

Latham

Continued from A1

members a rough estimate of \$779,500 to fix rotting windows, intercoms, water pipes, septic system, roofing, minor asbestos, lead paint, Americans with Disabilities compliance upgrades and possibly a boiler.

A previous discussion by the board concerning Latham's fate revealed a possible savings of nearly \$200,000 if the school were to close.

"The question that is lingering," said board chairman Alan Baas, "is either we win the lottery or Latham is closing at some time in the future."

That time, however, is not next fall.

The original discussion that began in December and was centered around closing Latham at the end of this school year so students and teachers could enter the new Harrison Elementary School that is scheduled to open Fall 2018. Now, the Latham community will wait until October or November to learn if they'll be granted an additional year or close for the 2019-2020 year.

"It just feels like we're being dragged along again," said

Latham parent Ashley Rigel. One son is a second-grader at Latham, the other is set to start kindergarten there next year but Rigel knows now that he most likely will not make it to second grade at Latham like his older brother. "I just want a yes or a no," she said.

The school board has suggested the Latham parent club look into increasing enrollment at the school which currently spends approximately \$5,000 per student for instructional time. London spends \$4,800. Harrison, \$4,700.

"We don't know what the school enrollment is going to do," Duerst-Higgins said before making a motion to prolong the decision to close Latham for another year.

Board member Jerry Settelmeyer contended that the savings garnered by closing Latham could benefit other schools in the district that will face budget shortfalls next year after the state legislature failed to pass the requested \$8.4 billion education budget. Former superintendent Krista Parent informed the board late last year



Latham School. Photo courtesy SLSD

that the district would be up against a budget gap due to the biennial nature of the budget. She noted that the second year of the budget cycle was always short because costs rise but funding remains the same. The district was previously faced with cutting school days from the calendar.

"I have mixed emotions on this," Settelmeyer said, noting he wasn't sure how he would vote on the issue. "If we're talking about benefiting all

kids, it closes now. If we're talking about benefiting only Latham students, we postpone." He also stated that he would find it hard to entertain postponing the closure again in six months.

The motion to keep Latham open for another year passed unanimously.

Residents who would like to join the Latham parent club or contact the group with fundraising efforts can contact (541) 942-0147.

"Waver" recognized



Four years of waving -Clarence Kreamier waves to passing cars on Main St. in Cottage Grove so often, he's been dubbed the "Cottage Grove Waver." On Friday, Feb. 2, a group of admirers visited with Kreamier to celebrate his fourth anniversary as the city waver. They also set up a Facebook page for him that jumped from 12 members to over 1,000 in just over 24 hours.

Local man looks for help after heart attack

By Caitlyn May
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It was the worst two hours of Roger Stevens' life. He'd come home from work and readied for bed when a pain shot through his chest.

It was a heart attack. He was 44.

"My wife was never usually home at that time because of her job but for some reason she was home that night," he said.

On the ambulance ride they avoided a car wreck and when he arrived at the hospital he got the news: it had been what doctors dub the "widow maker."

Now, two years later, the Cottage Grove native is on the road to a heart transplant and is struggling to make rent.

"We're about to be homeless and I don't know how that can happen. I've worked since I was 16-years-old," he said.

Stevens was born in Cottage Grove but soon moved with his parents to Springfield. Some how though, he spent his days in the Grove.

"Every weekend, holiday and summer I was at River Stone park with my grandparents. They made me who I am," he said.

Stevens spent his days mowing lawns and collecting cans to make money for the "cool" clothes his parents couldn't afford and when a divorce sent his brother with his father and Stevens with his mother, he picked up part-time work. He didn't finish high school.

"I could have gone to the University of Oregon but I didn't really know that as a kid," he said. "I was just working and helping my mom."

At 20, he had a son and a few years later he had what he described as a "good week."

"I got custody of my son, got married and got a job in Portland," he said.

After five years and another child in Portland, Stevens bounced around Oregon working in lumber yards and overworking in lumber yards.

"I smoked, I worked 60 and

70 hour weeks. It was the stress of life," he said.

The night he had his heart attack, doctors placed a stent in his neck and watched his vitals. He began having pain again and doctors worried he was having another heart attack.

"I had a nicked artery," he said.

He was released from the hospital with a life vest: a contraction that was strapped to his body with the intention to shock him back to life if he suffered another heart attack and cover him with blue dye to notify him when he woke that he'd nearly died.

"I was off work for four months, I stopped smoking and started walking. I could walk miles a day," he said. He went from 235 pounds to 190 pounds.

Then, he went back to work. "I really had to, we were a one-income house after my heart attack," he said.

However, his health again, went into a decline.

He started having memory

problems and would come close to passing out at work.

"My heart was flooding," he said. "And it would scare the guys at work. They'd say I got bright white and looked horrible but if I went home and slept for awhile, reset, I was ok again."

After further consultation with his doctors, Stevens was facing a pacemaker or perhaps a bypass until finally, a transplant was suggested.

"But there are things you have to do first before you go on the list," he said. "They want your heart that you have to go as far as it will go first."

But that means he can't work and while he's applied for his social security benefits, it's a long process.

"I didn't have a flood or a fire. I wasn't the victim of a shooting or an earthquake so it's hard to find a way to get help," he said. "But we need help. This really could happen to anyone. A health problem, a heart attack at 44 and you could lose everything," he said.

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