

Car crashes into Parkdale Bicentennial Garden

By TAMARA EMLER BALL
Parkdale correspondent

Just last summer Parkdale's Bicentennial Memorial Garden began to once again take shape and bloom under the combined efforts of the Parkdale Garden Club, the Central Gorge Master Gardeners and the Parkdale Grange.

Their efforts came to a crashing halt early Sunday morning Feb. 15 when a driver failed to slow down for the left turn onto Baseline Road from Highway 281, went off the road and into the garden, flipping over and snapping off trees, breaking sprinklers and tearing out shrubbery.

"I didn't know about the accident and I took my husband by the garden to show him how good it was looking," said Parkdale Garden Club President Jean Hardman. "That's

when I saw all the damage with car parts all over and a deep rut where the car had been pulled out."

The driver of the car abandoned the vehicle after the crash and when the Sheriff's Office went to the registered car owner's house, he reported the car had been stolen, leaving in doubt the liability for the damages to the property.

"We lost several trees that were snapped off and had to be removed, including Bird's Nest Spruce, which is very slow growing," said Hardman. "Plus we lost several other trees and decorator nursery stock plants."

Much of what was destroyed in the crash was planted in the original Bicentennial Garden in 1976, formed wind breaks and borders, and provided shade for the other plants.

Master Gardener Paul Marcotte has been a part of the garden reboot, damage cleanup, and is now researching how to repair the damage to the garden.

"A total of six of the Bird's Nest Spruce trees, part of the original gardens planted in 1976, were uprooted and had to be removed," said Marcotte. "Another master gardener, who works at Good News Gardening, estimated those trees were worth \$300 each."

The current damage estimate is nearly \$9,000, but the group is getting an estimate from a local landscaper for some of the work and that figure will probably increase.

"When the trees are replanted they will each need a 3-foot deep hole," said Marcotte. "We'll need heavy equipment to do that

kind of work."

Marcotte is in contact with the insurance company of the car's owner in an effort to get liability damages to bring the gardens back to its former self.

He has also contacted the Oregon Department of Transportation and requested a guard rail be installed in the curve above the gardens and better signage be installed to warn drivers of the sharp curve.

"The guard rail should have been installed years ago," said Marcotte. "This is not the first car that has rolled in the gardens and in fact I've seen two in the last ten years."

The timing of the crash couldn't be worse as Parkdale is the location for the Central Gorge Master Gardener's Association gardens tour on June 29 this year and the Bicentennial



Photo by Tamara Emler Ball

GARDEN volunteers are taking stock of the full cost of the damage when a car drove into the Bicentennial Garden at the corner of Highway 281 and Baseline Road.

Memorial Garden is one of five locations that will be featured.

Marcotte says the group will have to work quickly

to repair two broken irrigation lines in order to be able to water the garden this spring in time for the tour.

ART

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SAWA, on the other hand, is a competition for all high school students in the United States or enrolled in American schools overseas. Students were invited to send in pieces of their work — photography, painting, sketches, sculpture, etc. — via Internet or mail with a \$5 entry fee per item.

The entered pieces are then "scanned and looked over by a series of judges at a regional level, and then each judge rates your art piece," she said. "Depending on what score the judges have given your artwork, you then get a certain award."

Her photo, titled "Disparity" because of the contrast between the bright whites and dark blacks, won a Gold Key.

"A Gold Key is the highest award given, the Silver Key is second, and then after that they award honorable mentions," she explained. "If your art piece is awarded with a Gold Key, it then moves on to the national competition. If it wins the national competition, it's presented in a show in Carnegie Hall in New York City. No one in Hood River who has ever gotten a Gold Key at the regional level has gone on to win at the national level, so while I'm hopeful, I'm also doubtful that I will move on. However, you never know!"

Since winning the SAWA, Searcy has earned an internship with local artist Robin Panzer to help with Columbia Center for the Art's upcoming Birds of a Feather art exhibit.

The internship just started, but so far, she's been "gessoing and painting wooden frames, and then attaching small reproduction prints to said frames," she said.

Searcy plans to attend an art school after graduating from HRVHS and major in photography or film/film production. "I'm currently looking into art schools around the country ... However, the only one that's really caught my eye so far is San Francisco Art Institute," Searcy said. "It's currently my dream school."

LIBRARY

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buy a brick so your personal message is ensclosed in the revitalized gardens.

Event sponsor are the Bruce and Mary Stevenson Foundation, Cardinal Glass Industries, Copper West Properties, Duckwall-Pooley Fruit Company, Farm Stand in the Gorge, Riverside at the Hood River Inn, and Rotary Club of Hood River. Beer sponsors are Double Mountain Brewery and Pfriem Family Brewers, and Viento Wines is the wine sponsor

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GEORGIANNA SMITH PARK is a historic, and popular gathering place, with its river view, sloping lawns, varied trees and plantings, and seating areas. But the grounds are showing the wear and tear, and the Feast of Words event fundraising goal of \$25,000 will revitalize the park.

Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

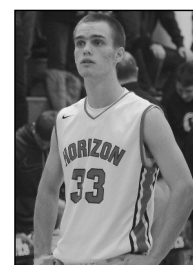
BENSON RETIRES

Stan Benson has retired after 25 years on the County Planning Commission. His service, which began in 1990, was celebrated during a Planning Commission dinner, held Feb. 25. New commissioner Ann Dow will succeed Benson on the panel. "Thank you for your service," At Large Commissioner Erik von Lubken told Ben-



son. "It's been greatly appreciated." "I just have a big chair to fill now," said District 3 Commissioner Kathie Alley, who follows Benson as longest-seated commissioner, having started in Sept. 2004.

Athlete of the Week



Nick Anderson
Horizon Hawks basketball

Nick Anderson had a team-high 15 points and scored the game-winning free-throw last weekend in the Hawks' Big Sky championship win over Sherman.

The Athlete of the Week will receive a large pizza with 2 toppings from Papa Murphy's. Congratulations to our winner 2-28-15.



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