



Cottage Grove Sentinel

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SOUTH LANE COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889

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Duck backers at the Great Western Pub try to cheer their team to victory. photo by Jon Stinnett

Fans flock to back Ducks

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

It's doubtless that many Duck football fans chose to watch their team try to win the National Championship from the comfort of their own living rooms. But one could be forgiven for thinking otherwise after glimpsing the green-and-yellow clad crowds that packed local watering holes to cheer on the Ducks Monday night.

Fans began showing up well in advance of the 5:30 p.m. game time, and many stayed throughout for the less-than-desirable conclusion (there wasn't a shred of Ohio State gear to be seen, at least by this reporter.)

The evening's schedule had already been cleared for local leadership — the South Lane School District Board of Directors acted preemptively to reschedule its Jan. 12 meeting to Jan. 5 in the event of a Ducks' Rose-Bowl win on New Year's Day, and Mayor Tom Munroe canceled the

Cottage Grove City Council's Monday meeting and rescheduled events such as his State of the City Address for Monday, Jan. 26.

For their part, the Ducks punched their ticket to the first-ever National Championship game following a playoff by crushing the Florida State Seminoles in Pasadena, 59-20, a lopsided victory that had them looking very much like the team to beat heading into game time.

Duck fans had something to cheer about early on, as their offense marched efficiently down the field for six points and the early lead. Still, an uneasiness seemed to grip the crowds at places like Hard Knocks Brewing, El Tapatio and even the Great Western Pub, where a boisterous group sat ready to erupt given the chance. They'd get that chance to yell mostly following turnovers by the Ohio State Buckeyes throughout the middle frames of Monday's game, during which the Ducks seemed to struggle to find their

offensive rhythm.

Regardless of the venue, the chant for many as the game wore on became a simple one — "Get Him!" as the Ducks struggled in vain to contain either Buckeye quarterback Cardale Jones or, more commonly, running back Ezekiel Elliott, who went on to pile up a record-breaking 246 yards on 36 carries en route to four touchdowns.

Spirits rose for many after halftime, when the Ducks' offense caught fire to get within a point of the Buckeyes, 21-20. Still, there was no stopping Elliott or Ohio State, who quickly answered for two touchdowns to effectively put the game out of reach.

The Buckeyes would march down the field once again and add another touchdown to seal the deal and a National Championship, 42-20, leaving Duck fans with little to do but head home, the evening's elation quickly evaporating into the January night.

Prozanski to preview 2015 legislature

The 2015 regular session of Oregon's legislative assembly began on Monday, and a visit by one member of the legislature aims to preview the session for Cottage Grove.

Cottage Grove's Blackberry Pie Society, which dedicates itself to "promoting good politics and great people in South Lane County and beyond" has invited Democratic State Senator Floyd Prozanski to preview the 2015 legislative session. Prozanski will appear at Hard Knocks Brewing (located at 1024 E. Main St.) at 7 p.m. this Thursday, Jan. 15.

The Society's Leslie Rubinstein explained that Cedric Hayden, the new representative of House District 7, was also invited to Cottage Grove this week but had a conflict that will make him unable to attend. Hayden is expected to visit in the near future.

Kevin Moore, a legislative aide to Prozanski, explained Monday that, since the session just began and bills have of course not yet been presented, the Senator will be giving a "high-level" preview of what to expect for this year's session.

Three hot-button topics that promise to make waves, though, are gun control, the legalization of marijuana for recreational purposes and the state budget, and Prozanski is positioned to make an impact particularly on the first two.

With regard to gun control, Moore said Prozanski's position as Chairman of the Senate's Judiciary Committee will put him in the midst of the fray of what should be a hotly debated topic for the legislature. On Friday, the Oregonian reported that Prozanski was among a group of senators discussing a bill that would require background checks on private gun purchases.

Prozanski is also in position to figure into the implementation of Measure 91, which legalizes the recreational use of marijuana for those over age 21, as a member of the joint committee charged with overseeing that implementation. In addition, he'll include a question-and-answer session involving an overview of the state budget, Moore said, adding that the entire event will take place in question-and-answer form.

School Board talks budget, potential bond measure

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The South Lane School Board had its first meeting of the New Year on Monday, Jan. 5. Topics of discussion included Governor John Kitzhaber's proposed education budget for the 2015-'17 biennium, full-day kindergarten, and an anticipated 2016 bond measure.

In reaction to the Governor's recently released budget for K-12 education in the 2015-2017 biennium, SLSD made it clear that the proposed \$6.9 billion would be inadequate. While the budget is larger than in the previous funding cycle, it also contains several new, expensive programs, including full-day kindergarten, which is expected to cost \$220 million.

"It's deceiving," said SLSD superintendent Krista of the Governor's proposed budget. "People see \$6.9 billion and say, 'Awesome, that's more than we got in the last biennium.' But if you factor in all of the new initiatives it's about the same, which isn't enough when you consider that costs have gone up since then."

Parent noted that historically the budget for K-12 education sees improvement after the Governor's initial proposal. She said that a more appropriate budget

would be in the range of \$7.2 billion, in which case SLSD would be "fine." However, that final figure could be released as late as the summer — well after SLSD will have started to prepare its own budget. Although not ideal, Parent said that SLSD would be able to begin its budgeting process based on an estimate.

In addition to the budgetary concerns, there will be logistical hurdles for SLSD to provide full-day kindergarten beginning in 2015-2016.

"Not only do you have to hire more teachers, you have to find more classrooms, and purchase new furniture and curriculum. We think full-day kindergarten is a good thing, but there are a lot of details that need to be worked out," Parent said.

Classroom space is particularly an issue at Bohemia and Harrison schools: SLSD has considered converting part of the library at Bohemia into a new classroom at an estimated cost of \$17,000. Harrison needs at least one more classroom, and one possible solution is to purchase and install a portable classroom, which would cost over \$100,000.

SLSD is continuing its prepara-

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New director hired at Parent Partnership

Organization still trying to right its financial ship

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Last April, the board of directors of Cottage Grove-based nonprofit Parent Partnership met to chart the future of the organization — if there was to be a future at all, that is.

Parent Partnership operates three programs that aim to aid



Carol Kuhn Simons

youth in South Lane School District — First Steps Childcare Center cares for the children of the District's teen moms and some of its staff members; the McKinney Vento Program aids homeless students, and A Primary Connection, a family resource center targeting early childhood development and skills for new parents, is based at Bohemia Elementary. The organization also runs a new teen center at Kennedy High School.

At that fateful meeting, Board President Bill Noah outlined the issues the organization had been facing: namely, that its executive director was seeking retirement and that, although its

programs, which are considered highly successful, are funded, its administrative costs are not.

"It's difficult to raise funds to pay an executive director," Noah said back then. "Essentially, we're out of money, we have no money to recruit a director and we couldn't compensate that person if we found them."

South Lane Superintendent Krista Parent added that state and county funding paid a much larger role in funding organizations like Parent Partnership in the past. Funding has also been difficult to secure for the First Steps Childcare Center, she said, because the school district has seen less teen parenthood in recent years.

Several new board members came to the fore during that discussion, as did Parent Partnership's new director, Karol

Kuhn Simons, who worked in a volunteer capacity to take over the reins from outgoing Executive Director Anna Strong between that fateful meeting and Strong's exit in July. Simons was officially hired as the organization's new executive director in November.

Simons has lived in Cottage Grove since 1989 and has served as President of the Chamber of Commerce Greeters. She formerly served as a biologist with the U.S. Forest Service and also operates her own business, Facilitate Solutions.

"I've been around the community," she said, by way of understatement.

As positive as Simons sought to be regarding the current state

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