

Early learning center renamed for founder

'Peggy's Primary Connection' honors Lintula

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Many of the details surrounding the South Lane School District's plan to rebuild Harrison Elementary School are still up in the air. But one aspect of the plan was made certain by the School Board at its first meeting in February.

That night, the Board voted unanimously to change the name of A Primary Connection, the family resource center that has served area families since 1991, to "Peggy's Primary Connection" for founder Peggy Lintula.

A Primary Connection offers programs that emphasize family support, child development and domestic abuse prevention. Lintula was instrumental in starting the program in 1991 and was recently on hand to celebrate its 25th anniversary and a move to the Lane Community College campus in Cottage Grove.

But Lintula is currently losing a battle with cancer, and as such the Board, led by Jerry Settelmeyer, voted hurriedly to change the center's name to "Peggy's Primary Connection." At its Feb. 22 meeting, the Board was able to view a mockup of what a new logo for the center could look like, a logo prepared by BLRB Architects. Parent said she plans to show the logo to Lintula herself on Friday.

The resource center is planned for inclusion in its own wing of the new Harrison building next to its kindergarten classrooms in drawings prepared by the architects.



photos by Bruce Keish

Above: Superintendent Krista Parent unveils a potential "Peggy's Primary Connection" logo for the School Board. Below: Lintula reads to a group of students recently.



Trial ends in conviction on charges related to bar brawl

BY JON STINNETT
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After close to three hours of deliberations on Thursday, a six-person jury found a Cottage Grove man guilty on charges related to an altercation at a downtown bar last August.

Roger Benjamin Miller was found guilty of Assault IV, Strangulation, Physical Harrassment, two counts of Disorderly Conduct, Interfering with a Peace Officer, Resisting Arrest and Failure to Appear in Court. Miller, who was represented in court by attorney Jacob Daniels, will be sentenced in Cottage Grove Municipal Court at 1 p.m. this Thursday.

Cottage Grove Prosecutor John Woodworth called several Cottage Grove police officers to testify to the actions of Miller and Jeremy Burnes on the night of Aug. 22, 2015, when a bouncer working at the bar at El Tapatio restaurant reportedly attempted to stop a visibly in-

toxicated Burnes from drinking and removed his beer from him. During testimony last week, the bouncer stated that after being cut off, Burnes told him he had to say goodbye to a friend, at which point he walked to the back of the bar and punched the DJ there. In the ensuing melee, Miller reportedly grabbed and placed another individual in a chokehold, after which he and Burnes left the bar.

Officer Matt Walker and Reserve Officer Steve Sherwin responded to the incident, followed by Corporal David Burgin, and much testimony centered around the actions of Burnes and Miller when police attempted to question them in the Cottage Grove Community Center parking lot after leaving El Tapatio. Officer Walker testified that Burnes became compliant and sat on the curb but Miller continued to struggle with Burgin, pushing Burgin back into his patrol vehicle; Walker said Miller only complied with po-

lice orders after Walker pointed his taser at Miller and indicated that he planned to use it.

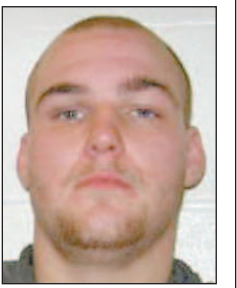
Daniels would argue that "something doesn't pass the smell test" with regard to police accounts of their encounter with Miller, adding that Miller could only be responsible for "applying the amount of force necessary to pull somebody off his friend." The jury disagreed. Burnes had reportedly pled guilty previously to charges related to the incident and was sentenced to 36 months' probation and 14 days in jail. Miller's trial began early Thursday and concluded at about 8 p.m.

Judge Martin Fisher said this was the first trial in Cottage Grove Municipal Court since Jan. 28 of this year. Trials here are rare and tend to "come in shifts," Fisher said, with seven occurring last year and none in 2014, though he said he expects cases to go to trial this month and in April.

Area man held on multiple charges

The Cottage Grove Police Department was advised on Tuesday, Feb. 23 that a wanted subject from Cottage Grove had been booked into the Lane County Jail.

A dispatcher at CGPD said that local police have had over 270 contacts with 21-year old Dillon Privitt, who was booked on a Municipal Court warrant last week on charges of attempting to elude a police officer in a vehicle, reckless driving and two counts of failures to appear in court. Bond was set at \$100,000.



Dillon Privitt

Safe Families for Children program to launch in Cottage Grove

Armory to host first local event on Saturday, March 5

Christians As Family Advocates (CAFA), a non-profit organization committed to making a safer place for children, will be celebrating the launch of its first Safe Families location in Lane County at the Cottage Grove Armory on Saturday, March 5 from 1-3 p.m. at an event open to the entire community.

Organizers say the event will be a celebration, a time of informational sharing and also a lo-

cal where families can drop off household items for the Safe Families program. Local pastors from the Cottage Grove area will join together in a ribbon-joining ceremony to symbolize that they and the community are joining together to support Safe Families for Children.

According to Angela Ard of CAFA, Safe Families for Children is a community-based network designed to support struggling families who need to

temporarily place their children in a safe place outside of their home. The Safe Families model relies on the networks and accountability that exist in church communities to support families in crisis. Church members from participating churches volunteer to become a trained safe family, while other volunteers can contribute meals, babysitting time and financial resources so that the child is fully covered during their stay.

"The beautiful thing is that everyone can help in one way or another. We all want to make a safer place for children, but

sometimes we just don't know how. With Safe Families, everyone can play a role," said Ard, the director of Safe Families in Lane County at CAFA.

The program works to provide a chance for parents to get back on their feet offering respite before the parent is pushed into a place of possible neglect. Parents experiencing a temporary crisis can arrange for their children to stay with a "Safe Family" while they address the issues that led to their situation. Children in these situations often suffer neglect or abuse and some eventually are removed

from their home and are placed in state custody. The idea with Safe Families is that these children with temporary needs don't get placed with the state.

There are currently 78 active sites in more than 28 states across the United States alone, and Ard said this has also become a global movement with sites now in Canada and the UK. Safe Families partners with host agencies, local churches, ministries, as well as community and government agencies to intervene in the lives of children and families that could otherwise be forgotten. Cottage Grove will

be the first Safe Families site in Lane County.

In early 2015, CAFA hired Ard as the SFFC Lane County Program Director and began to focus efforts on introducing Safe Families to Cottage Grove. Community members in surrounding areas have quickly become interested as well, with churches in Eugene, Springfield, Junction City and Oakridge eager to get on board.

Those seeking more information about CAFA can visit: <http://cafaweb.com>.

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