

# Toga! Toga! Toga! CG group looks to reclaim world record

By Caitlyn May  
cmay@cg sentinel.com

Somewhere between 2 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. on Aug. 18, members of the Double Secret Society will herd the crowds together and count exactly how many people showed up to Bohemia Park in a toga in an attempt to break a world record.

The event is in honor of the film, "Animal House" that was filmed in Cottage Grove and remains one of the city's largest tourism draws.

The Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce has teamed with the Bohemian Film Festival to celebrate the

film's 40th anniversary Aug. 18 with a parade and an attempt to re-claim the Guinness World Record for biggest toga party.

The city lost the prize more than a decade ago to a university in Australia.

"We'll group people in groups of 50 in a grid system so we can take photos and for a 15-minute window have everyone gathered," said chamber executive director Travis Palmer of how the record attempt will be documented.

Palmer is also a member of the Double Secret Society, the group made up of chamber and community members planning the August event.

To earn the record, Cottage

Grove will have to have more than 3,700 people don togas and be counted. It will also have to prove it.

In an attempt to do so, the chamber has opted to sell tickets to the event which caused a stir on Facebook late last month due to the cost of entry. According to Palmer, the first record-breaking attempt sold tickets as well for \$15. This year's price is \$20 per person.

The price had some residents hesitant, noting that, for a family of five to attend, it would cost \$100.

"The first thing people need to understand is that to coordinate an event of this size there are significant costs. Insur-

ance alone, security bringing in extra bathrooms, there's a lot. That doesn't even factor in the performers. They shouldn't think of this as a toga party. It's a concert, it's an event with a lot of bands," Palmer said.

Only individuals who buy tickets to enter the toga party will be counted toward the world record attempt.

Those who choose not to buy a ticket can still celebrate "Animal House" Aug. 18, according to Palmer. The Village Green and Eugene Emeralds will be hosting "Animal House" themed events and the Cottage Grove celebration will include a parade, free of cost.

"We understand \$20 might

be too expensive but that's also part of the reason we're having a big parade, there's no cost for the parade. We're losing money on the parade," Palmer said. Individuals who volunteer to work the event may also have their toga party ticket paid for, according to Palmer.

The parade will take place in downtown Cottage Grove in the same location the film staged its famous parade scene. The chamber is hoping to attract residents to take part in the parade as well as enjoy it from the sidelines. Entertainment inside the toga party will include several bands including Otis Day who famously sang "Shout" in the film. The event

will be co-sponsored by the Bohemian Film Festival which will debut this year in Cottage Grove showing submitted films throughout the day at various locations around the city including the armory and community center.

Tickets for the "Animal House" celebration are on sale now through the end of the month for \$15. The price will jump to \$20 in July and, according to Palmer, may rise again in August.

For more information, or to volunteer to work the event, visit animalhousetoga.com or call the chamber of commerce at 541-942-2411.

## Cottage Grove Swinging Bridge Project gets strong show of support

By Caitlyn May  
cmay@cg sentinel.com

The Swinging Bridge's repair fund swung a bit more toward the black and out of the red on Monday, June 18, after city manager Richard Meyers, public works and development director Faye Stewart and several residents made a presentation to the Local Government Grant Program Advisory Committee.

"The committee reviewed applications for 39 projects. The committee met after hearing all the presentations and ranked the applications to submit recommendations to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Cottage Grove Swinging Bridge was ranked third out of 18 projects that were recommended for funding,"

Meyers said of the meeting.

If awarded, the grant would pay out \$200,000.

"I was very happy to hear about the grant," said Dana Merryday, a member of Friends of the Cottage Grove Swinging Bridge, a community organization dedicated to raising funds for the bridge's repair. Merryday accompanied city officials to the grant committee presentation June 18.

"The letters that people wrote were very persuasive," Merryday said. "At the fundraiser last week, we got a stack of letters about an inch thick. Everyone who grew up in the community has a story about the bridge and it's just great that people were willing to do that and write."

The bridge has been out of service since 2016 when the

city's engineer deemed it unsafe. The city has since consulted with engineers and architects to determine how to repair the bridge with several options from a pre-fabricated replacement to a fully swinging bridge being considered.

Last year, the city council was presented with three options that ranged between \$150,000 and \$370,000.

However, the latest cost estimates have reached \$1 million with \$500,000 estimated for the actual cost of

the bridge and the remaining funds attributed to engineer and contingency fees which can be completed in-house.

The city implemented a "round-up" program last year that allows residents to round up their water bill to the nearest whole dollar with money going to the bridge's repair fund. The Friends of the Swinging Bridge have also hosted two public events as well as garage-sale style fundraisers.

The combined efforts have

resulted in more than \$10,000 raised for the project.

"That was another thing that was persuasive," Merryday said. "That the community had chipped in. At the garage sale of our left overs from the bigger sale, we made another \$377. Some people just put in \$20."

The recommendations by the local grant committee, according to Meyers, will be submitted to the state historic preservation office for review and will then be forwarded to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Commission which will approve applications on Sept. 19.

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- 5 Shopping Local retains our community:** Without the support in the local community, restaurants, shops and services are forced to close.
- 6 Shopping Local retains our distinctive-ness:** Local businesses respond quicker to the needs of the customers and stock products to meet the core community's needs.
- 7 Shopping Local encourages community growth.** By choosing to do business locally you help maintain Cottage Grove's diversity, charm and appeal; which in turn, attracts new community members.
- 8 Shopping Local invests in community services and city economy.** Your dollars spent in in locally-owned businesses have three times the impact on your community as dollars spent outside of Cottage Grove. When shopping locally, you create funds for more city and county services through taxes. In turn, these funds are invested in neighborhood services including police, fire and ambulance as well as park and library improvements.
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