

On the road — again

Second book details 99's 'Folk History'

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

While it certainly has the ability to move people and goods from place to place, local author Josephine "Jo" Brew feels that Interstate 5 lacks much of the charm of its predecessor.

"The freeway makes a point of not connecting cities," Brew said. "You can go all the way from one end to the other and never be in one city."

For her newest book, Brew eschews the Interstate in favor of the many cities along Highway 99, often stopping in lesser-known locales and even paying a visit to ghost towns along the way. But "Oregon's Main Street: U.S. Highway 99, The Folk History" is about more than the cities that Oregonians call home. Instead, the book tells the history of the famed highway through the stories of those who lived there, stories that have thus far found an enchanted audience.

"We're delivering books to stores, and people seem to be enjoying them," Brew said. "They like that there are short pieces that can be read one or two at a time, but a lot of people say they want to keep a copy, so they can follow the road."

Brew and family followed the road a lot during her early years. She attended high school in Ashland, moving from north to south along 99 "as the road was built." She's lived and worked in California, Grants Pass and has taught in Cottage Grove. These days, Brew's work appears in a regular column in Creswell's "Chronicle."

A clipping from a Chronicle column that looked back on her early days in Ashland eventually formed the basis of her first book.

"I always enjoyed those little stories," she said. For over four years, she dutifully interviewed, listened and copied them down, often with the need to verify historical details later on. Along the way, she talked with several families and often several generations of the same family.

After amassing stories by visiting small museums up and down the Highway and accepting submissions from others with a story to tell, Brew felt she had a rough draft that was ready for an editor. The book would tell the tales of Highway 99 in sections corresponding to maps that would also be included.

Brew sent her early draft to Pat Edwards, herself a published local author of historical accounts such as "Sawdust and Cider"



courtesy photo

Author Jo Brew spent four years compiling stories about life in the communities along Highway 99.

and "From Sawdust and Cider to Wine," which chronicle the history of the Lorane area. Right away, they zeroed in on a problem.

"She said to me, 'You have 845 pages,'" Brew said. "So eventually we decided we would have to separate it into two books."

After some wrangling, it was decided that the stories Brew loved so well would comprise the first book; "U.S. Highway 99: The Stories," which was released in 2013 with little fanfare or promotion. They then decided that Edwards would handle the historical details that populate "Folk History," a history again told with the voices of those who lived it.

"Folk History" travels Highway 99 sharing stories along the way. In Cottage Grove, much attention

is paid to the area's pioneering timber families, and the small communities of Saginaw and Walker also get a nod.

Brew and Edwards started their promotional efforts at a presentation organized by the Cottage Grove Genealogical Society, which Edwards said drew a nice crowd. Many left with copies of both books, which are now often purchased as a set.

"From hearing everybody's reactions to it, I'd say they've taken it very well," Edwards said. "I was especially nervous about how historians would take it, but even they seem impressed."

Both books can be purchased at the Genealogical Society office in the Community Center and at the Bookmine in Cottage Grove.

Crash claims life of Dorena man

The Lane County Sheriff's Office is crediting the driver of a tall truck with discovering the car wreck that claimed the life of a 75-year old Dorena man on Thursday.

On Jan. 22, the Sheriff's Office received a report of a vehicle that was located 30-40 feet down a ravine off Row River Road between milepost 18 and 19. According to Public Information Officer Carrie Carver, the vehicle was situated far enough down the ravine that it is unlikely that it would have been visible from a passenger vehicle; however, the community member reporting the wreckage was driving a commercial truck that sat far enough off the ground to provide visibility. When the vehicle was spotted, the community member called for help. It remains unknown at this time when the accident occurred or why the vehicle veered off the road.

The driver, Robert Peck of Dorena, was found deceased in the vehicle. Peck was reported as a missing person on Tuesday, Jan. 20 by his caregiver. The Lane County Sheriff's Office will conduct a death investigation in conjunction with the Lane County Medical Examiner's Office.

Flue fire spreads to attic, displacing family

Fire dept. officials still exploring why blaze spread

What started out as a report of a flue fire on Thursday escalated quickly for officials with South Lane County Fire and Rescue.

Division Chief Joe Raade said the department responded to a report of a chimney or flue fire (a fire involving the accumulated soot or creosote in a chimney) in the 1300 block of S. 8th St. across from Kennedy High School.

"When we got there, we noticed that the outside of the flue was burning," Raade said. "We opened the attic, and the whole attic had burned already."

The cause of the fire is unknown, and Raade said firefighters also wonder how the blaze could have transferred from the flue to the nearby attic. Occasionally, he said, fires escape a flue in which the inner jacket has decayed.

"The homeowners are lucky to have discovered it when they did," he said. "They were an hour or two from going to bed, and then things could have been different. Looking from the outside of the house, you can't even really tell anything has been burned."

The fire did considerable damage to the home, however, and the Cascades Region office of the American Red Cross reportedly assisted the family consisting of two adults, a child and a dog with temporary housing.

Committee to discuss bond levy, replacing Harrison

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

South Lane School District officials have sought to replace the aging building that houses Harrison Elementary School for some time, and a meeting scheduled this week should start the most in-depth conversation on how to make replacing Harrison a reality.

Built in 1949, Harrison is one of South Lane's oldest buildings and its second-largest elementary school. In December, South Lane Superintendent Krista Parent petitioned the School Board to create a committee charged with exploring the feasibility of a local tax levy that would raise funds to build a

new Harrison, though Parent didn't stop there. Many technological and facilities upgrades are necessary throughout the District, Parent said, and a bond to put before local voters may be the only way such upgrades could be financed.

At the Board's Dec. 1 meeting, Parent read a draft 'statement of purpose' that charges the bond advisory committee with "reviewing and prioritizing the District's facilities needs" and "conferring on recommendations regarding a bond for facilities upgrades."

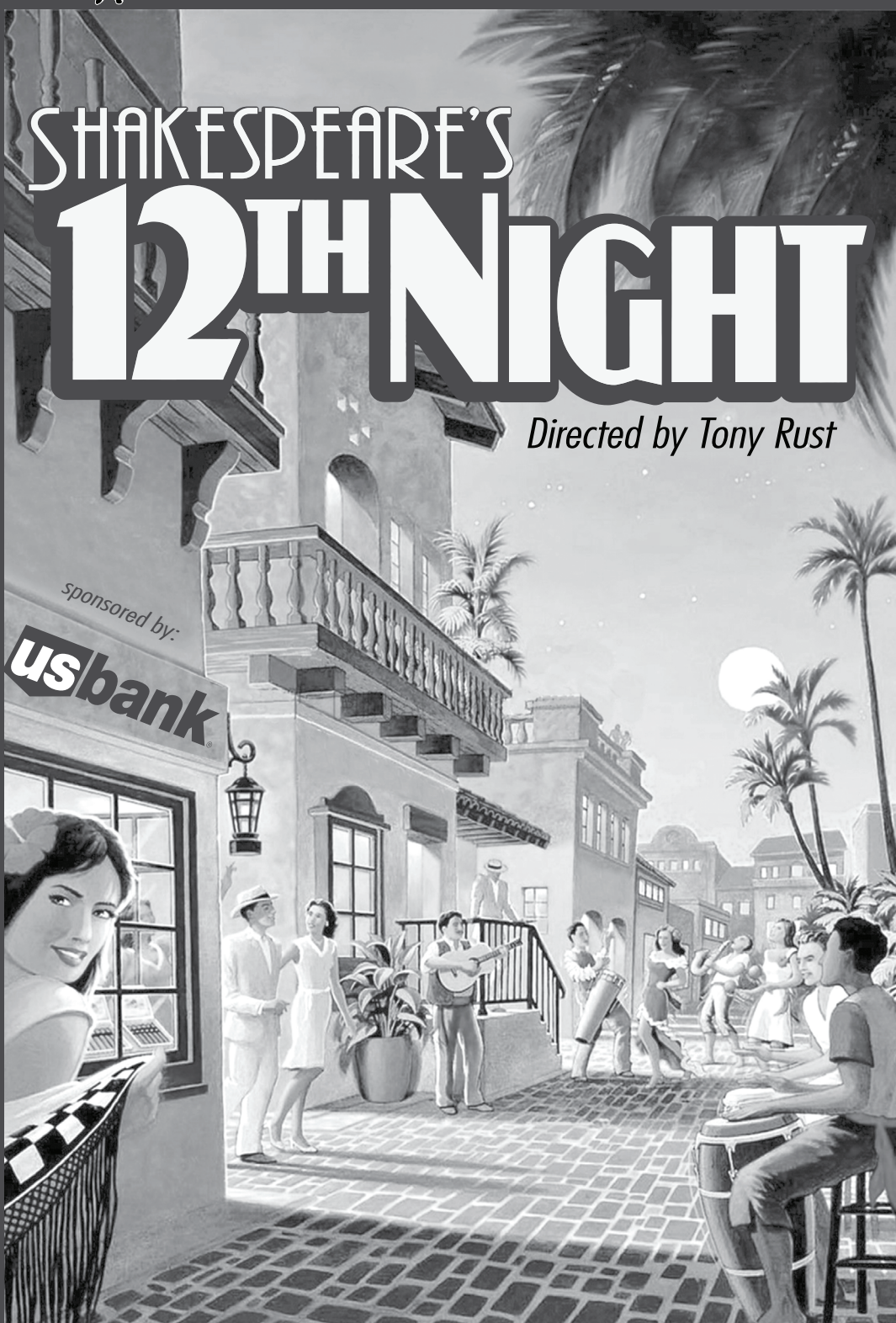
Parent said those recommendations could also potentially involve technology and security upgrades throughout the District, a new pool, baseball field and perform-

ing arts center.

"We shouldn't just call it the Harrison committee," she said. "There are other possibilities that should be wide open. I don't want to narrow the possibilities of things I think we won't ever get without a bond. With regard to technology, the gap just gets wider and wider, and security in our facilities is just really not acceptable."

Applications for prospective members of the bond advisory committee have come in steadily, according to District spokesperson Garrett Bridgens, who said the committee will likely consist of 10-12 district employees and a similar number of interested citizens.

Cottage Theatre presents
A comic "triángulo de amore" set in 1950s Havana



January 30, 31, February 1*
February 5, 6, 7, 8* • 12, 13, 14, 15* *matinee

Tickets available online, by phone, or at the door one hour before performance
Thursday-Saturday 8:00 pm; Sunday 2:30 pm. \$19 Adult, \$16 Youth (age 6-18)
www.cottagetheatre.org • 541-942-8001 • 700 Village Drive • Cottage Grove



Find Local Businesses.

Introducing the newest way to find the businesses that mean the most to you.

www.shoppelocal.biz

Find GREAT
MONEY SAVING COUPONS
from local businesses

 Cottage Grove
Keep it local. Sentinel

Shoppe™ is a trademark of News Media Corp.