "The results, last year attested, are pretty amazing. And this year, with the photography and video, we're just adding to that 'amazing.'"

Florence sponsors are the River House Inn, Siuslaw River Coffee Roasters, City Lights Cinemas, the Chicken Coop Gift Shop and Mari's Books in Yachats.

Tickets are \$27 for adults or \$10 for youth. Purchase them by phone at 541-888-968-4086, online at www.eventcenter.org, or at the door.

PEO wine tasting to offer art, food and fun for a good cause

Wines for the third annual Philanthropic Educational Organization's (PEO) fundraiser, "Wine, Women and Who Knows What?" will include LaVelle Vineyards, River's Edge, Reustle Prayer Rock Vineyards and Silvan Ridge.

In addition, food pairings for each wine

will be created and prepared by Siuslaw High School culinary arts students.

More than 20 uniquely themed gift baskets will be available, including everything from treats and toys for your favorite dog, to a special date night package or elaborate barbecue collection.

There will also be a silent auction featuring art works by more than a dozen well-known local artists.

The "Wine, Women and Who Knows What?" wine tasting will take place Sunday, Oct. 18, from 5 to 7 p.m., in Galleries

One and Two at the Florence Events Center.

Sponsored by PEO, Florence Chapter FQ, all the proceeds from the event will go to fund scholarships and loans for women pursuing higher education. A number of past scholarship winners are from the Florence and Mapleton communities, and many have returned home to contribute their talents to the local business community.

"Our first two wine tastings sold out," said event co-chairwoman Paula Becker. "So it would be smart to reserve your tickets early."

Tickets are \$25 per person, and can be reserved by calling 541-999-9667 or 541-997-2318.



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Like card games? Try your hand at this Van Fans fundraiser

The Van Fans will hold a card games and lunch fundraiser on Wednesday, Oct. 21, at the Florence Events Center. The event begins at 11:30 a.m. Ticket price, with or without card games, is \$12 and includes a catered lunch by Fresh Harvest Café and Bakery.

There will be raffle prizes and other exciting events.

The Friends of Florence Van Fans is a non-political organization that sponsors this event. All proceeds benefit Friends of Florence, which transports cancer patients every weekday to Eugene and Springfield for radiation treatments.

