



Cottage Grove Sentinel

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



SPORTS

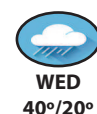
A weekend packed with basketball. Who came out on top? B1

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2017

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They know what you call them...

"BAD KIDS"

But they're taking the title back. Because this is their school. And their story.

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.

Part two of a seven-part series

By Caitlyn May and Zach Silva

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It's Christmastime at Kennedy.

Once upon a time, that meant a family dinner, prepared by students and staff in the kitchen of their old portable trailers in the footprint of the old high school. But Delight Valley isn't the old portable trailers. Its kitchen is responsible for turning out six meals a day—plus snacks for a pack of hungry preschoolers and has little room for a casual, lighthearted and somewhat haphazard cooking parties meant to mark the start of the holiday season and the end of the first half of the school year.

So, on Dec. 14, in the minutes before winter break would see the school empty for two weeks, there weren't several courses of food laid out on the cafeteria tables. But, that doesn't mean it wasn't a party.

"Hey! Guys!" Kennedy Principal Halie Ketcher really likes Christmas. In Christmas leggings, a Christmas sweater and a necklace of flashing Christmas lights, she shouts over the restlessly excited chatter of approximately 40 students. They're 30 minutes away from winter break and even closer to getting one of the Christmas presents Ketcher guards. Their conversations come to a California stop, some still rolling on. "Are you buying it for her?" "He's not a super senior." "We have to pay for Snapchat now because of that Internet stuff." (The FCC voted earlier in the day to eliminate net neutrality).

One more shout from Ketcher and the road is clear.

It's time to recognize outstanding students of the month and hand out presents: lotion, soda, candy, gloves, knick-knacks and gift cards that Ketcher warns are worth \$5 each, encouraging students to repeat the amount back to her because she will not repeat herself.

Each month, Kennedy recognizes a student who has shown growth, determination, passion and persistence and for December, it's Sophie. She'll speak at the next South Lane School Board meeting as a reward. She's nervous.

And while the celebration normally ends with a round of applause for students like Sophie, today is different. There's a special announcement. There's a new Kennedy graduate.

Nathaniel Mulhall will return this spring to walk with his class but today, he's done. He's completed all 75 credits required by the state of Oregon in time to qualify as a four-year (not five-year) graduate.

It's easy to see the pride among his teachers and the excitement in his peers as the cafeteria explodes in congratulations for the boy in the back hiding under his hood.

The thing that's a bit harder to single out though is what it took to get here, to this moment of jubilee because at Kennedy, things work a little differently.

Mulhall was part of the cohort group of students. It's one of three options for students who choose Kennedy over the traditional Cottage Grove High School and most resembles a schedule one might find there. Students have different teachers and rotate classes throughout the day with a lunch period in between. But it's only one option. Kennedy also offers a GED program and something called Odysseyware that can be combined with the cohort or GED program.

Telling stories

Danny Henson doesn't teach Odysseyware or GED. No one does, really, in the traditional sense. He mans the language arts class and storytelling spark—a unique component of the cohort model.

At Kennedy though, not everything is black and white and so Henson has students who are in Odysseyware class in the morning and spend the afternoon with him. It's part of what draws some students to this school: the ability to choose and receive dedicated time from their instructors.

In his storytelling spark students explore different ways to tell stories and the fundamentals that build narrative. They complete assignments that ask them to interview their favorite characters from their favorite stories. Who are the character's friends and family? Where were they born? Where do they go when they're angry? What's their favorite possession? Some questions are obvious, others, students have to use their storytelling chops to create the answers.

When they indulge in typical high school griping over assignments, he refocuses their attention and doesn't let anyone off the hook.

It's part of Henson's teaching style; reassurance with a dash of tough love.

It's why his language arts class can descend into a conversation about space travel and veer back to align with a discussion on topic sentences and thesis statements. Students get two-minute cell phone breaks and when they work independently to

Please see KENNEDY PG. A3

SLTV users must rescan today

By Caitlyn May cmay@cg sentinel.com

South Lane TV watchers who want to continue watching programming will have to rescan today, Wednesday, Dec. 20.

The rescan will resolve technical changes made to comply with a new governmental mandate that will see SLTV vacate seven of its 10 transmit channels.

"T-Mobile is poised to begin utilizing television frequencies they won in a 'repacking' of the television spectrum by the FCC," a release from SLTV read.

"The good news for SLTV viewers is that the FCC approved our request for replacement channels," it continued.

Channels viewers see will remain the same. For example, AMG will still be on channel 47.1. The change affects the backend of the system.

To rescan, viewers must go to their TV menu and select either "scan," "autoscan" or "rescan" depending on the age of their television and then select "antenna."

Programming should be uninterrupted.

Coming to terms with zombies City's lease revealed

By Caitlyn May cmay@cg sentinel.com

Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers announced at the Dec. 11 council meeting that the city had signed a lease with the "zombie house" located on 46th St.

The home, which was abandoned physically and financially, had attracted squatters who altered the structure and created a sanitation issue without running water.

Under the terms of the lease, the city will pay \$12 a year with the option for a second year.

According to Meyers, the individuals currently living in the house were given a 48-hour notice to vacate the property.

"If they leave things behind, we have to hold it for a certain amount of time," Meyers said.

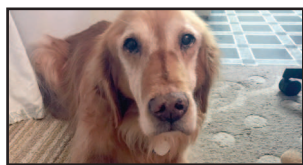
As a cost-saver, Meyers said

Please see ZOMBIE PG. A3

COMMUNITY

Summer's days

Summer begins to say goodbye but not before helping a new puppy say hello. PAGE A7



CRIME

Teacher charged

Former Springfield teacher from Cottage Grove charged with sex crime. PAGE A6

INDEX

Calendar	B11
Channel Guide	B5
Classifieds	B7
Obituaries	A2
Opinion	A4
Sports	B1

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