



Cottage Grove Sentinel

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



SPORTS

The Lions fall to Junction City in doubleheader. Senior send-offs continue.

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For a complete six-day forecast turn to page 5.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2017

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Harrison's Got Talent



Twenty-five acts performed at Harrison's Got Talent on Saturday, April 29. Acts ranged from interpretive dancing to singing to drum solos. Performers included: Annabelle, Deegan, Blake, Natalee, Colton, Teagan, Aurora, Kaela, Clara, Kylee, Kadence, Sidney, Zoey, Oceana, Byrnn, Chevelle, Dylan, Ava, Ariana, Eliza, Charlese, Genesis, Kendra, Melissa, Eliza, Ethan, Isabell, Sara, Sarah and Sunni.

CGHS Principal resigns

Iton Udosenata announces move to North Eugene



Iton Udosenata

By Zachary Silva
Cottage Grove Sentinel

In front of a full room of 30 community members, the South Lane School District School Board met Monday night for their monthly meeting at the District Service Center.

The meeting began with some shock from both board members and those in the audience when South Lane School

District Superintendent Krista Parent noted that Cottage Grove High School principal Iton Udosenata would be leaving his post in Cottage Grove to be principal at North Eugene High School.

"This opportunity with North Eugene... was a challenge that I was ready for and while it is bittersweet to leave here, we're excited about the new opportunity to be principal at North Eugene High School," said Udosenata who attended North Eugene High School as a student and has served as principal at Cottage Grove for four years.

After this announcement, the meeting was back on track. Cottage Grove High School student Savannah Palis updated the board about what was going on at the school focusing on AP tests and a variety of club activities.

The attention of the board then shifted to a presentation from Bohemia Elementary School staff members. Principal Heather Bridgens, alongside fifth grade teacher Ashley Olsen and first grade teacher Katherine Hawks, gave a presentation on Performance Assessment Demonstration Sites (PADS), a program that through the Oregon Department of Education is working to, according to the ODE website, "provide performance assessment professional learning and implementation support." For this program, the school received a \$43,000 grant.

"The purpose of a performance assessment is three things," said Bridgens. "One to tell the story student learning, to gather information to inform about the best next step will be for the student, and to decide if the student has learned enough. Our current state assessment system looks at number three, has a student learned enough by the end of the year."

As the group made clear, the goal of this is to assess students in a way that also aids the learning process. Additionally, they identified that assessments should not be the most difficult part of the learning processes but should be integrated into the learning.

Please see **PRINCIPAL PG. A8**

South Lane Mental Health works to serve Cottage Grove

By Caitlyn May
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Tom Wheeler

His name was Jose.

He lived in a hospital in Lexington, Kentucky that was nearly 200 years old and at some point before crossing paths with Tom Wheeler, a scalpel was inserted into his brain; a lobotomy. It rendered him in a permanent state of childhood; leaving him with intelligence of a seven-year-old whose walls came equipped with holes a man's-height high. Remnants of the chains that used to hold patients by the neck.

"It struck me," Wheeler says. The hospital in Kentucky was his first placement for his Master's program and Jose, his first assignment. "A lot has changed since then."

A lot and in some cases, not nearly enough.

Wheeler is currently the executive director of South Lane Mental Health but within a year's time he's stepping down from the post he's held for 25 years and handing the reins to someone else. Approximately 90 staff will continue to serve 2,000 patients a year, fulfilling the original mission of a small church in Cottage Grove: to help the mentally ill who live in the community.

"I've heard a saying, 'If you go to Cot-

tage Grove, you'll never go to the hospital again,'" Wheeler said. "It's not always true, but we're good at this."

"This" is treating severe mental illness that could lead to homelessness, criminal records or other situations that may see people ostracized from the community. Many of the individuals residents have come to know wandering downtown are clients of South Lane Mental Health. And some aren't.

While South Lane staff may attempt to engage with someone obviously in the throes of undiagnosed or under-treated mental illness, their patients are those who seek help on their own or with the help of local law enforcement.

"This is America and people have the freedom to not ask for help," Wheeler said.

But those who do want help would be hard-pressed not to find South Lane's outstretched hand. The program is in the local emergency room, counselors and administrators have a working relationship with Cottage Grove police and anyone can walk in off the street and ask for help. If it's serious, they'll be seen that day. If they're on the Oregon Health Plan, costs may be minimal and if they have private insurance they can be connected with a private practice to continue their treatment or counseling.

The facility is able to treat those with Medicaid, even though the plan does not cover mental health treatment, on a sliding

scale. Some of South Lane's counseling and treatment is given away for free based on its budget for the year. It started with volunteers helping 50 patients per year. Now, as Wheeler prepares to pass the baton, South Lane Mental health sees 2,000 patients in the same time span. It's a number that could free-fall under the current political climate if the Affordable Care Act is repealed and its replacement does not offer the same services or funds.

"They're talking about 50,000 people maybe losing their health insurance in Oregon," Wheeler said. "The 2,000 people we see could lose their health insurance and there are no amount of community bake sales to make up that difference."

While the threat of diminished client services hangs overhead, South Lane will welcome more patients through its doors. After having to turn residents of Douglas County away, an agreement is in the works to allow those seeking mental health services to find them in Cottage Grove.

"There are 90 staff here in Cottage Grove and in Drain there isn't a single counselor who takes OHP. The closest one is in Roseburg," Wheeler said. "But now, in the next few months the county will allow us to bill Umpqua Health Alliance and those people can be served."

That's not to say South Lane Mental Health is in the business of seeking out, out-of-city patients. Despite public specu-

Please see **MENTAL HEALTH PG. A8**

Pool reveals future financial trouble

By Caitlyn May
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The Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center costs thousands to run each year and each year, it's coming up short of that cost.

"The city gives us \$50,000 consistently but we do end up using our reserve fund to make up the difference," said manager Carrie McCasline.

McCasline gave a presentation to the Cottage Grove City Council on Monday, April 24 detailing the costs associated with operating the pool and the relationship between its programs and revenue.

"The lap swims and open swim doesn't generate a lot of revenue but it's what the community wants the most," she said.

McCasline went on to note that swimming lessons comprise a large amount of the revenue being generated but due to the size of the pool and safety requirements, classes are restricted to a certain

Please see **POOL PG. A10**

ENTERTAINMENT

Danny Fingers

New York act Danny Fingers will be at the Axe and Fiddle on Thursday. **PAGE A3**



COMMUNITY

Swinging Bridge

The city water bill will now let residents round up to save the landmark. **PAGE A9**

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Coffee with the Editor Every Tuesday 12 pm

@ Backstage Bakery

Come chat about the community!

