

'Black Suitcase' author to speak at library

Local coastal author and former educator Gail Elliott Downs will be at the Siuslaw Public Library in the Bromley Room on Tuesday, April 19, at 1 p.m., to share the story of her book, "The Black Suitcase Mystery," published in 2015.

The mystery begins with World War II era letters discovered by one of the author's family members, letters Downs inherited and preserved.

The real life mystery of the letters in the suitcase took four years to solve. The sleuthing began in 1991, the first year of the 50th anniversary of World War II, as part of an assignment given to fifth graders by Downs who was then a school librarian in Missouri.

The purpose of the assignment was not only to learn about World War II and the importance of family history, but to also teach research techniques to the young student by using primary sources, in this case the 200 letters in the Downs family black suitcase.

What the students discovered and recovered over the four years of their research was a poignant story of love against the backdrop of a faraway war,



COURTESY PHOTO

Gail Downs looked through family photos and the contents of the black suitcase.

in particular the experiences of B-24 Liberator bomber crews.

The collected letters were written to Downs' great aunt, Hazel Elliott Rich. The correspondents were her son, Rich, and Rich's wife, Wanda, who began writing letters to her husband's mother in 1943.

George was killed in action while performing his 50th and scheduled last mission as a member of a B-24 Liberator

bomber crew. Downs wanted the story contained in the 200 letters to be "told because of its uniqueness — approximately 150 letters written in the 1930s and '40s from a young son to his ill mother." This was followed by wartime letters and finally letters from Wanda, the last one written in 1946, each a glimpse into their own experience of love and war.

The project, which started out as a simple school library assignment, eventually garnered national attention and resulted in history exhibitions and programs for veterans.

President Clinton even mentioned the group's work in a 1994 Memorial Day speech. One of the students involved in the project wrote "none of us could have predicted the astounding course this project would follow."

Discover what this "astounding course" was by joining fellow history buffs — family and military and world — for the opportunity to learn the details of the fascinating mystery of the Black Suitcase letters.

While this program will appeal to a myriad of history lovers, it is certain to appeal to mystery fans as well. The event is free and open to the public and copies of the book, The Black Suitcase Mystery, will be available for purchase from Downs upon conclusion of the discussion.

For more information, visit the Siuslaw Public Library, call 541-997-3132 or visit www.siuslawlibrary.info.

Library to host 'Hang It All 2' during May

The Siuslaw Public Library will again present "Hang It All 2" beginning May 2. The exhibit will continue through May 30. This year's theme is "Animals."

Artwork will be on display throughout the month of May in the lobby gallery and lobby display case.

All artists and craftspeople are invited to enter this non-juried art show. This is a great opportunity for all artists to display their talent in a popular community exhibit.

Artists can submit one entry per person in any medium. Two-dimensional items must be framed and wired for hanging. No "sawtooth" hangers

are allowed. Maximum size for flat work is 38" measured either horizontally or vertically. Three-dimensional items must fit into the display case.

Maximum accepted size is 12" deep by 12" by 24".

All entries should be hand-delivered to the Bromley Room of the main library in Florence on May 2, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

No shipped items will be accepted.

Information brochures are available at both the main library and the Mapleton Branch.

For more information, call the library at 541-997-3132.

'Shuffling' off to a night of music at FEC

Shuffle Concert Review

BY ELLEN TEMPLAR

Shortly after 7 p.m. on April 7, Nancy Pearson, Seacoast Entertainment Association board member, walked onto an open stage set with piano, chairs, microphones and soft, violet lighting and introduced one of the most unique instrumental groups found anywhere.

Shuffle Concert is an eclectic group of instrumental musicians and one singer. Their main goal is to give their audiences the experience of great music in a variety of musical styles, and the experience of participation.

A menu of music choices from multiple styling venues is passed out. Attendees were advised to memorize their number.

Dressed in concert black, the musicians took their places. They called out the first number and a participant voiced their selection. Shuffle Concert musicians flawlessly executed Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's "The Star-Crossed Lovers." This slow, beautiful jazz piece expresses the sadness of Romeo and Juliet. Violin, clarinet and piano together are unusual and most of the music is arranged for particular instrument groupings playing duets, trios, quartets and ensemble.

Director and founder Ehiran Avni and clarinetist Moran Katz are both from Israel. Hassan Anderson, oboist and "Mr. Personality," is from Florida. All three are graduates of the famous Juilliard School in New York City and knew of each other at Juilliard. They did not come together in their music until after graduation.

In the upbeat manner of the ensemble, Katz expressed her joy and the love of what she was doing in every piece she played. Katz invoked the soulfulness of this instrument as she magically worked her woodwind.

Sofia Nowik sat center stage expertly plying her bow across the cello strings. She never missed a beat. She was constantly watching each musician as her cello, along with the keyboard, carried the rhythms for the ensemble.

Harmonics on a violin can sometimes sound like a fingernail scratching across a blackboard. There was none of that when Brendan Speltz played them. This technique is difficult to perfect but not for Speltz. Everything he did on that violin was done to perfection. He was not quite as good with the shak-



From left: Adrienne Pardee, Sofia Nowik, Brendan Speltz, Nancy Pearson, Ehiran Avni, Hassan Anderson and Moran Katz (photo by Ellen Templar)

ers as Anderson in one piece, but did have a definite violin wrist technique with them.

Soprano Adrienne Pardee has an absolutely lovely voice. When she turns up the vocal volume, it can probably be heard out in the parking lot. She often sang without a microphone and her voice was just as lovely soft, but not always heard by the back row.

A highlight of the evening was "Far From The Home I Love" from Brock and Harnick's "Fiddler On The Roof," performed by Pardee, Anderson on oboe and Avni.

Anderson introduced this piece as being about a "hot boy" and then proceeded to unbutton his shirt a bit while eyeing Pardee. Shortly after Pardee started singing, she broke up and asked to start over. She stated, "I can't stop think-

ing about the hot boy."

Everyone cracked up then. Anderson excused himself from the stage, returning with his shirt buttoned and a great deal of decorum. The piece started again and Pardee sang this sad, emotional song beautifully.

When it ended, Anderson crossed the stage and gave Pardee a kiss on the cheek.

Perfection in playing one's instrument and then in playing in a group is accomplished by a great deal of practice, along with a lot of talent. The intonation of instruments may be even more important. A string can be played on a sliding scale. Winds can also hit various parts of a single note.

Perfection is achieved in intonation by listening to each other and not letting notes slide. Shuffle Concert has unbelievable and exquisite intonation

and clarity of tone.

Enough cannot be said about Avni. He is the consummate piano accompanist playing with perfection in the background letting the rest of the musicians stand out, never overpowering them with his vast talents.

It was a treat during "The Eleven O'clock Train," by A. Barbosa and arranged for the group by Oran Eldor, to hear his command of the keyboard. It would be good if he did more of that.

Presented by SEA producers Pat McArdle and Nancy Pearson, Shuffle Concert was the sixth in this seven-part series of SEA's 35th concert season. Don't miss SEA's next exciting concert, The New Hot Club of America, on May 13, at FEC.

For tickets, call 541-997-1994.

DentureMasters™ & Implant Center

45% OFF Implants NOW

FREE CONSULTATION **Dr. James Ridley, DDS**

206 Nopal Street
Florence, OR 97439

CALL NOW
541-997-6226

See the DentureMaster's difference, we do it all right here!

See Jim for your auto sales needs!

JOHNSTON

MOTOR COMPANY

2150 Hwy. 101 • Florence
(541) 997-3475 • 1-800-348-3475

www.theshedd.org

The Shedd Institute's Emerald City Jazz Kings

A 20th Anniversary Year of Swing!

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

E=McSwing!, 1943-46

Sat, April 23, 2:00 pm
Florence Events Center
Tickets: 541.997.1994

COLLIS WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP

...need a friend?

Meet Rose

No...not a dog, just curious, alright nosey if you must! I bet you cannot resist the "come hither look" in my eyes. Hypnotized yet? Well you should know I'm also an exuberant love biter at times when I can't get enough of you. If your good with that... now go grab the carrier and come and get me I am waiting to make you very happy.

If you would like to meet Rose any of her friends, please visit us at:

FLORENCE HUMANE SOCIETY
2840 Rhododendron Drive • Florence • 541-997-4277

www.florencehumane.org

This message brought to you by:

Siuslaw News + **shoppe**
Keep it local.

www.shoppelocal.biz

Breathtaking Oceanfront Home

Selling with No Reserve 4 p.m. PST
Friday, May 6, 2016 - Newport, Oregon

1723 NW Pacific Street, Newport, OR 97365
Previews April 24th, April 30th, May 1st 1-4 pm

- Ocean Front
- Commanding View of the Pacific Ocean and Lighthouse
- Executive in Home Office

- Lots of Garage/Shop Space
- Large Wine Cellar
- Lap Pool with Workout Area
- Close to Municipal Airport

10% Buyer's Premium

ASSITER assiter.com | 806.655.3900 **STUART** REALTY GROUP, INC.