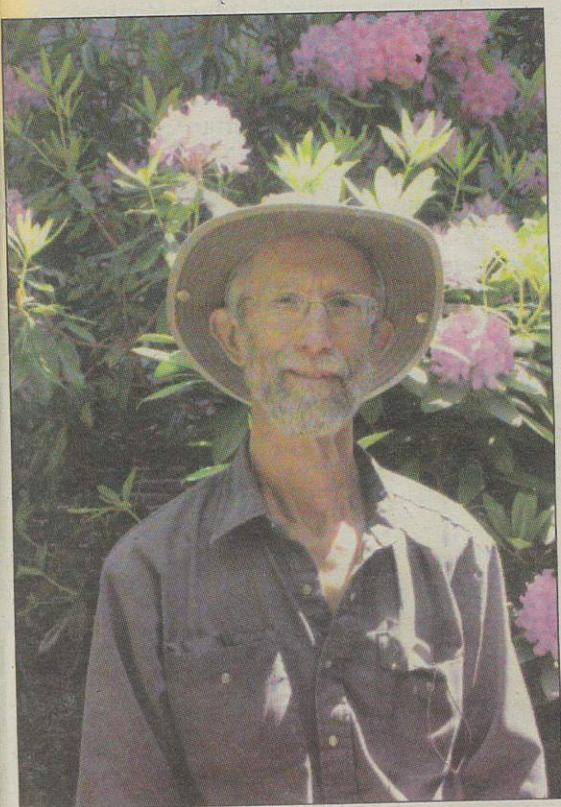


City Something

OUR **TOP PICKS** FOR JUNE 13 - 19

MOVIE MONDAY TURNS 20



MARY ELLEN GREEN

Bruce Saunders at his day job as a gardener.

Every Monday evening for the last 20 years, Bruce Saunders rushes home from his day tending some of the city's finest gardens, takes a quick shower and heads down to the Eric Martin Pavilion to set up the theatre for Movie Monday. And every Monday evening, dozens of people show up to see a movie, chosen by Saunders, and partake in a discussion about the film, often with special guests in attendance.

But just because the event is at the former mental health hospital, it doesn't mean you have to have a mental illness to come — Movie Monday is open to the general public and the films screened at the event are often as entertaining as they are enlightening, covering everything from stories of people dealing with mental illness, to overcoming other challenges in day-to-day life, and stories that are just plain fun.

"A lot of people think we're only showing stuff about mental illness, or that Movie Monday is only for people dealing with that," says Saunders. "But film is a great catalyst. We show movies about all the issues life throws at you, hopeful stories ... I love introducing people to films they should see."

Admission is by donation and snacks are available on the cheap. "It's only \$1.75 for popcorn with butter," says Saunders. "And donations are optional. We don't want to embarrass anyone who can't afford to pay."

Saunders got the idea for Movie Monday when he was a patient at the Eric Martin Pavilion. Saunders was in the hospital after a second suicide attempt and a battle with severe depression. He's since been diagnosed bi-polar.

"The stuff we were watching on the ward was terrible," says Saunders. "Things like Cops and Oprah. Mental illness was depicted as evil ... Even when I was really ill I thought we could do better."

When Saunders discovered the 100-seat theatre with video projector, the Movie Monday concept came to be. Now he's showing 60 films a year — every Monday (even on holidays and long weekends) and now some Wednesdays with Music Movie Wednesday, a collaboration with the Friends of Music Society.

"It feels good to do something open, positive and user-friendly," says Saunders. "Everything got a whole lot easier when I started to do Movie Monday ... It's a real privilege to be a window into so many stories and lives."

Saunders records all the discussions and makes them available at Yo Video (2000 Cadboro Bay), along with hundreds of films screened at Movie Monday in a special section.

"Expect more than just a movie," says Saunders. "These are older films, yes, but they're unique films that you don't get to see elsewhere."

The 20th anniversary celebration is Mon., June 17 at 6:30pm. The feature film that evening is *Cubers*, a look at the brainiacs obsessed with the Rubic's Cube. Saunders will provide the cake. **M**

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FEAR NO OPERA

Victoria's newest opera company, Fear No Opera presents *Don Pasquale*, a comic tale of love set to some of Gaetano Donizetti's most beautiful and lively music, sung in Italian with English surtitles. Directed by Graham McDonald, *Don Pasquale* stars Amy Steggle and Michael MacKinnon (pictured above) and is showing for one night only, Sat., June 15 at 7:30pm at Oak Bay High theatre (2101 Cadboro Bay). \$25/10. **M**

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