

# Local developer invents test prep app for med students

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Taking a test that has immense implications for one's future can lead to no small amount of anxiety, even if its subject matter can be mind-numbingly dull. A Cottage Grove-based game developer, though, has invented a game that aims to take the anxiety and ennui out of studying for students of the medical professions.



T. Raven Meyers

A self-taught computer programmer, web designer and midwife, T. Raven Meyers lived in various places throughout the world and



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## Scrub Ninjas allows players to create a surgical 'weapon' to answer study questions for exams in AP psychology and biology, pre-med and nursing studies.

spent years in Thailand with her family before journeying back to Cottage Grove, from where her husband hails. Now, Meyers said she's combined her passions for programming and helping create a more fulfilling learning experience in creating Scrub Ninjas, a test preparation application designed to support students taking a range of courses from high school advanced placement psychology and biology to pre-med and nursing school requirements.

A visual learner, Meyers said that she often requires a visual element to learn any piece of information, and she knows she's not alone. She said she's the first person to create a game that includes test preparation for medical students, which she developed in tandem with a doctor friend that supplied the instructional material.

"The students love it," she said. "It's got visual stimuli that help keep them engaged and stimulate the part of the mind that helps

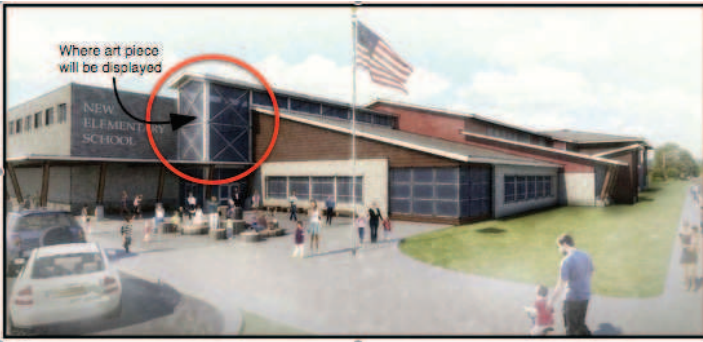
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# Art sought for new elementary school entry

South Lane School District is seeking an artist to beautify part of Cottage Grove's new elementary school.

Voters passed a bond to replace the aging Harrison Elementary School building in the spring, and the school is scheduled to open in the fall of 2018. Now, South Lane has put out a request for proposals for art that will be displayed as a centerpiece in the entryway of the new school.

In the request, Communications Coordinator Garrett Bridgens wrote that the building's design narrative "is to create an engaging metaphor for growth that is functional, flexible and re-



courtesy graphic

spectful of children as thoughtful, independent learners." The school's main entry and living room will be a gathering place for students who will then circulate into the main building. Its design will reference the

historical abundance of covered bridges, wood trusses and cross bracing.

The art that is chosen will be displayed above the school's main vestibule. The dimensions of the area are approximately

22 feet high, 16 feet wide and 24 feet deep. The chosen application will be awarded \$5000 and given a \$3000 budget for materials and other supplies. The District said that applications should include a narrative of what the proposed artwork represents and how it ties to the local heritage and history of Cottage Grove. A drawing and itemized budget is also to be included. The deadline for applications is 4 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 2. Questions can be directed to Superintendent Krista Parent or Bridgens at 541-942-3381.

# Council, Planning Comm. set to meet

Cottage Grove local government agencies are set to tackle several issues in upcoming meetings. Here's a brief rundown of upcoming agendas of the City Council and Planning Commission:

## City Council: EBID extension, tiny homes

On Monday, Nov. 14, the City Council will hold its second public hearing on the possible extension of the Business Improvement District and Economic Business Improvement District. The first hearing, at which no one spoke, was held last month.

The EBID and BID are assessment districts in which property owners choose to be assessed an annual fee that is used to promote and improve the businesses located there. The original districts were created in 2004 and extended in 2007, 2010 and 2013. The EBID/BID boards are requesting a five-year extension this time around. The extension will be considered after the second public hearing. Previous EBID initiatives include the remodel and renaming of All-America City Square (a/ka Opal Whiteley Park.)

Also on Nov. 14, the Council is expected to hear a presentation from the Cottage Villages Coalition, a group dedicated to bringing 'tiny homes' to Cottage Grove as housing for those at risk of being homeless. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

## Planning Commission: Airport rezoning, rental shop

At its Wednesday, Nov. 16 meeting, the Planning Commission will examine a zone change application for the Cottage Grove Airport, which was recently annexed by the City from Lane County. The applicant is seeking to change the zoning on Cottage Grove's Land Use Map for the Airport from Lane Code Chapter 10 AO, Airport Operations, to Cottage Grove Chapter 14 Parks and Recreation District.

The Planning Commission will also examine an application for a site design review of plans for a new industrial rental shop facility in the Cottage Grove Industrial Park, located at 2125 Getty Circle.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Both meetings are open to the public.

# Applications for home heating assistance increase

The need for energy assistance for low-income families in the Cottage Grove area increases a bit each year, according to one local agency charged with implementing a

federal energy assistance program.

Mike Fleck, Executive Director of Community Sharing, which distributes funds through the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, said late Monday that 566 local households had signed up for the program on or after the Nov. 1 deadline. Community Sharing would likely close the registration process for LIHEAP on Monday, Fleck said, after reaching its quota, though registration may be opened up again if more funding is allocated.

Fleck said Community Sharing was allocated about \$160,000 to provide energy assistance through the program, a number that could climb toward \$170,000. For the first month, households that have a member living with a disability are given preference for funding, after which all households making 185 percent of the federally recognized poverty level are eligible.

According to Mary Ellen Bennett, LIHEAP coordinator for Lane County, a household's current gross monthly income must be at or below 60 percent of Oregon's median income level to qualify for LIHEAP. A household of one person can have a gross monthly income as high as \$1,885 and qualify. A household of four people can have a gross monthly income of \$3625 and qualify.

The amount of assistance a household receives depends on a number of factors. The program pays the assistance directly into a household's utility account as a one-time payment that can range from \$150-\$550.

Fleck said that Community Sharing will continue paying out LIHEAP assistance through the winter and often into April.

"We will probably reopen registration, and if we do, it always happens on the first business day of the month," he said. "At that time, those interested can call to see if it's been reopened."

Fleck said energy assistance is frequently accessed by the "working poor" of the area, though such "front-of-counter" services such as laundry and prescription drug assistance are held to a much more stringent requirement of 110 percent of the poverty level. Another key Community Sharing outreach, its food box program, has reportedly leveled off in the 700 or so per month range, but has not decreased with an improving economy.



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