

Cottage Grove

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Keaton celebration showcases CG history

BY SOPHIA EDELBLUTE
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Driving in an westward direction down Main Street in Cottage Grove, Buster Keaton stares down anyone passing into downtown.

Not long ago, fences surrounded the mural as artist Connie Huston was hard at work repairing the wall and refreshing Howard Tharpe's original work.

"With the destruction

that had happened, it was either get rid of the mural or refresh it, because it was in such bad shape," said Huston,

The restoration effort was galvanized in part by City Councilor Kenneth Roberts, who helped put together a committee, sponsored by the Cottage Grove Historical Society, to oversee the fundraising, hiring of Huston and management of the grant funds provided through the Historic Landmark Commission.

"It's amazing how in the time of pandemic, when I started this, people came forward and wanted to help," said Roberts. "This is a great way to show that community can still come together and work, even in a pandemic. I'm so proud of everything that happened."

Roberts hopes to eventually have murals all over Cottage Grove depicting movies that were filmed on location in the city. He is currently

working on getting one of "Emperor of the North," another railroad-based movie filmed in 1973.

"My goal, as a city councilor, is to get murals up in town to represent every movie ever filmed here," said Roberts.

The Buster Keaton mural was in dire need of help. The mortar was crumbling away like sand, Huston said, and a lot of the wall had to be repaired before she could

paint on it.

Luckily, the sealant was translucent so she could paint without need for "a pattern or projection" to follow the original work.

The ribbon cutting ceremony of the restoration of Tharpe's iconic mural was also in conjunction with the Buster Keaton Conference. A group of about 20 people bought passes to visit locations from "The General" and spend time at the Village

see **KEATON** on A7



Forecast optimistic for Oregon RAIN

BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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Oregon RAIN (Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network) has begun its process of percolating throughout Cottage Grove.

RAIN's Lane County Venture Catalyst Ariel Ruben has been in the community establishing stakeholder connections this past month.

"We've officially signed a memorandum of understanding between the City of Cottage Grove and RAIN," said Ruben. "So as of July 1, we began our work in Cottage Grove."

The city invited RAIN into the community when it approved the partnership in the city budget on June 28

this year, joining the organization for a two-year entrepreneurial development program in the amount of \$21,000 for initial-year funding.

During the council meeting, City Manager Richard Meyers said there was a \$25,000 grant which the Community Development Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce had received as a commitment from the Woodard Family Foundation to support the program.

The annual cost of the program is \$33,000.

RAIN is a nonprofit which partners with communities to encourage job growth and entrepreneurialism by providing guidance for local

see **RAIN** on A8

Unlocking the human genome:

A local resident's contribution to mapping our DNA

BY CINDY WEELDREYER
SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

The fruit fly can be a source of major irritation if it is crawling on the peach you want to eat or swarming around in your kitchen. Yet few people know the gigantic role the tiny insect played in unlocking the mystery of the human DNA code, which today is vital to scientific research seeking a cure for many genetic diseases. One of those few people is Amy Merryday.

Amy and her husband Dana are best known in the community for their enthusiastic leadership that resulted in the replacement of Cottage Grove's iconic



PHOTO BY CINDY WEELDREYER

Amy Merryday contributed to foundational genomic research in her "Fly Lab".

swinging bridge. They relocated to Cottage Grove from Berkeley, California in 2015. Amy grew up in New York and graduated from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts in

1979 with a degree in psychology and education and a double major in Latin.

The following year she moved to Berkeley, California, to work as a technician in the Fruit Fly Lab at the University of California.

It was a job she fell in love with and stayed with for 27 years until she retired in 2007.

She began as a part-time "lab helper" cleaning and returning glassware and ordering equipment and supplies. Her favorite task was feeding the flies in the breadbox.

At the end of her career, she became a "microscopist" studying anesthetized

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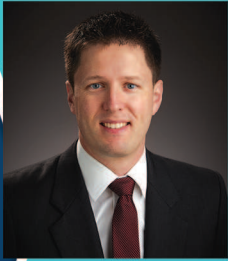
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