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Lions downed by Baker City in playoffs, page 1B



Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2015 SOUTH LANE COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889 VOLUME 128 • NUMBER 19

ATTENTION: EARLY DEADLINES

Due to the upcoming Veterans Day postal holiday, deadlines for the Nov. 11 edition of the Sentinel will be as follows: Deadlines for editorial, classified and display advertising will be Thursday, Nov. 5 at noon.

Teen raised in CG drowns in Santiam River

Matthew VanBrocklin, 15, had been flyfishing with a friend

A 15-year old boy who drowned in the Santiam River on Thursday had recently moved to Sweet Home from Cottage Grove.

The Linn County Sheriff's Office, Sweet Home Police and firefighters reportedly responded to a call regarding a fisherman in distress after 5 p.m. on Thursday. The fisherman, later identified as 15-year old Matthew Ryan VanBrocklin, was reportedly floating downstream in the South Santiam River near the Pleasant Valley Bridge.

"Witnesses told deputies that VanBrocklin was flyfishing with a friend just upstream from the Pleasant Valley Bridge, when Van Brocklin waded out into the river and either fell in or tried to swim across," according to a news release written by Linn County Undersheriff Jim Yon.

VanBrocklin reportedly yelled

for help as soon as he went into the water, but witnesses were too far away to help. Yon said he was not wearing a life vest. VanBrocklin was found near the area where he was last seen.

According to obituary information submitted to the Sentinel, VanBrocklin had been raised in Cottage Grove and moved to Sweet Home in August. He was a sophomore at Sweet Home High School and an avid fisherman.

A gofundme account set up to cover VanBrocklin's funeral expenses had raised almost \$2000 in one day by mid-afternoon Monday.

"Mattie brought joy wherever he went and could bring a smile to your face no matter how you were feeling," said a description on the site. "He was a light in this dark world, and anyone who knew him would agree."

A Celebration of Life for Matthew VanBrocklin will be Saturday, Nov. 7 at 2 p.m. in the Parish hall of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Cottage Grove. VanBrocklin, who had recently moved to Sweet Home, was fishing in the South Santiam River when he went under the water Thursday afternoon.



City Council moves ahead with plan for more crosswalks, sidewalks around area schools

Lincoln Middle School students Brayden Green, Samuel Ramirez and Cobie Simpson cross Fourth Street in front of the school Thursday afternoon. The Cottage Grove City Council recently discussed adding a crosswalk at the intersection of Fourth Street and Fillmore Avenue, in addition to more sidewalks in the area.

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

About 20-30 percent of students walking to and from Lincoln Middle School in Cottage Grove cross the street to get to and from school at an unmarked intersection, according to one local police officer. The officer's request for a crosswalk there, however, touched off a much broader discussion of the routes many local youths take to get to school and the paths that take them there.

At its most recent meeting, the Cottage Grove City Council heard a report from City Engineer Ron Bradsby, who stated that Officer Shawn Branstetter had recently approached him about the possibility of putting a crosswalk at the corner of Fourth Street and Fillmore Avenue in front of the Middle School. But Bradsby also sought further direction from the Council — much of the area around LMS — and around other South Lane schools — lacks sidewalks, he said, and the Council has the power to compel local homeowners to install them on their properties at their own expense.

Bradsby said that Branstetter felt "a marked crosswalk and warning signs

would give vehicles advance notice and greatly improve safety for the students." Bradsby added, though, that as he examined the intersection, he "noticed that there was no sidewalk along the south side of Fillmore Avenue."

"The crosswalk would allow students to cross the street safely, but then the students would need to walk in the street," he said.

Bradsby said he broadened his review and noticed that there is no sidewalk on South Fourth Street south of Lincoln and no crosswalks at the intersections of Fourth and Grant Avenue or South Sixth and Grant either. Similarly, there are areas without sidewalks on South Fourth north of the school and on Harrison Avenue between South River Road and South Third Street, and Bradsby said he discovered evidence that students had been walking on dirt paths where sidewalks did not exist.

"Therefore, staff wants to have a discussion about safe school routes and placing marked crosswalks and sidewalks," Bradsby said, adding that "Council has the authority...to direct the placement of crosswalks and order the placement of sidewalks." By the end of a rather in-depth discussion, it appeared that the

Council was ready to begin the process of compelling homeowners in the area to add sidewalks to their properties.

Bradsby said the City's Municipal Code could allow the Council to write a letter to homeowners stating that they could either hire someone to build a sidewalk in the City's right-of-way on their property or allow the City to build one, after which the City would place a lien on the property that could be paid off in the future.

There are many areas in Cottage Grove that lack sidewalks, according to City Manager Richard Meyers, but the area around Lincoln is the worst in terms of allowing schoolchildren to walk to school safely. He said the crosswalk at Fourth and Fillmore should be the City's first priority, but he asked the Council to prioritize other areas.

"A lot of these homes were built in the 50s and 60s," he said. "The homeowners didn't put in sidewalks for a variety of reasons, and they were never ordered to do so. In some locations, they didn't have kids walking to the Middle School until about 20 years ago, because there wasn't anything built there. Now there are a lot

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The staff of Shampoo Dolls took home first prize and \$100 in the business decorating contest with their "haunted wedding theme. Second place went to Territorial Seed, and third to Lauraine's ATA Martial Arts.

Right: Xavier Woods maintains a calm demeanor during trick-or-treating. Woods was the winner of Friday's costume contest.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Downtown packed with trick-or-treaters

Organizers of Cottage Grove's Downtown Trick-or-Treating event on Main Street — held Friday, Oct. 30, reported a "wonderful" turnout of kids and adults for two hours of fun. Main Street itself was closed for the duration of the gathering, which caused a bit of consternation as to which evening it should be held. Having Halloween itself fall on a Saturday this year led many to wonder whether trick-or-treating should happen on that day or the day before. A committee of representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Cottage Grove Main Street program, the Cottage Grove Sentinel met with downtown business owners to determine which day they felt would be best to hold the event. Their opinions seemed evenly split, though some business owners said they would not participate if the event was held Saturday.

It appears that having trick-or-treaters downtown on Friday did not hamper crowd participation, as Jim Gilroy, president of the Economic and Business Improvement District, reported handing out about 1500 pieces of candy that afternoon.

More pictures of the event can be seen on page 12B.

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