

Acclaimed author Kirkpatrick to speak at Shore Acres

COOS BAY — Twenty years ago, Coos Bay residents Ken and Nancy Tedder brought their relatives Jane and Jerry Kirkpatrick to Shore Acres State Park.

What followed was the acclaimed book “A Gathering of Finches” (1997) by author Jane Kirkpatrick. That visit to the park led to her journey to discover the story of Cassie Hendricks Stearns Simpson, for whom Louis Simpson designed this now jewel of a state park.

The author will sign her books at the park Sunday, June 26, from 1 to 3 p.m. She will make a presentation at 1:30 p.m., and remain to chat with visitors.

Friends of Shore Acres will serve refreshments.

“I kept trying to find out what kind of a woman would inspire this beautiful place,” said Kirkpatrick. “My husband loves me very much but he gives me earrings. Who was this woman and why did-



COURTESY PHOTO

Jane Kirkpatrick

n't we know more about her?"

With some trepidation she called on descendant of Cassie Simpson, Peg Day,

who enthusiastically joined her quest helping her uncover lost documents.

“The book has touched people from around the world,” Kirkpatrick says. “I hear from descendants of Louie’s brother and sister, and from people who read the book and said they’d changed their lives because of it.”

The book was adapted into a stage production performed by North Bend’s Waterfront Players, led by Judy McDonald, in the early 2000s.

Kirkpatrick dedicated the book to her sister, Judy Hurlley, who died later that year.

Thousands of visitors each year enjoy the gardens and Kirkpatrick notes that people make the trek with family members to see for themselves this lavish estate that marked a great though tragic love affair.

Publisher’s Weekly says “Kirkpatrick is a master at using fiction to illuminate

history’s truth.”

Kirkpatrick’s titles have won several national awards and been short-listed for awards, such as the Oregon Book Award and the Christy national awards. Her novel “A Sweetness to the Soul” was named to Oregon’s 100: 1800-2000, as one of the best books about Oregon published in the past 200 years and earned the prestigious Wrangler Award.

“Where Lilacs Still Bloom” won the CAROL Award and A Light in the Wilderness earned the 2015 WILLA Literary Award.

Her latest release, “The Memory Weaver,” is a finalist for Western Writers of America Spur Award for Historical Fiction.

Kirkpatrick has spoken around the world about stories, history and women.

For more information, visit www.jkbooks.com or contact Shore Acres State Park.

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