

When I first moved to Florence we had two movie theaters (1994). Then one closed. Then the other one closed and for several years we had no movie theaters. Then Michael came in renovated our theater upgraded the equipment to digital and turned City Lights Cinema has into a giant asset for Florence. Holding Oscar watch party galas, broadcasting live plays and ballet's. He has done film study classes in conjunction with Lane community college. In the past he's run historical movies which I wasn't around for when they first ran in a theater. What a treat to see Singing in the rain, Murder on the Orient Express and more on a big screen. He's shown fascinating documentaries, sometimes with questions and answer sessions with someone associated with the film. My neighbors hadn't gone to a movie theater in twenty years, but started going regularly with all the different things he was showing. Michael spent several months updating the theater to meet pandemic guidelines only to be shut down again shortly thereafter, when Lane County hit extreme levels. He finally resorted to launching a go fund me campaign to survive. Florence rallied around them and we gave him the money he needed to survive another 6 months. Here we are a year later and we're going back to a level he's barely going to be able to operate at. The theaters have been hit so hard and yet they are so vital to communities all over, but especially to the small and rural ones. While we're spending money on everything else I'm in full support of spending some on an industry that has basically shut down for a year - NO business is prepared for that!