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Cottage Grove Sentinel

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Remains found near Brice Creek identified

Lloyd Ruiz had been missing since 2011

The Lane County Sheriff's Office recently identified human remains discovered in the Brice Creek area as those of a camper who has been missing since 2011.

On Sunday, March 8, a local man who was reportedly hiking in the woods near the Brice Creek Trail discovered skeletal remains that were later confirmed to be human by the Sheriff's Office. Joe Bedortha told Eugene television station KVAL the next day that a friend had located the remains while mushroom hunting and asked Bedortha what to do about them. Bedortha said he had experience with such a situation, having discovered the remains of a Cottage Grove woman while camping several years ago.

The Sheriff's Office subsequently identified the remains as those of Lloyd Flores Ruiz, who disappeared from the Brice Creek area while camping with a friend almost four years ago, on March 18, 2011.

Crews with Lane County Search and Rescue searched for the then 53-year old Ruiz after his disappearance was reported by a man who had reportedly been camping with him in an undeveloped campground along the creek. The man said he spent the night after Ruiz' disappearance at the campsite after searching for Ruiz and before hitchhiking into town to report that Ruiz was missing. Crews searched the Brice Creek shoreline, and divers conducted a search of the creek that was not extensive due to high water levels.

Ruiz reportedly went missing in the area near Cedar Creek and Lund Park campgrounds. Sgt. Carrie Carver of the Lane County Sheriff's Office described Lund Park as the "entry point" to the area where Ruiz' remains were found, adding that a news crew attempting to access the site found it too remote last week.

"It was a nasty, strenuous hike over steep terrain," she said. Carver said that "not much else" besides human remains were discovered. Ruiz' next-of-kin have been identified.

"It's closure for the family, but not the way we would have wanted it to be," Carver said. "We're still waiting for word on the cause and manner of death."

Starry, Starry Night

The Cottage Grove Public Library hosted a Star Party on Monday evening, along with the Eugene Astronomical Society and NASA education ambassador Teena Della. This was the fourth consecutive year that all three parties have joined for such an event.

In the parking lot, seven telescopes were trained on a variety of celestial objects, including planets Venus and Jupiter.

Despite wet and cloudy conditions in the early morning to mid-afternoon, the skies cleared to offer some breath-taking views of the heavens.

"We plan these viewings at least a month in advance, and of course you never know what the weather will be, but this is as good as you can ask



With help from Eugene Astronomical Society member Kathy Oltion (left), Zoe Goings peers at Venus with her grandma, Ruby Haskell (right).

for," said Society treasurer Jerry Oltion.

Inside, Della — who had spent the day with high school students launching rockets — was on hand to visit with guests and answer questions, including the ob-

vious one, "Have you been to space?"

Despite making it into the second round of the Canadian astronaut program, her answer still is "no."

Community Services Director Pete Barrell said he

was very pleased with the turnout, which numbered around 50 at 8 p.m., and wouldn't be surprised if another 50 people visited the telescopes before the night was over.

City Council mulls Downtown Refinement Plan at another worksession

In-depth discussion ends without any changes recommended

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

There was much to say about the Main Street Refinement Plan at a worksession of the Cottage Grove City Council Monday night, though an at-times heavy discussion concluded without the recommendation of any changes to the plan.

The City of Cottage Grove's Planning Department initiated the formation of the plan, which aims to redesign and refurbish the downtown historic

district between its historic buildings, with the help of a Portland-based consultant about a year and a half ago. The City stated needs for downtown that included fixing the crown of Main Street, repairing sidewalks, improving access for those with disabilities and adding outdoor utilities.

Since then, the plan has been the subject of intense scrutiny and much comment by members of the public, the Planning Commission and a committee of stakeholders.

The City Council began its examination of the Refinement Plan in early February after the Planning Commission recommended its passage with a few conditions, and the Council has the ultimate authority to adopt, reject or modify it.

The Council held a lengthy public hearing on Feb. 23, then got close to voting on the plan at its March 9 meeting before electing to have Monday's worksession to more intensely and less formally hash out its stance on the plan's key issues.

The Council worked through a list of the plan's 22 basic components on Monday night, though early on it appeared that the discussion might only involve the first component: the cross-section of Main Street and the plan's recommendation to widen sidewalks from eight feet to 12 ½ feet; increase parking lane width to eight feet and decrease the travel lane width from 16 feet to 12 feet.

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Chamber finalizing Deathmobile purchase

Insurance issues still to be ironed out

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Just what is the current rate to insure a beat-up Lincoln Continental with a place in movie history?

The Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce finds itself asking insurance-related questions this week, having completed (at least in principle) the purchase of the "Deathmobile," the car made famous as the one used by the fraternity brothers of the Delta house to wreak havoc in the climactic scene of the 1978 film "Animal House."

In late December of 2014, Chamber Director Travis Palmer announced a fundraising effort on the

crowdfunding website gofundme.com to try and keep the Deathmobile in Cottage Grove through its purchase by the Chamber. Palmer said Monday that the Chamber has raised the \$5000 it was asked to raise for the purchase but declined to name the actual price of the car, stating that the deal had not yet been finalized.

As far as anyone knows, the original Deathmobile was destroyed shortly after the film was completed. The car the Chamber has its eye on was built from scratch by Tom Meeks, according to Linda Schmale, one of a group of the Deathmobile's current owners. Meeks built his car from the ground up, and it has appeared in parades

celebrating the movie's anniversaries, in addition to Bohemia Mining Days, the Eugene Celebration and other events.

Late last year, though, it was discovered that Schmale would be moving to Arizona and could be taking the Deathmobile with her. Schmale said she decided to wait on transporting the car to see if the Chamber could raise funding for the purchase, which it has apparently been able to accomplish.

Palmer said the biggest donation toward the car's purchase totaled \$2000, with another \$1000 pledged in the name of Cottage Grove High School's Class of 1978. He said

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The Chamber of Commerce hopes the Deathmobile from the movie "Animal House" can become a local attraction at parades and other events.

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