

Signups being taken for annual TRCR job fair

Plans are underway for the annual Community Job Fair on Thursday, March 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., hosted by Three Rivers Casino Resort.

This fair will be free to attendees, businesses and community partners.

Three Rivers aims to bring parties and resources together to form a network in the local community by utilizing its marketing experience and contacts to publicize this event so that there is a large pool of attendees.

The following businesses have already committed to participating:

Driftwood Shores, Fred Meyer, Lane Community College, Les Schwab, Oregon

Department of Transportation, Siuslaw Fire District, Spruce Point Assisted Living, Three Rivers Casino Resort, Confederates Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, Northwest Youth Corps and Western Lane Ambulance District.

Additional interested businesses and community partners who would like to participate in this free event are invited to be a part of this opportunity to reach out to interested applicants and talk with them in person before the busy season.

For more information or to sign up to participate, contact Pam Hickson at 541-902-6504.

IT'S A MIRACLE ON KINGWOOD STREET

"Santaland Diaries" Review

BY BURNEY GARELICK

This is the time of year when you can never have too many elves. Last weekend, Florence frolicked with a plethora of Holly Jolly elves — big, little, and swivel-hipped — rockin' around the Christmas tree. This weekend and next, Fat Cat Productions features a stupendous single elf at Class Act Theatre (CAT) on Kingwood Street.

The redoubtable Matt Korso is Crumpet the elf in "The Santaland Diaries," by humorist David Sedaris, that began as a radio essay and morphed into a one-act, one-man play, adapted by Joe Mantello, and a holiday favorite throughout the country.

Korso is Florence's extraordinary chameleon, a consummate actor who doesn't just act but so thoroughly transforms himself that he inhabits a character that never fails to capture the hearts and minds of an audience. The emcee in "Cabaret" and Leaf Coneybear in "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" are two of his glorious performances.

In "Santaland," Korso's character is an out-of-work actor

who finds a job as one of Santa's elves at Macy's department store in New York City. It's a different story than the iconic holiday movie about Kris Kringle having to prove he's Santa, so don't expect the sweet sentimentality of "The Miracle on 34th Street."

In Crumpet's "Santaland," Santa's identity is not questioned; in fact, there are many Santas of varying dispositions, including salesmen and Wall Street brokers, all clamoring for cash for Ho Ho Ho-ing. And there are strange and plentiful elves and dwarfs with elfin psychoses and names like Jingle Bells and Snowball.

Most of all, there's Crumpet, who's just trying to get along. A crumpet, by the way, is a pastry, a cross between an English muffin and a pancake, grilled on one side with the top toasty with nooks and crannies to be slathered with butter and jam. By the time Crumpet fulfills his many elfin duties, he's pretty toasty, sustained with wee nips from a brown bottle, and he's pretty cynical at the array of customers and colleagues he encounters.

Korso is a triumph as Crumpet, on the festive CAT stage all alone for an hour straight telling tales — recreating elf school, putting on his cuddly red and green elf suit complete with cap and pointy shoes, working with stage-door parents and whining children,

kibitzing with fellow elves, and serving Santas who have peculiar ways of coping.

In a moment of frustration, Crumpet ruminates about the word "Santa" and how it is an anagram in which the letters can be jumbled to form "Satan" which leads to a devilish story. But when the job ends on Christmas Eve, Crumpet is overcome with sentiment, and just as he is about to express kindness to his employer, he is jolted back to reality by a bel-lowing Grinch.

So, if you, like me, enjoy playing with words like "diary" and "dairy," scoop an imaginary dish of ice cream, willingly suspend your disbelief and settle back for outright prolonged laughter at Korso's masterful interpretation of "The Santaland Diaries."

But wait! I've got the horse before the cart — or the reindeer before the sleigh. Crumpet's story encompasses Act Two of this production.

It is preceded by Act One, a kind of overture of "Holiday Music and Musings," presented by three of Florence's finest vocalists—Maree Beers, Hilary Roach and Jason Wood.

Beers is absolutely stunning in voice and appearance, the best jazz singer around. Roach, who dazzled audiences as Mabel in the recent "Pirates of Penzance," plays the comic of the trio with a big, bright smile and a red sweater sporting a silly reindeer that resembles its wearer. Wood, who directed "Santaland," is a peerless vocal-

ist, actor, arranger, vocal instructor and a sort of Dr. Frankenstein as the creator of Fanny Ruggburn, a naughty lady. The trio's songs, to recorded music, include holiday favorites, parodies of holiday favorites and readings from Sedaris' book, "Holidays On Ice," including his infamous story of the Dutch Santa, formerly Bishop of Turkey, currently living in Spain, and his Six or Eight Black Men, who are neither elves nor helpers. You'll want to hear this.

There is a caveat to this splendid production. Crumpet may not be everyone's cup of tea. Some of the language, while in context and character, may be offensive to some, and some of the humor blue. Also, the show may not be appropriate for children, no matter how above-average they may be.

Otherwise, it's A Miracle on Kingwood Street. Crumpet, the musical trio, and Fat Cat Productions wish you a Merry Christmas, A White Christmas, A Blue Christmas or A Rainbow Christmas — whatever stuffs your stocking. So deck the halls and roast the chestnuts. It's time for laughing, singing, spreading joy to the world and slathering jam on crumpets.

"The Santaland Diaries" plays this weekend, Dec. 10 to 11, and next weekend, Dec. 16 to 18, at 509 Kingwood St. in Florence.

For more information or tickets, call 866-967-8067 or visit catproductions.org.

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Paint holiday scene at Mindpower Gallery

REEDSPORT — Florence artist Karyllynn Keppol is teaching a Holiday Paint and Wine event at Mindpower Gallery, 417 Fir Avenue in Reedsport, tonight from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Keppol is a Siuslaw High School graduate and has two degrees in fine art. She will be demonstrating how to paint a festive scene using a

simple palette. Guests can browse the gallery, sip wine and learn some of Keppol's favorite techniques.

Tickets are \$35 and include all materials and a glass of wine for people 21 and older.

For more information or to reserve your place, call 541-271-2485.

Florence Christian Church, Fred Meyer holding food drive

Florence Christian Church and Fred Meyer are teaming up for the third annual Holiday Food Drive.

Food will be collected today from noon to 4 p.m. at Fred Meyer, 4701 Highway 101 in Florence.

Most needed items are

peanut butter, tuna, beef stew, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti sauce, canned fruit, diced tomatoes, sugar, coffee, baby formula, chili, milk and eggs.

All food purchased and donated will go to Florence Food Share.

...need a friend?

Meet Butch

Hi, my name is Butch Cassidy. Our group of kittens were named after the wild bunch as we were found in the woods near the South Jetty. We were very shy when we first came in, but every day we are getting more and more friendly with our care givers. Please come in and meet us in the Kitten Adoption Room at OCHS.

If you would like to meet Butch or any of his friends, please visit us at:

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