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Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2015

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

VOLUME 126 • NUMBER 48

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Track troubles

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Main Street plan petition effort falls short

Benchmark to force a public vote shy by 55 signatures

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Petitioners hoping to place Cottage Grove's Main Street Refinement Plan before voters in a September election came up 55 votes short of their goal, a letter from Lane County Elections confirmed Friday morning.

Program Supervisor Roxann Marshall stated in a letter to Cottage Grove City Recorder Trudy Borrevik that the elections department processed 547 signatures and accepted 423 of them, with many signatures rejected due to their signer's not residing in the proper district or being registered to vote.

The Cottage Grove City Council approved the plan, a proposal for a redesign of Main Street between its historic buildings, in April, with the efforts of petitioners to have it put before voters beginning about a week after approval.

The plan calls for wider sidewalks and a narrower travel lane on Main Street, in addition to outdoor utilities and the correction of the "crown" of the street itself. The fate of the maple trees lining Main Street loomed large in the public conversation about the plan, especially early on, and the current plan as adopted calls for the systematic removal and replacement of the trees in the worst condition first.

As per state law, petitioners had one month from the passage of the Main Street Refinement Plan to gather signatures representing 10 percent of the registered voters in Cottage Grove, or 478 signatures, and they had until 5 p.m. on May 13 to gather them.

Chief petitioner Mary McNamara could be seen gathering signatures outside the Bookmine downtown until just before the deadline to turn them in. On Monday, McNamara said that while she is disappointed in the ultimate outcome, the message the referendum process should send to those in government remains.

"Of course we're disappointed, but we're also very appreciative of the legitimate signatures we got, and of the people who took the time to stand up and

speak out. The process has surely been informational for me, and I hope it let the City know that everything isn't as easy as they might think it would be, that in the future they need to stop and consider things more closely. Those 423 people are going to be watching what the City does in the future. We still live in Cottage Grove, and we still care."

McNamara said that people had been "coming out of the woodwork" to help gather signatures, with many going door-to-door in their efforts. She said she would certainly be ready to undertake another petition process in the future if the need arises, adding that she's still concerned about the impact the Main Street Refinement Plan can one day have on the future of Cottage Grove.

"I don't think we need it (downtown) to look like some other place," she said, "and I think that's what's going to happen. It's going to be like some foreign place we've never lived in before."

McNamara had expressed confidence that the required number of signatures could be gathered. About 23 percent would eventually be rejected by elections officials; in addition to their signers not being registered voters or living in the wrong district, some petitions were signed by voters with cancelled registration, voters whose signatures didn't match voter registration documentation or whose ballots had been undeliverable at one time.

Please see **REFERENDUM**, Page 9A

Sacrifices honored at Memorial Day service



photo by Matt Hollander

Tom McVey plays the bagpipes during the retiring of the colors during the Memorial Day service Monday at the Armory.

War II.

In his address, Mayor Tom Munroe, said that it was a difficult task to write a speech this year but, in the name of remembrance, he recalled what it was like growing up in Oregon while the nation was at war with Germany and Japan.

This year's guest speaker was Brigadier General Norm Hoffman, who is the chairman of the Oregon committee for Employer Support of National Guard and Reserve.

This is so important because freedom is not free," said Hoffman, who previously served in the Armory. "And there's nothing like getting your history from a veteran."

Kenn Hunt of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3473 read the names of the 77 local military veterans who passed away since Memorial Day in 2014.

After closing remarks, Gowing invited those in attendance to join in a remembrance march to Centennial Bridge, where the American Legion Riders provided a 21-gun salute, a remembrance wreath was dropped into the Coast Fork Willamette River and Dan Cuyler played "Taps."

erans of Foreign Wars Monday at the Armory. The gathering, which has been an annual tradition in the United States since 1868, was staged to honor the millions of veterans who fought and died to defend the country's

freedom. The event, which was headed by Jeff Gowing, Commander of the American Legion, drew veterans from each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and from every major conflict since World

Meet the 'Cottage Grove Waver'

Kreamier works to spread happiness one wave at a time

BY COURTNEY MAITIA
 For the Sentinel

Clarence Kreamier wants to turn your frown upside down.

Kreamier sits on the corner of North 16th and Main streets in Cottage Grove on sunny mornings and afternoons and simply waves at people as they are driving through traffic with a grand smile on his face and his American flag dancing in the wind. He says his goal in life is to spread happiness.

Kreamier is a Vietnam veteran and a retired Safeway truck driver.

When asked why he does what he does, he said he "enjoys the smiles, waves and laughs" he receives from passersby, adding that people have told him that his positive attitude has changed their lives for the better.

Kreamier believes that "happiness is what keeps people going in life". So the old saying that "happiness is through traffic with a grand smile" must be true, because Clarence Kreamier seems to be one very happy man.

Courtney Maitia is a photojournalism student at Lane Community College.



photo by Courtney Maitia

Clarence Kreamier offers a wave and a smile for passersby on Main Street.

Mort squeaks by Hemenway for School Board post

Caven holds off Duffy for Fire Board reelection

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Even Gary Mort himself seemed surprised at what he had done.

While the results won't be official until June 8, Mort appears to have triumphed by a mere 13 votes over incumbent South Lane School Board representative Darin Hemenway in the Tuesday, May 19 election, an election that could be characterized by a low voter turnout of

just over 36 percent countywide and a large number of under votes.

Mort, an instructor at Lane Community College since 1998, said that he had "no sense of how" he was doing in the run-up to the election, adding that the apparent difficulty of beating an incumbent in this area loomed large. Still, Mort had garnered endorsements from the local teacher's union and the Blackberry Pie Society following its candidate forum.

Joining Mort on the School Board will be longtime South Lane educator Jerry Settlemeyer, who bested competitors Nevin Beckes and Ben Price

for the Board's Position 6. Current Board President Tammy Hodgkinson won an unopposed reelection at Position 1, while incumbent Merlene Martin triumphed over challenger Cirila Appellof by a wide margin.

Elsewhere in the election, Mike Caven staved off challenger Dan Duffy to earn reelection to the South Lane Fire and Rescue Board of Directors by 139 votes.

Mort said that he attempted to keep his campaign positive despite his concerns about the performance of the current School Board.

"I tried to say, 'Vote for me if you think I can do a better job of

this,'" he said. "But I don't feel like the Board has been responsive to the public or adequately skeptical about what it is presented. I'm not always happy with the decisions the Board makes, but I'm more concerned about the process, and as a member of the public, that hasn't always been clear to me."

Mort said that his competition, Hemenway, "seemed invisible" throughout the campaign, having not contributed to the voter's pamphlet or attended the Blackberry Pie Society forum. (Hemenway could not be contacted by Sentinel press time for this article.)

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WEATHER



Sunny

HIGH 80
 LOW 51

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