

Area dancer, 12, to audition for TV show

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Though she's only 12 years old, Cottage Grove's Kenady Conforth has had more than a few opportunities to show local audiences her moves. This week, however, Conforth hopes a much broader audience will see what she can do.

On Thursday, Conforth will journey to Chicago to audition for a spot in the television series "So You Think You Can Dance." Her mother, Mandy Conforth, said the competition is for dancers age 8-13, a group the show has never catered to before. Dancers chosen to compete will be paired with one of the show's "all-stars."

"There was a round of video and a round of live auditions," Mandy Conforth said. "But we

have no way of knowing how many people there will be."

Meanwhile, the younger Conforth said she viewed an announcement regarding the show on Facebook as a way to make her big break in dance.

"I think it was the universe telling me this is something I needed to do," she said. "In the dance world, once you're 25, there's really nothing for you, so it's better to start young."

Conforth, whose mom is also a dancer, has been working hard since age five. Her education began in hip-hop dance and now includes instruction in ballet, contemporary, tap and jazz. She's taken many classes at Cottage Grove's South Lane Ballet Academy, where she also teaches three classes per week, though her contemporary instruction brings her to Eugene.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Kenady Conforth, 12, poses with her Friday hip-hop dance students. Conforth will audition for ABC's "So You Think You Can Dance" this week.

In her already full career, Conforth has appeared locally in "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," "Beauty and the Beast," "Gypsy," "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" and "Fiddler on the Roof."

"I like to keep busy," she said.

"I'm just going there (to Chicago) to show my talent. If I don't get in, I'll still know I showed them what I had."

If chosen to compete on the show, Conforth may be asked to commit to 12 weeks of filming.

Police searching for missing CG man

William Thomas Stuart, 44, has been unaccounted-for since Christmas

The Cottage Grove Police Department is seeking the public's help to locate a Cottage Grove man who has not been in contact with his family since Christmas.

Police say William Thomas Stuart, 44, is a member of the local transient community who was last seen around Christmas of 2015 and has not since had contact with his family, which is reportedly concerned about his welfare.

Stuart was last seen with a bushy brown beard and hair. He has no known scars or tattoos

and is described as five feet, eight inches tall, weighing 165 pounds with blue eyes and brown hair. Those with information regarding Stuart's whereabouts are asked to contact CGPD's Doug Skaggs at 541-942-9145 x. 140.



William Thomas Stuart

Brissenden named Justice of the Peace

On Tuesday, March 1, Oregon Governor Kate Brown announced the appointment of Rick Brissenden to fill the position of Justice of the Peace on the Lane County Justice Court. Brissenden is slated to fill the position — based in Florence — made vacant by Justice of the Peace Gary Carl's Feb. 29 resignation.

"I am impressed by Rick Brissenden's almost 20 years of service to the people of Florence as their Municipal Judge," Governor Brown said. "I know he will bring the

same long-established integrity and conscientious decision making to his new role — based in the very same courtroom — as well."

Brissenden presided over Cottage Grove's Municipal Court as its judge for 12 years. A contentious 5-2 vote by the City Council in May of 2012 led to his ouster, and Brissenden later said that a letter detailing the decision cited only "court efficiencies" as reason for his termination. The judge's chair would eventually be filled by Martin Fisher.



Rick Brissenden served as CG Municipal Court judge until 2012.

Safe Families for Children project underway

About 40 people, including local officials and church representatives, gathered Saturday afternoon at the Cottage Grove Armory for the kickoff ceremony to launch the "Safe Families for Children" Project. The project aims to reduce child abuse and neglect in Cottage Grove, and eight local churches initially signed up to support families in crisis situations by providing a loving, temporary home for children who might otherwise end up in the foster care system. Orga-



photo by Cindy Weeldreyer

nized by Christians as Family Advocates (CAFA), the new program is part of the countywide 90x30 Project to reduce child abuse 90

percent by the year 2030. For more information contact Emily Johnson at 541-686-6000 x558 or send an email to emilyj@cafaweb.com.

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