

Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2016

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

VOLUME 128 • NUMBER 52

Attention: Early deadlines

The Sentinel asks that items for its July 6 edition be submitted by Thursday, June 30 at noon.

Also inside:



Looking back

Columnist Betty Kaiser on 20 years of Sentinel memories, page 6A



Downtown vigil

Event held to support assault victim, page 3A

Sisters accused of robbing elderly veteran

Amount of alleged theft believed to be over \$100,000

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

On Friday, the Cottage Grove Police Department announced the arrests of two area sisters suspected of bilking an elderly area veteran out of over \$100,000 in a four-month period.

The Department said Friday that it had arrested 57-year old Rita Amundson and her sister, 64-year old Teena Taylor, both of Cottage Grove, after a 94-year old World War II veteran reported that he had been the victim of theft that had so far totaled \$107,000 as of press time

Monday but was expected to rise. The investigation began on June 10.

Detective Doug Skaggs told the Sentinel that the man, who found himself isolated and without companionship or help after the passing of his wife of 71 years, was first introduced to Taylor, who suggested that Amundson move in with the alleged victim and become his caregiver.

Skaggs said that purchases made by the sisters using the man's money began right away; they were asked to buy him a car, he said, which they did. Skaggs said the women convinced the victim that there would be no one authorized or

able to pay for his burial when he passed away, after which he agreed to authorize Amundson to access his bank account.

"That's where the spending goes crazy," Skaggs said. The title to the car the man authorized the ladies to purchase was not registered in his name, Skaggs said, and \$19,000 was allegedly transferred soon after into another account. The sisters allegedly purchased another car with the man's money. Skaggs said the women are believed to be responsible for the purchase of "at least seven vehicles" using their victim's money, including a 2014 Subaru that they allegedly traded in to purchase an older vehicle and pocketed cash in the trade.



Rita Amundson



Teena Taylor

Skaggs said the victim's bank account had been brought down to a balance of \$500 from a total of close to \$80,000 in about 3 1/2 months.

Please see THEFT, Page 10A

A PROPER END



photo by Kelli Wesolowski

Area Boy Scouts solemnly prepare a tattered American flag for retirement at a ceremony held on Flag Day, Tuesday, June 14.

Joint ceremony held to honor, retire flags

The United States Flag Code states that, "The Flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." On Flag Day, Tuesday, June 14, representa-

tives of local American Legion Post 32, VFW Post 3473 and Boy Scouts Troop 140 presented a ceremonial flag retirement ceremony at the Legion, where a fire pit has been constructed for just that purpose. Boy Scouts disassembled the

flags by cutting apart the blue field of stars, then stripping each colored stripe apart. As each was laid upon the fire, a saying was read. A beautiful rendition of "America the Beautiful" was then sung by Marlene Nowak.

Local LCC campus plots its future

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The economic downturn that devastated this country's economy several years ago sent many people who were frustrated with the state of the workforce and their place in it back to the halls of higher education. College enrollment figures soared, though the protracted recovery from the Great Recession has had the opposite effect, as numbers continue to fall. It is against this backdrop that a committee of concerned local citizens got together last week to plot the future of the Lane Community College center in Cottage Grove.

The LCC Cottage Grove Advisory Committee met for the first time on Wednesday, June 15 to envision the future of the local branch, and the group reportedly plans to meet monthly into the near future. Eight of its 11 members (of which this reporter is one) joined LCC staffers Lida Herburger, MJ Kuhar and Holli Turpin to talk about how the college might best prepare for the task of educating Cottage Grove in future years.

Near the start of the meeting, Herburger, who serves as director of the Cottage Grove campus, outlined the offerings there. She said the campus offers only non-credit classes, in addition to the testing necessary to receive an Oregon National Career Readiness Certificate. The college offers a popular General Equivalency Degree (GED) program, she said, and hosts the South Lane Children's Dental Clinic and Peggy's Primary Connection, a family

Please see LCC, Page 8A

Local gardener Andrea Mull receives state's top honor

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The care and maintenance of a downtown Cottage Grove park was one of the reasons that a local woman was named the Oregon Federation of Garden Clubs' Gardener of the Year for 2016. A meeting involving that very same park, however, kept her from attending the ceremony and accepting her award.

Andrea Mull has been involved with the Cottage Grove Garden Club since its inception, and she was instrumental in convincing the club to take over

the maintenance of All-America City Square at the corner of Seventh and Main Street. But a meeting involving the park on Tuesday, June 14 kept Mull from attending the Federation's state convention and accepting her award in person.

Mull said that fellow Garden Club members Peggy Severns and Colette Kimball compiled the information that led to her nomination for the statewide honor.

"I figured that with all of the garden clubs in Oregon, that there was no way," Mull said.

Mull found out a week before the state convention that she had

received the honor.

"I'm pretty proud about it," she said, "but it wouldn't have happened without the Garden Club."

In an entry on the Garden Club's blog, located at cottage-grovecgardenclub.blogspot.com, Kimball wrote of the reasons that Mull was nominated for the award, which included "her work and leadership during the critical infancy stages" of the club.

"As a charter member of the club, Andrea quickly volunteered to be vice president, then went on to serve as president for 3 1/2 years," she wrote. "Andrea's

leadership in the club went beyond her capacity as an elected officer. During the formative years for the Garden Club, Andrea was the plant sale coordinator for the annual district-wide plant sale; she volunteered to lead many informative, hands-on programs; she wrote educational pieces for our newsletter and was dedicated to promoting the club within the Cottage Grove community."

Kimball also wrote that, in 2009, Mull helped convince the Garden Club that maintaining All-America City Square was

Please see GARDENER, Page 8A



Sentinel file photo

Andrea Mull (far right), the Oregon State Federation of Garden Clubs' Gardener of the Year, is shown being interviewed by "Garden Time TV" in 2014.

RAIN COUNTRY REALTY INC.
75586 Wicks Road, Dorena

NEW LISTING

5.39 Acre Country property with 2258 SF Home! All on one level, partially updated with new siding, roof, heat pump, bamboo flooring and nice Master bedroom suite with walk in closet. 60x30 Metal barn with several stalls. 24x36 shop with concrete floors. Call Valerie Nash for your private showing.
\$339,400

Would you like to sell your home? Call Today!

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| PENDING 1225 Taylor \$130,000 | PENDING 1047 Tyler \$180,000 | PENDING 1330 Merrill \$177,500 |
| PENDING 133 Date St. \$119,000 | PENDING 1905 E. Whiteaker \$105,000 | |

RainCountryRealty.com raincountryrealty@gmail.com 1320 Hwy 99 • 541-942-7246

Principal Brokers
Teresa Abbott221-1735
Frank Brazell.....953-2407

Broker
Valerie Nash521-1618

Licensed in the State of Oregon

CONTACT US

On the Internet www.cgsentinel.com
By telephone (541) 942-3325
By fax (541) 942-3328
By e-mail cgnnews@cgsentinel.com
By mail P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424
In person Corner of Sixth and Whiteaker, Cottage Grove

WEATHER



Sunny

HIGH 77
LOW 52

CONTENTS

Calendar.....11B
Channel Guide.....4B
Classified ads.....6B
Obituaries.....2A
Opinion.....4A
Public Safety.....5A
Sports.....1B



6 18134 42405 2

1 Dollar