

Radio CoGro features local perspective, talent

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

When I heard there would be a song about yours truly, the nervousness turned to a twinge of dread.

Last week, this reporter was asked to be a guest on a locally based radio show with a decidedly local flavor, and it was a bit daunting to show up at Little Onion Studios in Cottage Grove and learn that the weekly happenings as relayed by the Cottage Grove Sentinel often figure prominently into the conversation there.

Still, I needn't have worried, as the folks at Radio CoGro are a welcoming bunch, and the 20 minutes of radio I was fortunate enough to be a part of were one of the highlights of my week (in addition to the fact that the tune, written by Michael Brennan, was a spot-on bit of acoustic blues.)

Last week marked the 35th production of Radio CoGro,

which airs three times a day locally on Cottage Grove-based FM station KSOW 106.7. It's a show that features a bluesy, folksy blend of music and spoken word poetry, as envisioned by Dean Still of Aprovecho Research Center fame, brought to life by its producer, the Godfather, and written and performed by Still and a cast that often features local musicians Brennan, Bretagne Werner, Samuel Benston and others.

Still himself bills Radio CoGro as "a 20-minute, home-grown, twisted version of a Prairie Home Companion-type show," and after experiencing it myself, it's difficult to come up with a better descriptor. This week's show got started with "A Light in the Window," a tune co-written by Still and Werner, whose razor-sharp voice provided extra poignancy to a perfectly wistful old-timey number. Brennan's blues followed, and a Werner-penned tune entitled "In the Tide" painted a haunting



photo by Jon Stinnett

Michael Brennan and Bretagne Werner tune up for a taping of Radio CoGro.

picture of a relationship gone wrong. There was plenty of good-natured ribbing from the group squeezed between four songs in a packed 20-minute set just right for radio or a podcast.

Still said the collaboration that led to the production of his recent play "Baked Goods," a dark comedy detailing the fate of an Oregon heated to a frenzy by climate change, led even further toward a live radio show, which is filmed Thursday evenings and runs three times each day

throughout the following week. The show can be heard daily on KSOW at 7:40 a.m., 11:40 a.m. and 4:40 p.m. Past shows can also be experienced via a blog located at <https://bakedgoods-cogro.bandcamp.com/>.

Radio CoGro plans a live extravaganza for its last show of the season before the summer, which is set for taping on Friday, May 15 at the Arcade Theater on Main Street downtown. There is a \$5 cover charge for the event.

Only REAL men iron clothes at 3,000 feet

BY NED HICKSON
News Media Corporation

I have reached the conclusion that most of the world's ironing is now being done by men. I say this because it's the only explanation I have for a sport called "extreme" ironing, which is actually being lobbied as an Olympic event by "ironing enthusiasts" — a phrase referred to in the Bible as a sign of the coming apocalypse.

And four horsemen will come from the sky. And they will lay waste to the land, but not before having their robes pressed by ironing enthusiasts.

It's easy to understand how extreme ironing evolved if you keep in mind this simple truth about the male species:

Given enough time, any man performing a mundane task will find a way to hurt himself.

And if you can hurt yourself doing it, then it's practically a sport already. Sure, bowling and golf may appear to be exceptions to this rule. But ask anyone who has ever jammed their finger in the ball return, or inadvertently left a tee in their back pocket, and they'll tell you there is plenty of danger involved.

As a man who irons, I know, firsthand, the danger that comes with pressing my daughters' favorite clothes. Especially if I use the wrong setting and turn what was once a flowery cotton blouse into our newest hand towel. Until recently, men who ironed were looked upon as being wimpy. This was a stigma left over from an earlier time when men brought home the bacon and women cooked it ...

... Then cleaned the kitchen, vacuumed, washed the dishes, bathed the kids, and did all the laundry. Back then, men who refused to perform domestic chores were still called mascu-

line things such as "The Breadwinner," "King of the Castle," and "Man of the House."

Generally by other men.

Today, men who want to bring home the bacon — while avoiding any domestic chores — are called other things, such as "single" or "recently divorced."

As a result, we men have come up with a way to demonstrate our unquestionable maleness by 1) taking a simple task and 2) making it as difficult as humanly possible. This is the general idea behind "extreme" ironing, which, according to its website (www.extremeironing.com) "combines the excitement of an 'extreme' sport with the satisfaction of a well-pressed shirt."

Being a man, I can appreciate that kind of logic.

Anyone woman can iron a pair of slacks; it takes a MAN to do it while jumping out of a plane.

Because of this, I have decided to train for the 2016 Extreme Ironing World Championships, which my daughters have pledged their support for by providing me with as much ironing to do as possible. In fact, as a demonstration of their unselfish commitment to my goal, they each recently purchased entire new wardrobes, none of which is "wrinkle free."

My hope is that the experience will draw us even closer together as a family.

At least, once I can find them on the other side of this pile of ironing.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

FORUM

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with previous experience as a business owner, preschool teacher and daycare provider, while Tony (Lyman) Appellof described his occupation as an estimator with Kendall Auto Group and lists himself as an Army veteran of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Mort, meanwhile, taught chemistry at Lane Community College for 16 years, according to his filing.

Martin told the Sentinel last week that she hopes to help the District set its priorities for the next four years.

"We're in good shape compared with other districts," she said. "We just have to take things as they come, and I'm excited to be there and be helpful

as part of that process."

Also entering the fray will be three candidates who will vie for the Position 6 seat soon to be vacated by Joe Raade. Long-time South Lane educator Jerry Settlemeyer has filed for the seat, along with Nevin Beckes and Ben Price.

"I still really like to see kids be successful," Settlemeyer said. "I have energy to devote to kids, and there's not any vendetta or specific agenda behind it, though I'm not sure we focus enough on resources for our youngest students."

Beckes, a co-owner of Jack Sprats restaurant and Weyerhaeuser employee, said he's passionate about schools and that his life has depended on public education. He said he attended

a recent school board meeting that struck a chord.

"It felt like, 'this is where I want to be,'" he said. "It looks like a great way to apply myself and to get involved."

Beckes expressed a desire to foster practical education in schools such as personal finance and auto care.

"A lot of education seems to be geared toward more education," he said. "But without the other stuff, students can struggle later on. We can do a better job preparing our young people."

Price, a co-owner of Hard Knocks Brewing, said that he's chosen to become involved in education locally before his young son gets to school age.

"If you want to make changes, you have to start before they get

to school," he said.

Price said he'll espouse a general focus on educational attainment, including the "stuff that doesn't make headlines."

"Our district is doing well relative to others, but compared to other countries, things aren't very good," he said. "Our public education system has become so arduous, and it's become so common to acknowledge it that it just kind of gets ignored. What about bearing down on getting kids to learn and realize that their education is not just a social experience?"

Next week's forum will include opportunities for written questions from the audience, according to Leslie Rubinstein of the Blackberry Pie Society.

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