



CEMETERY TALES

Event displays 'The humanity of history'



JULIE JINDAL returns as Phoebe Koberg (2011 cast photo). She will tell the story of residents of Neighbors of Woodcraft retirement home located in what is now Columbia Gorge Hotel.



GABRIELLA Whitehead (Emma Culbertson) in 2009, left, and this year, is the only performer to appear in all five years of Cemetery Tales.

Story and photos by KIRBY NEUMANN-REA

News editor

These are not ghost stories. Fifth-annual "Cemetery Tales," Sept. 27-29, brings to life the stories of people from Hood River's past. "Cemetery Tales" this year features familiar faces among seven entirely — almost — new stories of people buried at Idlewild Cemetery.

Tickets remain on sale (details on page B6), but Cemetery Tales has sold out in each of its first four years. It is co-sponsored by The History Museum of Hood River County and Idlewild.

"We have a lot of good stories, and a lot of heart-breaking stories, but that's real life and I think that's

what it offers," said performer Aaron Nice, playing photographer Alva Day.

Cemetery Tales uses first-person dramatic monologues to engage and connect with the stories of community members that have passed on before us. This style of performance allows attendees to experience our community's history in a very personal way.

Julie Jindal of Hood River, returning for a third year, will present her 2011 person, Phoebe Koberg, but Jindal this year focuses on a part of Phoebe's life that wasn't in much detail the first time around: her work at Neighbors of Woodcraft, the retirement home that in the 1950s and 1960s was located in the Columbia Gorge Hotel.

"There is a part of Phoebe that resonated with me that has always stayed with me. I admire what she went through and how hard she had to work and provide for her family and the things she endured and yet she stayed as positive as she did. She really touched me," Jindal said.

This is one of three twists this year: fourth-year performer Kate Daugherty shares the role with her own daughter, Keeley, 11, as Jennie Schumaker, a pioneer who came across the Oregon Trail at age 3.

The family located in Pendleton and later moved to Hood River. The Shoemaker family grew to one of the most influential families of the early 20th century. The museum has on display a piece of wedding

cake from Jennie's marriage to Joseph in 1886.

Rachel Short, 25, daughter, teams with her longtime friend Anne McGuire, both graduates of Columbia High School in White Salmon, as teachers and life-long friends Bessie Henry and Emily Park.

These lifetime friends shunned the traditional domestic calling of Victorian women and advocated for education rights for all children. Eventually they came to Hood River in their later years and purchased an orchard in the Neal Creak area.

Short's brother, Aaron Nice, 28, in his third year, portrays photographer Alva Day on the last stop on the tour.

Short and Nice are the children of Museum Coordinator Connie Nice.

Gabriella Whitehead also returns for her fifth Cemetery Tale.

"It's really special to have this my fifth and last year. I'm trying to make my story the best it can be," Whitehead said.

"I think this is nicer because it's a smaller group this year and we have more chances to expand our stories. From what I hear, the stories are really good this year.

"I've been looking for the little things (with Emma Culbertson's story)," said Whitehead, noting that she got to interview Emma's daughter-in-law, Dorothy Culbert-

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Understanding the past is more complex than we think

Roger Blashfield of Hood River, who portrays Philip Carroll in Cemetery Tales, wrote this observation about his participation in the program and what it means to him. Philip Carroll's was a life spent partly in Hood River, and it ended here, but in researching Carroll, Blashfield found that Carroll's reach went far beyond Hood River.

My wife and I moved to Hood River in 2011 from Auburn, Ala. Before retiring, I had been a clinical psychology professor who studied the classification of mental disorders. After arriving in Oregon, a new friend encouraged me to volunteer for a program called Cemetery Tales as a way of learning about the Hood River community.

As a volunteer, Cemetery Tales involves three activities: First, I need to research the history of the individual whom I am representing. Second, I write a monologue that summarizes my view of what is most relevant about that individual. Third, during the weekend in which Cemetery Tales is presented, I dress in a costume that would be similar to what that individual might wear, I stand at the grave of the person I am discussing, and I present the monologue to small groups of individuals who go through the cemetery in groups.

The overall goal is to allow people to make a personal, intimate connection to the stories of individuals from the past in our community.

Last year, I played the part of Jack Green, a Christian logger. I met with Jack Green's son and daughter multiple times. I had the honor of also meeting his wife. Being a psychologist and playing the part of a logger was a stretch, especially since many of Jack Green's family attended Cemetery Tales.

This year, I am learning about Philip H. Carroll (1885-1941). I know almost nothing of Philip Carroll prior to his early adulthood. However, after World War I, Carroll became an important figure in the American Relief Administration.

A history professor at Stanford University wrote an award-winning book about the ARA's effort in Russia during early 1920s immediately after the communists took control of that

country. Philip Carroll was an important figure in the first 100 pages of this book.

Reading about Philip Carroll also led me to obtaining biographies of the most significant American humanitarian of the early 20th century. This individual, known as "The Chief," could be described in modern terms as cross between Donald Trump and Jimmy Carter — famous, rich, effective, religious and highly respected for his integrity.

I had heard of The Chief prior to learning about Philip Carroll, but I had only thought of this individual because of a significant failure with which he was associated, not because of his humanitarian efforts. Philip Carroll worked for The Chief.

As a clinical psychologist, a goal when doing psychotherapy was to take a good history of a client. The first and most fundamental rule of being a clinician is "The past predicts the future." But understanding that past is often more complex than we think.

In researching Philip Carroll, I have learned a great deal about providing food to the needy, about the 1920s, and about a famous man who proved to be much more complex than I thought.

By the way, if you have not guessed, Philip Carroll's boss, The Chief, was Herbert Hoover, 31st President of the United States. Most of us only think of Hoover in terms of the Great Depression.

Hoover once said, "It is the youth who must inherit the tribulation, the sorrow ... that are the aftermath of war."

Roger Blashfield, whose ancestors are buried at Idlewild, lives on the family property in Hood River with his wife, Linda. They have three children, seven grandchildren and are competitive ballroom dancers.



RUSSIAN FAMINE RELIEF defined the legacy of Philip Carroll (1885-1941), the first non-Russian to receive a passport from the Bolshevik government, in 1919.



Stanford University Press photo

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son of Hood River. "She was able to tell me so much more than what you would find in an obituary," Whitehead said.

The Culbertson family was involved in the beginning of the lumber and fruit industry.

There will be multiple performances each day and evening, with a limit of 15 people per time slot (See ticket details, this page.)

Here are selected comments from performers about their roles:

Daugherty said, "I'm glad to portray Jennie Schumaker, with my daughter, as we share the different stages of this person's life, and Keeley gets the chance to do acting this way, in this style, because she's not having to carry the whole character."

Keeley said, "I don't have to write the script all by my-

self." But Keeley's fourth-grade Oregon Trail studies stuck with her and that helped in their work on the script.

"I asked her a lot of questions, because she studied the Oregon Trail," Daugherty said, "like, 'If you were on the Oregon Trail at age 3 what do you think you would have experienced?'"

Keeley said, "I definitely thought studying the Oregon Trail in the fourth grade really helped."

"I'm excited to do this with my daughter," Daugherty said, "because I am so amazed by the history of people in our area and the diversity of the fortitude of the people. I hope to share that with my daughter how exciting history is when you really take the time to understand the humanity of it."

Keeley said, "I just love history and it's a lot of fun to interact with people in our community. I also have a connection with all other people who are doing the same thing, and learn about who

they are portraying as well as the person I'm portraying."

Short has volunteered with Cemetery Tales in the past, but this is her first time acting, and she is happy to do so with a friend she has known for years from church and school. McGuire currently lives in Seattle.

"At first I felt a little intimidated doing this because Anne's a professionally trained opera singer. She knows how to get into character. It's nice my character feeds off that, she's quieter and artsy, and (Bessy's) more dominant, and it fits in with how our friendship pans out and our acting styles. We are so like the characters, we don't have to act the part, we just be ourselves, up to a point," she said, laughing.

About the private lives of Bessy and Emily, Short said, "People can think what they want; it was a beautiful friendship between two very educated women and I'm honored to represent them."

Aaron Nice said, "It's a

pretty amazing experience. One of the things year after year I'm amazed with is the story aspect, which is one of the big things I'm bringing out this year. But I think there is a big difference between what Cemetery Tales provides and just reading an obituary or reading something about the people in the valley and I think this is where it can really shine and provide something for people, because these are stories about real people."

Some things to remember:

■ Since this event is an outdoor performance (rain or shine), the museum encourages you to keep this in mind when selecting what to wear. Always bring a jacket and sturdy walking shoes. This year's performance is a few weeks later than in the past, so the evening temperature will be quite cool. Dress warmly so you can enjoy the program in comfort.

■ This event is not designed for children under the age of 10 due to the format of the performance. Please call the museum office if you

have questions about this.

■ This performance style is unique as each guest begins their Cemetery Tales journey by bus which takes them from the Hood River Valley Adult Center, into the cemetery and then drops them at the starting location. The groups are then guided from graveside to graveside by an experienced volunteer, following a path of hundreds of luminaries.

Once at a graveside station, guests are seated and then treated to a very intimate and personal look at the lives of the person buried there. Cemetery Tales is more than a program about dates and locations; it's an intimate journey into the lives of these unique people.

"Many people don't realize the preparation and planning that goes into the seemingly effortless success of Cemetery Tales," Nice said. "We begin working on the next year's performance in October (just a few weeks after the actual performance dates). We start by selecting tour options from throughout the cemetery and then we go back to the museums research files to start fine tuning that list.

"Once the casting call goes out and we see who is interested in acting for this season, we narrow the list down again and being to develop a final cast list," she says. "Each actor is then given a packet of research materials to start developing their story outline and eventually their script. The scripts go through multiple revisions, always honing in on telling a story that isn't just about dates and names — but about life and living. Costumes are then developed, designed and made.

"The final push comes when the tickets go on sale mid-July followed by the actual rehearsal and performance days in September," Nice said. "The History Museum works hard to have this special community event bring a deeper awareness of the museum and our mission, but also to create an opportunity for people to make a deep connection with the stories of our grandmothers and grandfathers.

"Despite all the preparation and work that goes into this event, it is my favorite community program that the museum offers and one that I look forward to each year."



ROWS of simple graves mark the resting places of Neighbors of Woodcraft residents, who will receive a tribute as part of Julie Jindal's "Cemetery Tales" presentation. The graves are near the north entrance of Idlewild. In the background is Hood River Sports Club.

Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

Ticket – and lasagna dinner – information

There will be multiple performances each day and evening, with a limit of 15 people per time slot. Tickets are \$15 per person general admission; \$12 for museum members and groups of 15 (entire time block).

Check-in and staging takes place at the Hood River Valley Adult Center, 2010 Sterling Place, Hood River, across the road from the cemetery. Attendees board a bus to the cemetery and back to HRVAC.

A lasagna dinner will be held Friday and Saturday evenings, with proceeds to benefit the Hood River Valley Adult Center's Meals on Wheels program.

Meal tickets are \$9, and can be purchased through The History Museum. Dinner includes lasagna, salad, garlic bread and peach-berry cobbler.

The ticket ordering process is a bit different this year. You may order online (link from the museum website) www.co.hood-river.or.us/museum or download an order form (found on the museum website) and mail it in to:

The History Museum Cemetery Tales
c/o Hood River County B&F, 601 State St.,
Hood River, OR 97031

All tickets are reserved through The History Museum. All payments will be processed through Hood River County Budget and Finance. Tickets will be mailed after payment is received.

Tickets ordered after Sept. 20 will be available at the door.

For ticket assistance or further information, contact Connie Nice at 541-386-6772 or thehistorymuseum@hrecn.net.

The History Museum is also looking for volunteers willing to serve as tour guides and lighting crew members. Volunteering is a great way to experience the show while helping out behind the scenes. Contact Carly Squyres for more information and details on training, 541-386-6772 or thmvolunteer@hrecn.net.



Library District launches new electronic resources

Hood River County Library District patrons now have access to three handy new electronic resources, thanks to the library district and Libraries of Eastern Oregon.

Genealogists will be excited to hear that they can now access Ancestry Library Edition and Heritage Quest Online, and anyone who needs a bit of help tinkering with their vehicle will want to check out the online Auto Repair Reference Center. These resources are free to library district cardholders or anyone who comes into a library branch.

Ancestry Library Edition gives access to more than 7 billion names from more than 4,000 genealogical

sources including United States Census records, passenger lists, and records from several other countries including the Canada, United Kingdom, China, Eastern Europe, and Germany. With its vast re-

sources and constant updates, Ancestry is a great resource for family historians. Ancestry Library Edition is available only when visiting a library branch.

Heritage Quest, another genealogy resource, provides a collection of research materials for tracing family lineage and American culture. It includes more than 25,000 genealogies, local histories, prima-

ry source materials, and genealogical and local history publications. It includes not only U.S. Census information, but also digitized genealogy books, bank records, and records from the Revolutionary War. Her-

itage Quest is available from home with a valid library card.

Auto Repair Reference Center includes repair information, wiring diagrams, and other practical information to keep over 50 years of makes and models of automobiles purring. Library patrons can view repair bulletins, download repair information, and view step-by-step diagrams on

how to do everything from replacing a manifold to flushing a radiator. This resource is also accessible from home with a valid library card.

These resources are paid for by Hood River County Library District and made possible thanks to the district's membership in Libraries of Eastern Oregon. LEO serves 53 public libraries in 16 eastern Oregon counties and to six rural libraries in Washington, an area larger than several New England states combined. LEO seeks to pro-

vide expanded horizons for the people of eastern Oregon. Its efforts support lifelong learning and communal gathering as essential to quality of life in each community that is served.

These resources are free to library patrons, and Heritage Quest and Auto Repair Reference Center are available from home with a valid

library card. For more information, contact the Hood River County Library District at 541-386-2535, or info@hoodriverlibrary.org, or visit hoodriverlibrary.org/resources. For more information about Libraries of Eastern Oregon, visit librariesofeasternoregon.org/.



New choral group forms in the Gorge

A new choral group is being formed in the Gorge.

It is co-directed by White Salmon resident Gil Seely, former director of the award winning Oregon Repertory Singers for 35 years, and Trout Lake resident Doug Anderson, former choral director at McMinnville High School for 30 years.

No auditions are re-

quired, but some singing experience is highly desirable. Rehearsals to begin in October on Tuesday nights at Bethel UCC Church in White Salmon, with a possible Christmas concert in December.

For details contact Gil Seely at 503-784-8151 or by email at seeley@clark.edu

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