

# Royal court takes center stage for Rhody Showcase May 11



The annual Rhododendron Festival is Florence's premiere event, bringing more than 10,000 people to this small, coastal town for four days of celebration. But before the vendors, bikers and parades fill the streets, the Rhody Court take to the stage for the Rhododendron Court Scholarship Showcase

to determine this year's royalty.

Once known as the Rhododendron Pageant and now held in advance of the annual Rhododendron Festival, the event features local high school juniors and seniors who will compete for scholarships and title of Queen Rhododendra during Rhododendron Days.

The showcase will be Wednesday, May 11, at 6:30 p.m., at the Florence Events Center, along with video presentations, displays of talent, dance numbers and live interviews of the princesses.

In addition, a junior court of five princesses and five princes will represent grades 1 through 5.

For the past several weeks, members of the Senior Rhody Court and Junior Princesses have been serving as ambassadors for the festival by visiting senior residences, volunteering in the community and, most

recently, rehearsing their talents for the fun-filled Rhody Showcase.

Court members will be judged individually on participation, mentorship, public speaking and platform presentation, pin sales and talent.

Queen Rhododendra will be crowned at the end of the showcase, and both courts will make appearances in the the Kids Parade and Grand Floral Parade during the 109th Rhododendron Festival, May 19 through 22.

Advance tickets are on sale now for \$13 and are available through the Florence Events Center box office by calling 541-997-1994.



## Spoken Word poets have a chance to shine with rhyme

Get your rhyme on May 7, during the Big Wave Spoken Word Poetry Slam and Contest taking place at 6 p.m. at the Florence Events Center. Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) is the organizer of this statewide event, which is offering the largest cash prizes in Oregon.

The first place winner will receive \$500, along with \$250 for second place and \$100 for third.

Poetry slams were invented in the late 80's in Chicago as a way of breathing new life into open-mic poetry events. The audience is involved, not only because the five judges are chosen randomly from the audience, but also because audience members are encouraged to verbalize or otherwise indicate their appreciation or dissatisfaction with the judges scoring.

Finger snapping indicates the poet has said something that resonates with the audience. Booing of scores that are deemed too low, and wild clapping and whistling for those brave poets who bare their souls, are

common.

Poetry slams attract a wide range of poets and diverse subject matter, including heartfelt love poetry, searing social commentary, comedic routines, and bittersweet personal stories.

Poets are free to perform any style.

"If you have never been to a Spoken Word Poetry contest," says chairwoman Bettie Egerton, "this is the one to attend. We will have the best of the best, from all around Oregon. You will laugh, cry, snap your fingers in appreciation and be emotionally transformed by the poetry you hear."

Admission to the event is \$10, which supports FRAA Poetry Events and the Youth Poetry Program.

A special youth poetry contest will be held at 2 p.m., with the winner receiving \$100, \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place.

For more information, visit the FRAA website at fraaoregon.org.



## An evening of Wine and Wallflowers returns

Come create your own wall art with artist John Leasure while enjoying a glass of wine Saturday, May 14, beginning at 6:30 p.m. All the paints, canvas and art instruction are provided to create your own sunflower masterpiece. Tickets are \$40 per person and include a free beverage (one glass of wine or non-alcoholic choice) and a multitude of delicious snacks while participants are given professional, step-by-step painting instruction.

Space is limited, so reserve your spot by visiting [www.eventcenter.org](http://www.eventcenter.org), stop by the FEC box office at 715 Quince Street, or call at 541-997-1994.

This fun event is sponsored by the Friends of the Florence Events Center.

