



Pauline Patton, a longtime customer from Bristow, congratulates Steve Stephenson, 89, co-owner of Steve's Sundry, Books & Magazines, as he celebrates the 60th year of business.

60-year-old emporium beats with heart of Tulsa

By DAVID HARPER
World Staff Writer

For six decades, it's been the place in Tulsa where everybody knows your name.

Steve's Sundry, Books & Magazines marked its 60th birthday Saturday, an occasion that anyone who has ever bought reading material, a malt or a lawn mower there can still celebrate.

Lawn mower? Yes, David Stephenson remembers in the early years of its existence his father's store sold just about anything under the sun.

But for the past few generations, Steve's Sundry has been where to buy books and periodicals at a place that is quintessentially Tulsa.

Local author Michael Wallis on Saturday described it as "Tulsa's Living Room," a place that like his muse, Route 66, provides an alternative to the commonplace.

He said Steve's is a place where a customer can purchase a racing form, a Playboy and a Bible and also get a Cherry Coke from an old-fashioned soda fountain to top off the transaction.

Wallis said Steve's has kept its distinctive charm by not trying to imitate the large chain bookstores that have become so prevalent in recent years.

Steve Stephenson, 89, said: "We're not in competition with the chains. You can't be in competition with them."

Instead, Stephenson — now co-owner of the establishment — said the store has always tried to fill a niche. The business offers a wide ar-

ray of magazines and the staff leaves no stone unturned in hunting down unique books on behalf of its customers.

"If it's hard to find, we can find it," Steve Stephenson said. "If we can't find it, nobody can."

The original location of Steve's was at 12th Street and Harvard Avenue; however, Stephenson said the current site at 2612 S. Harvard Ave. has been its home for about half a century.

The signage in front of the building trumpets the establishment as "Tulsa Owned" and "Tulsa Operated." Stephenson said that "Tulsa was built by independent people. It's just an independent community."

Teresa Miller, executive director of the Oklahoma Center for Poets and Writers, said that Steve's Sundry is the literary version of "Cheers," the Boston sitcom pub where "everybody knows your name," as the opening theme song said.

While that show was fiction, Miller said the support that Steve's Sundry has given local writers has been quite real.

"Steve has done more to promote Oklahoma authors than anyone else," Miller said.

John Wooley, a former Tulsa World entertainment writer who has written and/or edited 16 books, said Stephenson has "treated us so well."

Wooley said he was at Saturday's celebration "to let Steve know what he's meant to us."

The history of the place is palpable. It's found in the ancient pieces of gum that Stephenson says are embedded under the counter and the pencil marks on one of the bookshelves that mark the long-ago adolescent growth of David Stephenson, now 55.

David Stephenson's wife, Joanie Stephenson, is now co-owner. She has her own treasured memories of the place and has no massive changes planned for the day when she becomes the sole owner.

"You don't mess with something that's worked for 60 years," she said.

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Exec: Group repairing homes needs real home of its own

By NORA FROESCHLE
World Staff Writer

Rebuilding Together Tulsa's new executive director says the organization needs its own home.

"We're rebuilding homes, but we're doing it out of my kitchen," said Jennifer Barcus-Schafer, who recently was named executive director of the organization, which this year has repaired 69 homes for low-income senior and disabled homeowners in Tulsa.

For more

To find out more about Rebuilding Together Tulsa, visit www.tulsaworld.com/rtt.

"Our biggest goal is to get RTT planted in the community," she said.

Rebuilding Together Tulsa's three full-time staff members, including Deanna Boston, the organization's former executive director, work out of their homes. Barcus-Schafer said they do not mind doing so, but they have been forced to turn down donors who were offering building supplies.

The staff members keep donations at their homes and at a



HOMEBOODY

Jennifer Barcus-Schafer: She recently was named executive director of Rebuilding Together Tulsa, which this year has repaired 69 homes for low-income senior and disabled homeowners in Tulsa.

rented storage unit, she said.

"We have had to turn down some donations that we couldn't use right that minute," Barcus-Schafer said.

In those cases, donors are directed to other organizations that can accept larger donations of supplies, such as Habitat for Humanity.

A warehouse would allow the organization to solicit donations and build up an inventory. A central location for staff and supplies also would provide homeowners a place to apply in person, Barcus-Schafer said.

This year's goal is to provide more repairs for 80 homeowners, and by 2011, to be providing free repairs and rebuilding on at least 400 projects, with the labor provided by volunteers from the Tulsa area.

In 2007, 800 people pitched in to do the work.

"Tulsa is such a generous community, and to have this type of organization here, it seems like a perfect fit. We

need volunteers to do what we do, and Tulsans are more than happy to donate their time," Barcus-Schafer said.

Boston, who is now the development director for Rebuilding Together Tulsa, will concentrate on fundraising and grant writing, she said.

Barcus-Schafer said she originally started as a volunteer for the organization before taking on a part-time position.

Seeing the difference that Rebuilding Together Tulsa makes for people in need made her want to carry out its mission full time.

"I'm kind of a homebody myself. . . . I just can't imagine it being a place that wasn't safe or where my child weren't safe — you don't want to be worried that your ceiling is going to fall in on you," she said.

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Training set for school board hopefuls

Two organizations are hosting informational meetings for people who are interested in serving on school boards, just in time for the early December filing period for school board candidates.

Both informational sessions are set for Nov. 27.

From 3:30 to 5 p.m., the Tulsa Metro Chamber will host its latest Education Forum on the topic of "Components of serving on a school board."

Current school board members from Tulsa-area districts will serve as panelists, discussing the amount

of time required by the elected post, when and how often boards meet, how much training is required, as well as the major issues confronting local boards today.

The event will be held in the Tulsa Metro Chamber's second-floor conference room at Williams Center Tower Two, 2 W. Second St.

For more information, send an e-mail to sharongoswick@tulsachamber.com, or call 560-0276.

From 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., the Oklahoma State School Boards Association will be presenting a workshop ti-

tled, "So You Want to Be a School Board Member," in Room E of the Tulsa Technology Center-Lemley Campus, 3420 S. Memorial Drive.

Attendees will receive information about filing for candidacy, requirements for candidates, and some of the laws that govern school board meetings.

There will also be an opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer session.

For more information, interested parties can call the OSSBA at (888) 528-3571.

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What you missed in your Tulsa World

Tuesday: After pleading guilty to sexually assaulting a 12-year-old, Chris Collins was permanently dismissed from the Oklahoma State football team. **SPORTS**

• Wednesday: If you've never used your crock pot to make dessert, you might be surprised at how good these steamed pudding cakes, custards and baked apples are. **SCENE**

• Did you every wonder how nutritionists, dietitians and other health professionals eat? We followed three "health nuts" for three days to find out how well they follow their own rules. **SCENE**

• Wednesday: A Tulsa judge has allowed a lawsuit to be filed under fictitious names for the plaintiff and the defendant and no description of what the case is about. **NEWS**

• Wednesday: The Broken Arrow Expressway — backbone to Tulsa's commuting system — is 50 years old and is starting to show its age. **NEWS**

• Thursday: High school athletes from around the metro area made their college choices official on National Signing Day. **SPORTS**

• Friday: Reporter Debbie Blossom wrote about restaurateur Tim Baker opening his second establishment on Brookside, Sonoma Bistro & Wine Bar. **BUSINESS**

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