

Local couple celebrated more than 50 Valentine's Days



By Caitlyn May
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There was no such thing as an ATM when Berneda met Bruce. No disposable lighters, ATM machines, bar code scanners or post-it notes. Television, though, did exist and by the persistence of a neighbor and the charity of a father, a 55 year old story began.

Berneda McDonald's neighbor kept telling

her there was a guy she ought to meet. On New Year's Eve, 1962, he showed up at her door with a used TV from his father for the family to use.

"I kind of knew what was going on," she said. 10 months later, they were married.

Bruce and Berneda were 18 when they promised to stick together through sickness and in health, for richer or poorer and in October, they'll celebrate 55 years together.

"It's a commitment," Bruce said. "It's too easy now to get a divorce and walk away."

It was just an hour before the infamous Columbus Day storm in Oregon when the McDonalds sealed their marriage at the courthouse in Eugene. There was no wedding dress, tuxedo or expensive flowers.

"Big weddings don't make it last," Bernetta said.

What the couple have found does work is a mixture of dedication, religion and understanding. Don't go in expecting it to be perfect, Berneda says and according to Bruce marriage is a lot of give and

take. But after more than 50 years together, they say if couples remember that they love each other and keep God at the center of their lives, they'll make it through and while health issues and other distractions pop up, this year's Valentine's will be like the rest.

"We always exchange cards and chocolate," Bernetta said. The chocolate, they say, is usually shared but this year they are going to attempt to forgo it.

"She's worked so hard at dieting," Bruce said.

Work is not a foreign concept to the couple who raised two children and now enjoy two grandchildren, both girls, and two great-grandchildren.

And while cards and candy usually mark Valentine's Day, Berneda remembers one Feb. 14 that Bruce managed to surprise her with something different.

"I had brought my car in to be fixed and I went in and there was a beautiful bouquet of 25 roses. I thought, 'those are beautiful.' It wasn't until he was done fixing my car that he said, 'those are for you.' They were from Bruce."

CASA in need of volunteers

Representative stresses need for rural help

By Caitlyn May
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Former Cottage Grove City Council member and current executive director for the area's CASA program, Heather Murphy, came before the board on Monday night with a request: more volunteers.

CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocates speak on behalf of foster children or children otherwise involved in the court system where a neutral third party is needed.

Murphy began her presentation with a video of "Logan," a young boy who had made his way through foster care and the adoption process with the help of his CASA

volunteer.

"There are 200 CASA volunteers," Murphy said. She went on to note that, at last count, there were 181 children in the system being served by South Lane which includes Cottage Grove, Creswell and Pleasant Hill.

"The judges pay very close attention to the CASA volunteers. The first court case I sat in on, the one person the judge gave marching order to, even with all of the lawyers and parents in the room, was the CASA volunteer to make sure A, B and C got done," Murphy said.

CASA operates on a 4:1 ration. For every dollar it gets from the legislature, it raises four.

As a result, it relies on volunteers who undergo 40 hours of training.

Volunteers, according to Murphy, can be retired or have full-time jobs as long as they are flexible enough to allow the volunteer to attend court dates.

Councilor Mike Fleck spoke, noting his crammed schedule but encouraged anyone with the time to take part in the program.

"I'm here tonight to really just spread awareness and spread the word. We need volunteers in rural areas," Murphy said.

Interested individuals can visit the CASA website for more information on becoming a volunteer at <https://www.casa-lane.org>.

SDC fees rile city council

By Caitlyn May
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The Cottage Grove City Council spent more than half an hour debating its role in raising or lowering System Development Charges (SDC) during the Monday, Feb. 13 meeting.

The council originally debated the topic earlier this year when it was asked to vote on SDCs and discovered it was not actually voting on increasing or decreasing the fees but rather, on whether or not to include the automatic increase in their fee schedule so that the change could be readily known by the public.

At the time, the procedure drew criticism from members including councilman Mike Fleck who inquired as to the legality of a previous council bonding the current council to raise the fees.

Currently, Cottage Grove's code notes that the SDC fees will increase. It was Fleck's contention the current board should vote on whether or not that occurs.

It was an argument he made Monday night as well, saying, "What I'm asking is the opportunity for the city to have a say in that, whether or not we decide to increase the SDC or not. I believe this council should have this vote every year and have it matter. I'm appalled a former council said a future council will do this."

Councilman Jake Boone offered his services in presenting a slide show he had made for the council to explain SDC fees. In his presentation, Boone asked the board to entertain a fictional town, "Small Town." In Small Town, five houses each paid \$20 to build a water plant. The plant had a capacity to support 10 houses. To account for growth, Small Town set its SDC fees at \$20. Each time a new house is built, the new homeowner pays \$20 into a fund so that when the water plant reaches its 10 house capacity, the town has \$100 ready to pay for a new plant to support 10 new houses and so on.

"What Councilman Boone's example didn't take into account is inflation," city manager Richard Meyers noted.

Councilman Garland Burback stated that he disagreed with Fleck's take on the matter and said, "For me, it's just part of doing business. The person that's going to build a \$300,000-\$400,000 home, in my mind they would understand they have to pay some fees. If a person can afford to build a home, they can afford to pay for the fees."

Fleck argued that it took the council's responsibility away from it and offered a forthcoming solution to be discussed at a later date.

After conferring with the city attorney, the council opted to continue operating with the automatic increase in the fee but to do away with the vote that would notify residents of the change and instead make that process automatic as well.

City gets \$3,500 grant



The Titanic coat, located at the museum, will benefit from the grant.

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The city of Cottage Grove received a grant in the amount of \$3,500 from the state of Oregon, Parks and Recreation Department, State Historic Preservation Office through the Heritage All-Star Program. According to City Finance Director Roberta Likens, the grant must be used specifically to develop and install an exhibit for the Titanic coat currently housed at the museum. The money can be used to install protective material and install equipment to "enhance the digitization of and access to the collections of the Cottage Grove Historical Society." It may also be used to rehouse the remaining newspaper collection of the Cottage Grove Genealogical society.

The city was required to provide a match of \$1,675 to accept the grant. In order to spend the grant, the city council must comply with the requirements of local budget law and adopt a resolution to establish appropriations for the use of the grant funds.

According to Likens, the match amount will come from local organizations, citing the cost to the city as zero. She noted during Monday's meeting that the match would most likely come from in-kind donations. The acceptance of the grant did not add expenses to the city's 2016-2017 budget.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Registration Deadline

T.E.A.M.-Cottage Grove, a local networking group primarily focused on supporting nonprofit organizations, announces its first community-wide event to be held on Tuesday, Feb. 28. The Gathering of The Grove at The Green is designed to strengthen local nonprofit groups and to encourage greater community collaboration. The all-day event is from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Village Green Resort. Because seating is limited, early registration is strongly encouraged. Early Bird Registration Deadline is Feb. 16. Registration is \$25 in advance (\$20 each for additional person from the same organization). The fee after Feb. 17 and at the door is \$35 (\$30 each for additional persons from same group). Lunch and snacks are included in the fee. To request an application, send an email to teamcottagedgrove@gmail.com or call Beth at 541-942.2360.

History Program

The Historical Society is having their monthly program for anyone interested on Saturday, Feb. 18 at 10 a.m. at the Community Center at 700 E. Gibbs Ave. The topic will be the history and rehabilitation that has taken place at the First National Bank on the corner of Main and Sixth Street here in Cottage Grove. Refreshments will be provided and all are welcome to attend.

912 Project

A representative of the Jurisdiction Committee will speak at the next meeting of the Cottage Grove 912 Project on Monday, February 20th, 6:30 PM, at Stacy's Covered Bridge Restaurant, 401 E Main. The representative will discuss the committee's effort to educate public officials on how to take back control of public lands. The meeting is open to the public.

Volunteer Opportunities

Eugene Math Festival - Volunteers are needed to help with set-up, take-down and supervising activity groups from 9am - 2pm on February 18th. For more information on the festival please

visit <http://pages.uoregon.edu/nemirovm/festival.html>. For questions or to volunteer, please email coordinator Maria Nemirovskaya at nemirovm@uoregon.edu

Senior Meals - Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver 15-20 meals to homebound neighbors in Eugene and Springfield one weekday morning per week. Café 60 volunteers prepare and serve meals at various sites. In Springfield call 541-682-4368, in Eugene call 541-607-5065.

Elder Help - Volunteers provide companionship, transportation for shopping and errands, correspondence, reading and respite care to homebound clients. Training and on-going support provided. Contact Clarence at 541-517-6396 or RSVP at 541-741-6000 for details.

High School R&B Revue

The popular musical revue, directed by Cottage Grove High School Music Director Gabe Dickinson, opens February 23rd for four shows at the Cottage Theatre. For ticket information, contact the Cottage Theatre, 942-8001 or at www.cottagetheatre.org. Tickets are \$15 adults and \$10 for students. When the singing and dancing is over, students at the high school will have earned the \$8,000 or so needed to fund their way to music camps and competitions.

Opal Center Play

"Becky's New Car" opens Feb. 17 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$12. The play is a comedy directed by Marion Dempsey.

Swamp Meet

The Racing Swamp Meet will be held on Saturday, Feb. 18 beginning at 8 a.m. Admission is free. Booth space costs \$25. For more information or to sign-up call Heather at (541) 729-8666.

Live Tweets

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