

# Cottage Grove Retrospective

A look back at Sentinel stories from 30 and 60 years ago

## Al Kennedy starts forestry program, 1987

**S**cott Bangle, a junior at Cottage Grove High School, hadn't planned on attending school this year.

But a new program at the school, designed to retain dropouts while teaching them job skills, helped change his mind. The Morepun Project, instituted last spring, incorporates hands-on forestry experience with classroom curriculum in an effort to create a learning alternative for boys who have not done well in a traditional high school setting.

The program offers an opportunity for success to boys who have not tasted it before in school, says Al Kennedy, director of the program. That taste has whetted the appetites of the 13 boys participating and helped them assess their goals.

"I want to get my diploma," Bangle says. "That's all I'm working for. Last year it seemed so far away, and this year it seems so close."

The program is named for an aborigine word meaning "to care," which Principal Ed Otton picked up while teaching in Australia. Kennedy says the term not only describes this program, but reflects Otton's whole approach to education.

In the program, students spend five of their seven daily periods with Kennedy, learning science, math and beginning forestry in a classroom setting, with a two-period block devoted to work forestry-related projects on nearby private and federal timber land. Projects range from timber harvesting and commercial thinning to cone

picking and road building.

The students also study English and social studies with other teachers. While the students in the project follow a unique schedule, they are not isolated from their classmates and are mixed with other students in all their classes.

What makes their schedule different is spending five periods with one teacher. This offers a continuity for the students and means they are not continually forced to adapt to a different classroom and a different teacher, Kennedy says.

Obviously, another factor is the mutual respect between Kennedy and the boys, and their knowledge that at least one teacher is looking out for them. The hands-on part of the program is also attractive to the boys.

"It's not just book work. I get to go out and do physical things - spur climbing or chopping wood for older folks," says sophomore Eddie Davis. "It fits a lot of people in here."

Though the students learn specific skills, they also learn how to acquire skills, making them more adaptable and more employable, Kennedy says.

"We're teaching a process, not a technique," he says. "The skill is not as relevant as the process of learning."

Kennedy also tries to instill in his students what he believes is the most important skill needed for getting and keeping a good job - the ability to work diligently and efficiently.

"One thing about these kids is they're not lazy," Kennedy says. "I don't have to go

around trying to make them stay busy. They love being busy."

But book learning is not neglected, and students are required to complete the day's classwork before they can participate in the hands-on portion of the program. And, since forestry-related material is integrated with the math and science, students know they must keep up with their assignments if they want to work safely in the field, Kennedy says.

One shortcoming of the program, Otton says, is that so far it is limited to boys, but he would like to see a similar program developed to encourage at-risk girls to stay in school.

Though students drop out for a multitude of reasons, most at-risk students share similar behavior patterns, Kennedy says. Many are poorly organized and value free time over school work, he says. "They become addicted to habits of failure, and they like those habits."

Kennedy hopes to replace that addiction with an addiction to success, something that these students have experienced little of at school.

Though Kennedy admits it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the program, there are many indications that it is keeping the students interested.

"I haven't skipped a day so far, and I have almost perfect attendance," Davis says. "That's great - a lot better than last year."

Cottage Grove Police Department 24-Hour Anonymous Tip Line: 767-0504

### POLICE BLOTTER

#### October 30

Principal requests officer contact regarding a video floating around involving possible animal abuse by former Cottage Grove High School students.

Armed suspect reported at 6th St. and Cleveland Ave. Complainant reported she was exiting Hillcrest Market and she observed a male subject tucking a handgun into his waistband which was concealed under a baggy sweatshirt. Subject was concealing the weapon, not menacing, subject then departed northbound on 6th St. on foot.

Burglary reported on N. 19th St. Unknown suspect pried open the door on an outbuilding and took numerous tools sometime over the weekend including a trimmer, backpack blower, weed eater and an additional blower.

Complainant came into the police station requesting an officer test a substance he found on his child's bathroom sink. Suspects it may be heroin.

#### November 1

Disorderly subject reported. Female walking on the sidewalk, screaming at traffic and occasionally walking into lanes of travel. Car had to swerve to miss her.

Suspicious subject reported on E. Main St. Complainant believed a male subject had defecated in the back of their property.

Theft reported at Safeway on Main St. Complainant observed subject put something in a backpack. Confronted them but they ran out of the store.

#### November 2

Theft in the third degree reported at Safeway on Main St. Subject reportedly stole a roasted chicken and a bottle of wine and ran towards the Domino's parking lot. Subject dropped the chicken.

The boys' soccer team set off the alarm at the high school. Police received a call that the alarm was activated in the east locker room. The boys were returning from a game.

#### November 4

Theft reported on River Rd. A man with a gas can reportedly appeared to be siphoning gas from trucks parked outside the fence across from Boyce and Sons.

Contraband seized on Hwy. 99 by Dollar Tree. Officer response requested to pick up a small baggie containing a white crystalline substance.

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51° | 44°



Showers

FRIDAY Nov. 10

51° | 40°



Showers

SATURDAY Nov. 11

54° | 42°



Showers

SUNDAY Nov. 12

51° | 41°



Showers

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47° | 38°



Showers

TUESDAY Nov. 14

48° | 40°



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## National Beat

News from the state and around the nation

### From around the state

Rep. Knute Buehler is calling for a special counsel to investigate how the state of Oregon overpaid 16 health care providers in the Medicaid network nearly \$74 million.

Snow has started to fall on Oregon's mountain passes signaling the start of winter. Snow fell as low as 2,000 feet last weekend on the Santiam Pass while the Columbia River Gorge saw a mix of rain and snow.

Oregon is making national headlines after the Statesman Journal's Natalie Pate reported on a Salem-Keizer School District decision citing Oregon law that required teachers to report sexual abuse to law enforcement. Under the district's reported interpretation, consenting teenagers—under the legal age to consent—may be reported for confiding in their teachers regarding their sexual activity.

Senator Ron Wyden has sent a letter to University of Oregon President Michael Schill after Emerald reporter Kenny Jacoby investigated the lack of response by the university's administration after basketball star Kavell Bigby-Williams was suspected of rape. The story was published in Sports Illustrated. "I am deeply troubled about recent news stories related to the University of Oregon's handling of an alleged serious student misconduct violation of a student athlete. If these reports are accurate, the raise major questions about the university's commitment to creating and maintaining a safe campus environment," Wyden wrote.

### From around the nation

Former U.S. Airman Devin P Kelley, 26, shot and killed 26 people at a Texas church on Sunday, November 5. Local authorities cite a "domestic situation" as possible motivation. The victims of Sunday's shooting were between 18 months and 77 years old. Kelley had previous run-ins with the law including a 2012 charge of assault in which he reportedly fractured his stepson's skull. The firearm used in Sunday's shooting was reportedly purchased legally.

Senator Paul Rand suffered from five rib fractures after neighbor Rene Boucher reportedly assaulted the senator. Boucher was released from custody on bail.

The non-partisan Tax Policy Center released its analysis of the proposed GOP tax plan this week. The top tax rate under the plan in 39.6 percent on incomes above \$1 million and the Center reported 12 percent of taxpayers would receive a tax increase under the plan. According to the analysis, the wealthiest one percent of Americans would receive 48 percent of the benefits under the proposed plan.

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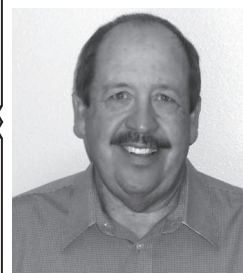
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