

Q&A with 'Romeo and Juliet' director Tony Rust

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove Sentinel: Cottage Theatre (CT) develops its seasons but having directors pitch shows they would like to put on. What was your pitch for "Romeo and Juliet"?

Tony Rust: CT was looking for a season of well known plays as we are only doing four this year because of our renovation project ACT III. "Romeo and Juliet" is certainly well known and has room for a variety of age ranges from high school students to the more mature. I really wanted to approach this play knowing I could cast everyone close to the ages as written (I've directed this play at colleges and high schools several times).

CGS: What is your history with CT?

Rust: I've been around for about 15 years, designing sets, directing and acting. My first show as a director was "Working," and my last show before this one was "Noises Off." On-stage I've played roles as various as Scapino in "Scapino," Che in "Evita" and the Clowne in "12th Night."

CGS: You've been in shows on stage and directed shows as well, which do you prefer and how do they lend themselves, separately, to your creative process?

Rust: The two sides are com-

pletely different and tap different parts of me. As a director, however, I try and build a visual story and guide the actors to find their way through the characters rather than proscribing what they should do.

"I really wanted to approach this play knowing I could cast everyone close to the ages as written."

— Tony Rust, director

Romeo & Juliet runs Feb. 1 - 17 at the Cottage Theater

CGS: Even people who wouldn't consider themselves interested in the arts are familiar with "Romeo and Juliet." It's arguably the play that's tran-

sceded its original platform and become part of our everyday pop culture. How do you go about staging it in Cottage Grove?

Rust: As a change up of how I usually approach Shakespeare,

and blocking that takes place in this play, particularly in the fight scenes. How did you approach that in CT where rows on either side of the stage can't necessarily see the entire stage?

Rust: Actually, that's a pretty normal thing for me, as my stage at Marist High School where I teach theatre is set up pretty much the same. It's mostly a matter of accepting that diagonals are the way to go and if you have lines, you go upstage. The fight scenes being right in front are exciting and scary.

CGS: Are there any stand-out performances the audience should watch for?

Rust: Other than Romeo and Juliet and my whole cast, I'd like to point out the stellar work from my supporting leads like Kory Weimer as Tybalt and Joel Ibanez as Mercutio. Without them, the heart of the play would just be mush, but they really make it crackle, both with comedy and fire.

"Romeo and Juliet" is playing at Cottage Theatre from Feb. 1 through Feb. 17. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit cottage theatre.org.

CGS: There is a lot of staging

New app makes parking easier in county parks

Passport Lane County Parks is introducing Passport, a mobile app that will allow park visitors to quickly purchase a day pass to any of Lane County's 68 parks.

"It is really important that we continue to look for ways to make it easier and more convenient to purchase the required passes," said Park Manager Brett Henry. "Passport will allow visitors to quickly purchase a day pass using their phones — and if they know they'll be out of service at the park itself they can take a few minutes to

do it before they leave home. No more hunting for the kiosk or digging through car cup holders to find enough change."

The app itself is free for users. Users create a profile that includes the vehicle license plate and payment information in order to pay on the go. Once purchased, a day pass is valid across all Lane County parks.

"The app will also help us gather better information about which parks receive the most visitors and use that data to make decisions about park

improvements," added Henry. "Overall, we're hoping to see less vandalism and theft of the fee tubes at several of our parks if most visitors move to using the mobile app."

Lane County parks receive no support from property taxes. The day use and camping fees collected from park visitors make up the majority of the funding available to maintain and improve Lane County's parks and open spaces.

Visitors can also purchase daily or annual parks passes online at www.lanecounty.org/

Local retailers, including REI, Cabela's and Bi-Mart, sell annual passes. Daily passes will continue to be available using cash where that option already exists in the parks.

Signs are currently in place at Armitage Park, Heceta Beach Park, Howard Buford Recreation Area (Mt. Pisgah), and Westlake Park.

Lane County Parks is the first park service in our area to offer a parking app option.

Very Little Theater continues 90th season with 'Blithe Spirit'

The Very Little Theatre continues to celebrate its 90th season in 2019 with "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward, directed by Karen Scheeland.

Noel Coward's Blithe Spirit is an audacious comedy about marriage, love and death, in which the memory of a lost love becomes material for a punch line. At his best, Noel Coward's work is able to weave little symphonies out of bursts of jaded lust or malicious wit.

Blithe Spirit is a very British

drawing room play, encouraging resistance to encroaching catastrophe by blithely ignoring it.

Set in England in 1941, we meet Charles Condomine, a well to do novelist, who has invited guests to be a part of a séance in order to get material for his next book. He invites Madame Arcati, a medium, to lead the séance. Unfortunately an unforeseen materialization occurs which leads to comic misunderstandings, other

séances and an unexpected ending.

The VLT cast features: Daniel Squire as Charles; Janna Slack as Ruth; Aimee Hamilton as Elvira; Kali Kardas as Edith; Bill Siedler as Dr. Bradman; Lisa Roth as Mrs. Bradman; and Kathy LaMontagne as Madame Arcati.

The show opened Friday, Jan. 25, with additional shows on the following nights: Thursday through Sunday, Jan. 31 through Feb. 3; and Thursday

through Saturday, Feb. 7-9.

Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. (except for the 2 p.m. Sunday matinees).

Adult tickets are \$21; seniors and students are \$17; Thursday performances are \$17 for everyone.

Tickets are available by phone through the Box Office from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday.

Call 541-344-7751 or get tickets online at TheVLT.com.



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

By Mary Ellen
"Angel Scribe"

Saving Jimmy

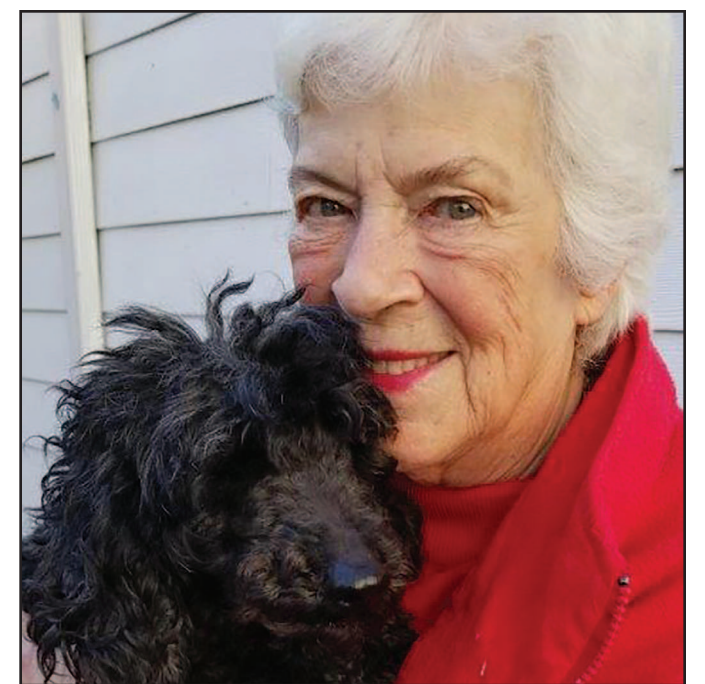
Four years ago, we published Nan's article "Cans for Cats. Bottles for Dogs" about her neighbors and friends donating a ton of recyclables. Nan then donates the deposit fees to animal welfare groups.

Her life illustrates what one person can do for others. One tin can isn't worth much, but this "garbage" has generated \$137,000 in 12 years — amazing for this kind-hearted woman in her 80s!

Nan's latest "one person can change the world" adventure involves a senior dog.

"I am an old woman and that's why I adopted an old dog, Jimmy," said Nan. "I always adopt according to my age and energy. A senior dog walks my speed and needs my companionship as much as I do his."

Adopting Jimmy was like buying a new car without any ac-



Nan saved Jimmy from a life of cruelty and is teaching him about love and joy. (photo by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe")

cessories. His previous life is under investigation as cruelty case from a breeder who imprisoned him in a crate. He has a lot of changes to adjust to at 11 years of age. One is that he did not know how to "go" outside.

"My other senior dog, Molly, gets all the credit for toilet training Jimmy in a week," said Nan. "He's also learned how to go up stairs and down again."

Jimmy's life-long isolation may explain why he is petrified of car rides. He is learning to become excited for them, though. When they drive for Nan's coffee, Jimmy gets pats and treats. Even with his crate-induced contracted muscles and stiff-arthritis legs, he now jumps out of the car but is unable to jump up into the car.

This special, gentle and good-natured dog has made great progress. When he first arrived, on three occasions, he charged Nan's cat, Frankie. However, he soon realized that Frankie was family.

"This afternoon while Jimmy and I were napping, Frankie jumped up and lay down beside Jimmy and they both fell asleep. That's progress!" said Nan.

Each morning, Jimmy greets her with his soft kisses, then grabs his favorite stuffy and runs around the house. Then at 6:30 a.m., they go for a walk, where Jimmy sits outside the coffee shop on the chair next to Nan while other customers give him a "Hello" pat. Jimmy also enjoys meeting customers' dogs who come for their morning treats.

"I thought I was adopting an older dog; but much to my surprise, he's turned into a puppy," Nan said. "He is a happy little guy and a quick learner, proving that you can teach an old dog new tricks. Whatever torture his previous life was, he is now loving life. I can't believe anyone would neglect such a special-hearted animal! He is affectionate, loves to cuddle and sleep on my bed with me, Molly, Frankie and his stuffed toy. He looks so cute (not sure Frankie thinks so).

"His happy gestures feel like he's thanking me for adopting him. He has brought so much joy to my life, that if I had a tail, I would be happily wagging it like he does his!"

TIPS:

When Nan emailed Jimmy's good-news update to his shelter, the staff crowded around the computer to read his progress.

Shelter staff have kind hearts and often fall in love with the animals in their care. The staff returned an email to Nan:

"It fills our hearts to hear that this sweet old boy got a second chance — he deserves it. He is lucky to have found you. People don't realize that our animals are not broken or problematic. They were let down by humans, or their parent died. We want to express how thankful we are that people like you see the value in adopting older animals. Thank you for taking this sweetheart home and giving him love. It means so much to him and to all of us!"

Note: During cold weather, stray cats may seek heat/shelter next to your vehicle's engine. Make it a practice to bang the hood as you approach your vehicle giving strays a chance to safely jump away.

Share your fun, amazing or crazing pet tips and tales at angelscribe@msn.com or Follow Pet Tips 'n' Tales on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PetTipsandTales. Adopt loving pets online at www.PetFinder.com. For spay or neutering, call the Humane Society at 541-942-2789.

6-day weather forecast

THURSDAY 57° 44° Sunny	FRIDAY 49° 42° Rain
SATURDAY 47° 38° Rain	SUNDAY 44° 34° Rain
MONDAY 45° 34° Partly Cloudy	TUESDAY 46° 33° Partly Cloudy

Flood policies must be in place at least 6 weeks prior to a claim.

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