



Cottage Grove Sentinel

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What teams ended their seasons and which ones will move on? B1

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

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"BAD KIDS"

A year in the life of Al Kennedy High School as it navigates a location change, funding shortages and the ever-present stereotypes associated with alternative education.

On an early September morning, the staff of Al Kennedy High School gathered in a room at the South Lane School District offices. The Sentinel had approached the district in the prior weeks about chronicling the teachers and students at Kennedy to tell the story of alternative education through the lens of those on the ground. District administrators thought it was a great idea. Kennedy staff had questions. Eight educators sat in a room with a newspaper editor and had a conversation. At the end, they'd come to an understanding: The truth is the truth and the kids come first. Over the course of the 2017-2018 school year, the Sentinel will tell the story of these educators and their students as they navigate a location change, funding gaps and the unfortunately true narrative that sometimes working hard isn't enough and an education doesn't fix everything.

We'll tell stories of triumph, tragedy and truth as the tribe at Kennedy makes the most with what it has in its continued effort to slingshot students up and over the barriers to progress through understanding, commitment and engagement while acknowledging the reality that some kids won't make it.

By Caitlyn May and Zach Silva
A seven-part series

Halie Ketcher has moved 11 times in her life but she's never had a move as difficult as the last one. Two days after being appointed principal of Al Kennedy High School, she oversaw the move of 94 students (and everything that came with them) four miles north of Cottage Grove to their new home in Saginaw; a space called Delight Valley that they would share with a pre-school and where they would contend with a shrinking move-in budget while new projects around the school district saw millions in bond money. It was a lot of baggage.

"There was some concern in the community," former Kennedy Principal Mike Ingman said. He began the move as principal at the end of the 2016-2017 school year before a domino effect started by the resignation of Cottage Grove High School principal Iton Unosenata, would see Ingman take the top spot at the traditional high school and Ketcher, behind the big desk at Kennedy. The move to Delight Valley, Ingman said, meant a longer trek for students in rural Oregon where a car ride is not always guaranteed and the suggestion of moving the community's alternative high school was labeled a bad idea.

Bad. Because in Cottage Grove—where the median yearly income is \$37,058 and 22.5 percent of residents live in poverty-- the perception is that the alternative school is for the students who can't be good, a common notion

Please see KENNEDY PG. A7

Creswell group works to save history

By Caitlyn May
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Last January, a group of Creswell residents came together with a simple mission: To collaborate within the community to enrich the lives of current and future generations by preserving Creswell's physical and cultural heritage. They call themselves the Creswell Heritage Foundation and they've set their sights on their first project.

"The old school house was built in 1875 as Creswell's first school," said Verlean McCoy, foundation president. "It's the only historic building in Creswell that's on the National Register of Historic Places."

The register is the federal accounting of buildings and places deemed worthy of restoration—currently some 80,000 nationwide—and as such, efforts to renovate them must follow strict guidelines. It's a blessing and a curse for the Heritage Foundation as they move to begin work on the school house.

Please see CRESWELL PG. A9

Bruddahs and Sistas closes

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove residents looking for a Hawaiian-food fix can no longer find it on S. Gateway Blvd. Bruddahs and Sistas Hawaiian Kitchen has closed.

"We tried to reach out to them early on when we got word that they might be closing," said Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Travis Palmer.

Repeated attempts by The Sentinel to reach the owners of the restaurant were not successful.

Bruddahs and Sistas Facebook page changed its hours of operation to 'permanently closed' last week after customers stopping in for lunch were greeted with blacked out windows and a sign on the door announcing the restaurant was closed.

The restaurant filed its articles of incorporation with the state on October 26 of last year.

"I don't know if they're going to start up in some other way but their dues are paid up for the year," Palmer said.

Local teen pushes past hardships to find his 'normal'

Clayton Schoenleber makes it work as he deals with the struggles of illness and high school

This piece is part of an ongoing collaboration between the Sentinel and the Cottage Grove High School's media class to bring back the school's newspaper. Readers will continue to find stories written by students as they gear-up to publish their own paper at the start of 2018.

By Chelsea Davis
For The Sentinel

Being a teenager comes with many struggles in itself such as grades, extracurricular activities, jobs and social pressure, but for Clayton Schoenleber he had a few extra obstacles. From childhood to now he has been in and out of the hospital, and as he says "I feel like I spent more time in the hospital than out for a couple years."

Schoenleber is very social and seems to be with a friend at all times, but he says that it hasn't always been this way. "When I first started having my medical issues it made me distance from my friends, just because I couldn't do the same things they could anymore and I needed to focus on my health." He had serious stomach problems, having to do with his intestines. He was asked how many surgeries he's had and

he replied with, "Too many to count, and way more than I ever wanted." He described it as going in circles, because nothing seemed to help for more than a couple of weeks. Being in the hospital is not something a person wants to do, let alone a kid and keeping stable relationships was hard when he needed to put his health above all.

Schoenleber has always been very active: he played football, basketball, and baseball in his childhood. Since his medical issues he is no longer able to keep his active schedule or partake in many other activities. He has to caution all his daily activities as well as hobbies because he doesn't want to go back to the hospital. He still manages to have many hobbies and stay active like working on his truck, kayaking, spending time with his girlfriend as well as his dog. He also now has a job he's maintained for over a year. "It's

easier now, but back then I had more challenges."

As far as school goes, having to spend so much time in the hospital means not spending so much time in school. He missed a lot of school in middle school, resulting in doing online school to make it easier on him. He did this for a couple years or so and is now enrolled at Al Kennedy Alternative High School. "School is school, not my favorite place but also not the worst." School itself can be quite the challenge, without added personal life issues so he has proven to be determined person that wants to excel in life.

A person who has helped Schoenleber through everything is his mother, Cassie. "She is so supportive and has never failed to show me her love and help me in any way she can." He has lived with his mother his whole life and they have truly been through thick and thin with

each other. He says he wouldn't have been able to surpass this rough time without her. As you could imagine this was hard on her, seeing the person she loves most having to go through such severe medical issues, but she did everything she could and proved her strength right along with him.

Today, Schoenleber proves his resilience everyday by exceeding in life and taking his past struggles as a motivator. Although his medical issues are not completely gone, they are much less severe. Through being in and out of the hospital for years he managed to stay positive and look on the bright side of things. "I have a lot of amazing people in my life, and a good life in total, I really am thankful." This goes to show his positive attitude and way of thinking, even after having obstacles thrown in his path time after time again.

Pool wish list over budget

By Caitlyn May
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In December of 2015, the South Lane School District had a list of things it wanted to address at the community pool with some of the \$35 million in bond money it had been granted by voters. After compiling the list, the price tag for the updates came in at just over \$8 million. That same list in September of this year is estimated to cost over \$9 million. The district has budgeted \$5.1 million.

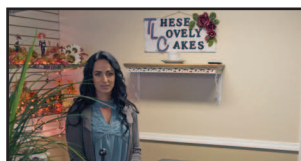
"What we want will cost \$10 million," Superintendent Krista Parent told the school board during its November 6 meeting. "We don't have \$10 million. We have \$5.1 million so we're going to have to prioritize."

The district has formed a design committee with members

Please see POOL PG. A9

COMMUNITY

New bakery
A new treat shop is open in Cottage Grove. PAGE A6



SPORTS

Heartache and heroes
State play has begun and some teams will move on while others come home. PAGE B1

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Coffee with the Editor
Last Thursday of the month
12 pm
@ Backstage Bakery
Come chat about the community!

