

# Cottage Grove Sentinel

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For a complete six-day forecast please see page A5.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018

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PHOTO BY CAITLYN MAY/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

IRC volunteers lend a hand during designated reading and language arts periods in an effort to get more kids reading.

## READING BRINGS GENERATIONS TOGETHER IN THE CLASSROOM

By Caitlyn May  
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Last summer, two retired teachers and an elementary school principal went to lunch.

Six months later, students at Bohemia Elementary School have a small army of helpers at their disposal three days a week to navigate the sometimes-rocky road to literacy.

The intergenerational reading collaborative (IRC) started in the fall of this year after teachers from Creswell reached out to administrators at Bohemia to rave about the success of having retired volunteers in the classroom.

"Its purpose," said Bohemia Vice Principal Laurie Melendy, "is to assist teachers and staff in educating students in the areas of reading, writing and language arts."

Melendy was not at the table during that summer lunch but Cindy Vogel and Nanci Strickland were.

Before they retired into what is a new busy schedule of non-profit and other community work, the pair used to teach and were recruited to lead a group of approximately 12 volunteers and substitutes who work in classrooms three days a week.

"It's a lot," Vogel said. "We could not sign-up for three mornings a week so what these volunteers do is great."

Lana Walker has been volunteering since the beginning.

In a first-grade classroom just beyond the library, there's reading going on. A group of students works on word searches, finding nouns and verbs vital to the story they're working on. Another group arranges magnet letters to spell out those



PHOTO BY CAITLYN MAY/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Volunteers are in classrooms three times a week as Bohemia continues to pilot the IRC program. Left to right: Cindy Vogel, Cathie Proffitt, Dacia Marsh, Rachel Nordquist, Lana Walker, Nanci Strickland, Terri Madsen.

same words while a group, stationed at a table under the color and creativity usually reserved for first-grade classrooms, reads page-by-page under Walker's watch.

"They think they can't do it and I tell them they can. They'll read the page and I tell them, 'Now, you just read that whole page and I didn't help you at all.' They're face lights up," she said. "There is nothing like it to see the light go on in their eyes, that they know they can do it, that they read something."

It's a sentiment shared by Bohemia's other volunteers; a mother, a grandmother, a former tech worker and a churchgoer. The IRC has courted retired community members but accepts anyone who is willing to help children learn.

"It's people who may not be in a classroom," Strickland said, noting the majority retiree

Please see **READING PG. A11**

## School board calls executive session

Meeting comes after 110 SLSD employees ask for investigation into whether or not Superintendent Parent wrote anonymous letter

By Caitlyn May  
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On Jan. 8, South Lane School Board Chair Alan Baas issued a statement regarding an anonymous letter received by the board and reportedly attributed to superintendent Krista Parent.

"... the South Lane School District Board of Directors wants to assure you that we are working to address the matter. We have been in touch with the Oregon School Board Association and are following the advice of legal counsel. We take this issue very seriously and will work in the best interest of the district," the statement reads in part.

Earlier in the week, 110 South Lane Education Association (SLEA) employees approved sending a letter to the school board that requested Parent be placed on administrative leave until an independent investigation into the author of the letter could be completed.

A second statement was released and supported by 13 administrators asking the school board to respond to the letter approved by the 110 SLEA employees.

"We are writing in order to show our support for South Lane School District teachers. It is our hope that you will respond to the statement provided by SLEA and that you will reassure teachers, administrators and staff that your top priority is to provide an educational opportunity where Kids Come First. By ignoring the statement from teachers, you are sending a message that teachers do not have a voice and that the current level of chaos and distraction is acceptable," it read in part. "This is an important step for the Superintendent as well. She should be provided the opportunity for due process. We want you to know that we support our teachers and that it is time for the board to show that they support our teachers too."

In the spring of 2017 the Sdistrict funded a week-long investigation into reports of a personal relationship between Parent and

Please see **PARENT PG.**

## City saves \$700k in loan restructure

By Caitlyn May  
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Cottage Grove beat the clock.

The city threw its nearly \$9 million in debt in with over \$55 billion contributed by other municipalities and organizations to score a savings over \$771,000.

Advanced refunding allowed the city to present its loans to the market and essentially refinance the loans at a lower interest rate thanks to the city's new bond rating by Standards and Poor's of AA.

"It's not the best score but it's pretty close," said Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers.

The move came prior to new legislation that would have limited advanced repayment. \$55.6 billion went through the process by Dec. 22 to avoid missing out on the opportunity.

"Typically, there's a window usually five or 10 years out where you can pay off the loan," he said. "We weren't in that window but we were in the window for advanced refunding. The new tax bill would have wiped that out and so we said, let's try this and jump in and see what we can get."

By doing an advanced repayment, the city put its debt up for sale.

"Ours sold pretty quickly," Meyers said. "You take the debt out to the market and basically say, 'Ok, what will you give me for it?'"

We saved, because of the interest rate, over the term of the loans we'll save almost a million dollars."

The city, according to Meyers, was expecting a savings between \$400,000 and \$600,000.

"Our good bonding rating helped," Meyers said.

**CITY**  
**Gateway construction**  
Construction continues at Gateway. **PAGE A3**



**GOVERNMENT**  
**City fined for water**  
City will pay \$1,575 for May bacteria test at Middlefield. **PAGE A6**

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## COFFEE WITH THE EDITOR

Have a news tips? Want to talk about community events? Have a question? Stop by Backstage Bakery.

The *LAST THURSDAY* of every month from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

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