

Old Mill Continued from A1



Princess Leia keeps watch over the store from her perch behind the cash register at Old Mill Farm Store in Cottage Grove.

'telephone,' Edison, the lightbulb, the North won the civil war, the Wright brothers had a new invention as well and a new company was in business under a guy named Ford. Amelia Earhart was missing, JFK had been shot, they were marching in Selma, Clinton lied and then he told the truth about the stain on the dress, there were weapons of mass destruction, America had an African-American president—they talked about it all. And they did it at that counter.

The walls at Old Mill Farm don't

talk—they chatter. A bell better suited for a small cow hangs just below the door frame so as to alert Debbie Lavios and Chuck McLeod that a customer has come in. The shelves are stocked with food for livestock, cats and dogs. Bird and other critter cages are for sale too and keeping watch over all of it is Princess Leia, the couple's small dog who sits perched on a chair behind the counter.

The pair have owned Old Mill Farms for 18 years but now, they're looking to move on.

"Our heaviest product is 100 pounds," Lavios said. "And as you get older, 100 pounds gets heavier. So, it's time to move on."

Lavios and McLeod are one of a handful of owners who have called Old Mill Farm theirs. The building has sat in the exact footprint since it opened in 1853—six years before the state of Oregon would join the union. The property has had seven major fires including one that robbed the place of its old 84-foot barn that served as a backdrop in Buster Keaton's famous

film, "The General."

It's gone through two or three rebuilding efforts and in 1906, the building supplied electricity to the first six street lights in Main St. in downtown Cottage Grove.

"This is a family place," Lavios said. "We have people who shopped here as nine year olds and they're old enough to be my grandparents now."

According to store records 42 families have been shopping at the Old Mill Farm store for two generations but now, the store that has been a fixture in Cottage Grove is up for sale.

"We're looking for a younger couple that wants to keep the place like it is," Lavios said. The property has been on the market since November and she says it has generated some interest but the couple is looking for the right buyer. "Cottage Grove deserves a place to get good quality food and supplies for their animals," she said.

Currently, dog and chicken food are tied for first place in the race for the store's most popular product. Cat and goat food are in a close second but Lavios said the store is full service.

"We like to say we have everything from hamster to zebra," she said.

As for what the couple will do when they say goodbye to Old Mill, Lavios said she's not sure. Her sons are what she describes as gainfully employed in fields outside of the feed store profession and so staying on in a family business capacity isn't an option. However, she said the couple isn't sure they want to leave the business world just yet.

No matter what the pair plan to do, the history of the store will be hard to walk away from. Lavios can still point to the place on the property where native and white women met to exchange roots and other supplies. Just out the front window is a view of the old Dr. Snapp house and out front in the parking lot that's now occupied by electric and fuel efficient cars, horse drawn carriages used to sit. A piano towards the back of the store has been a staple for years and according to Lavios, the pair has discovered a hoard of secret piano players with whispered requests from customers asking if they could play for "just a few minutes."

"It's noisy and it's wonderful," Lavios said.

Lavios and McLeod still greet customers at the counter, though and note that their business is the third longest consecutive running business in the state. And so, while the for sale sign sits just feet from where the old barn used to be, they will be particular about who takes the reins next.

"We want someone who doesn't just want the property, Lavios said, "We want someone who wants this place."

NEWS FROM OUTSIDE THE GROVE

Lorane: (Courtesy Lil Thompson) Today, Wednesday, July 19 is the beginning of the Lane County Fair and Grange Day. Come out to the Wheeler Pavilion, get free cookies and coffee from grangers while viewing all the Grange booths. The Wheeler Pavilion is the round building facing 13th street. Be sure to vote for your favorite Grange booth. Lorane Grange meets for this month, Thursday, July 20 at 7 pm. It looks like Alesong Tasting and Brewery has opened in Lorane. It is on Territorial Road just south of King Estate Winery and about a mile or so north of Lorane. Be sure to mark your calendars for the second Sunday in August for the Annual Lorane Community Potluck at Lorane Grange at noon and the Annual Lorane Fire Department Ice Cream Social from 1-5 pm. These have become annual favorites to see people in the community and those who have moved away.

Creswell: (courtesy city of Creswell) It is a new fiscal year so that means it is time for shoppers to register. All that is required is a piece of mail with the registrant's name and physical address. If you are homeless that's OK, just let the pantry know. The City of Creswell is seeking interested applicants to fill a part-time position of Airport Maintenance and Operations Technician. Completed applications must be received in the City Recorder's office at City Hall no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, July 21, 2017. Creswell is an EOE. Movies are shown at Holt Park, located at 4th and A Streets July 22nd - While You Were Sleeping - PG, July 29th - Ghost Busters 2016 - PG13, August 5th - 42 - PG 13, August 12th - Zootopia - PG. Bring your blanket and chairs for a movie under the stars brought to you by the City of Creswell in cooperation with Willamalane Park and Recreation District. Please be considerate of others with regards to smoking and language - remember this is a family friendly event. Movies begin at dusk. Do you have an interest in civics and a desire to serve your community? If you are over 18 and currently live within the city limits of Creswell (and have lived here for a year or more) you could apply to become a City Councilor. There is one vacancy needing to be filled for a term that will end December 31, 2018.

Ever wonder how Creswell stacks up against other Oregon cities? The League of Oregon Cities has developed a database for anyone interested in comparing city stats. Please check out their website at <https://data.oregocity.org/>

News tip from Yoncalla, Elkton or Drain? Send it in to cmay@cgsentinel.com or call us at (541) 942-3325.

Cottage Grove Area
Habitat for Humanity
Needs Volunteers
 To help build House #13
 and at the Habitat ReStore

WILL YOU HELP?
 Any skill level from beginner to expert is welcome. Building days are every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday starting at 9 a.m. Stay for as little or as long as you are able. Come directly to the build site on Harvey Lane, west off of 16th behind Safeway and we'll put you to work!

Thank you for helping Habitat Help Others!

Cottage Grove Area Habitat for Humanity
 2155 Getty Circle ~ Unit #1
 in the Cottage Grove Industrial Park
 South on Hwy 99 past the High School
 541.767.0358
info@habitatcg.org www.habitatcg.org

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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OR "It's Mining Memories Down a Long, Dark Hole"

July 21 & 22 at 7:00 pm
 July 23 at 2:30 pm

Written by Keith Kessler
 Directed by Janet Rust
 Music Direction by Catricia Mayhue

Sponsored by: UMPQUA
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\$7 all ages
 Tickets available online or by phone, advance purchase recommended
cottage theatre.org ★ 541-942-8001 ★ 700 Village Drive, Cottage Grove