



Cottage Grove Sentinel

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SPORTS

Cottage Grove players headed to the chess championships last weekend. **B3**

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018

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Community conversation held

By Caitlyn May
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Ten years ago, there was a list of goals meant to outline the next 30 years in Cottage Grove and maintain a vision for the future. A group of residents signed up to guide that plan, calling themselves the Vision Keepers. Last Tuesday night, they opened the conversation up to the community.

The Community Conversation, held in the Cottage Grove High School cafetorium, was open to the public and focused on garnering feedback on the current community plan including where it falls short. Ten years in, the group has seen some of the tasks completed including the construction of a new high school and elementary school but others are still unchecked such as a teen center.

Approximately 70 residents and community leaders attended the event which included a free meal and raffle prizes ranging from free yoga classes to tickets for the Opal Center's latest play.

Topics floating across the round table discussions included how to improve local institutions such as Bohemia Mining Days—the annual four-day festival held every summer—and concerts in the

Please see **CONVERSATION PG. A7**

Guns and our Schools

PART ONE

By Caitlyn May and Zach Silva
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"It's clear, when you see high school students filing out of a school with their hands on top of their head or their hands on the person in front of them and they're being marched out, that looks like it's a little over the top. But that's exactly what would happen." -Scott Shepherd, Cottage Grove Police Chief

On Feb. 14, 2018, 17 students, teachers and administrators were killed when Nikolas Cruz opened fire in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The shooting came 13 days after two 15-year-olds were shot—one in the head, one in the wrist—at Sal Castro Middle School in Los Angeles in an incident described as an unintentional discharge of a firearm. On Jan. 23, 16 people were shot at Marshall Counter High School in Kentucky; two people were killed. On Feb. 21, a 13-year-old boy shot himself in a middle school bathroom in Ohio. Local police reported discovering messages on the boy's phone; he had intended to carry out a school shooting. Sandy Hook. Virginia Tech. Umpqua. Thurston. Columbine. Lines of students, their hands up, being marched out of school.

The Parkland shooting has sparked debate on gun control and calls for safer schools while students plan nationwide walk outs and demand answers from legislators. In the 19 years since Columbine, school shootings have leaked into the news cycle at a steadier rate and continue to illicit the same list of questions including: What happens if it happens here?

Garrett Bridgens was a junior at Cottage Grove High school when 15-year-old Kip Kinkel killed two of his fellow students 20 miles away at Thurston High School in Springfield.

"Somebody who kind of experienced that kind of thing close to home and then here we are as teachers and working in a school now. Again, I think it really emphasizes the importance of how serious we take it," said Bridgens. "Because it has happened close to home and we want to ensure that nothing like that ever happens again. It had an impact on me growing up for sure."

Bridgens now serves as the communications coordinator for South Lane School District and teaches a media class

Please see **GUNS PG. A3**

Buddies, not bullies

Bohemia Elementary School fights bullying with a new program

By Caitlyn May
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There was a crowd of buddies, not bullies, at Bohemia Elementary School on Thursday, March 1. Parents and students filed into the school after hours for pizza, games and story time as part of the school's anti-bullying program: Buddies, not Bullies.

"It's all anecdotal but, yes, we haven't had a lot of bullying this year," Heather Bridgens, Bohemia Principal, said.

The program is simple. Classes pair-up and students pair-off, engaging in art projects and reading activities during class time. The aim is to create relationships throughout the school in an attempt to have students interacting with one another and stem bullying.

"It's just something we started this year where it's just one more way to prevent bullying to form these relationships," Nikki McClean teaches first grade at Bohemia and as part of the program, she paired with a fifth-grade class. On Tuesday night, the class had artwork on display that was created through collaborating with its fifth-grade partners.

Projects and activities range throughout the Buddies, not Bullies program from technology projects to simpler activities. In Lacie Geizler's kindergarten class, fourth-graders helped her students create a collage that features magazine cut-outs of both buddies'

Please see **BUDDIES PG. A6**

Leaders in CG

A council resignation has left Cottage Grove without a woman in governmental leadership

By Caitlyn May
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Every second and fourth Monday night in the court room of Cottage Grove City Hall, Amy Slay answers roll call, the last in line behind Ken Roberts, Bob Ehler, Jake Boone, Mike Fleck and Garland Burback.

On Feb. 26, she said "here" for the last time.

Slay announced her resignation from the Cottage Grove City Council in mid-January after purchasing land just outside of city limits. The move made her ineligible to hold her council seat and marked the forfeiture of the only governmental leadership position in Cottage Grove to be held by a woman.

"I became a city councilor by accident," Slay said, fresh from signing closing papers and moving one of the first truckloads to her new property. "(Mayor) Jeff (Gowing) asked me and told me about the position being open. I submitted my application based on the fact that I didn't think I'd be selected," she said. "The other applicants were notable business leaders so I thought I could submit my application, not get picked and Jeff would be happy."

But Slay was selected. She landed on the committee to redesign the community pool and as one of the councilors leading interviews to fill empty positions on the forestry board. She lent her efforts to the local police department, kick-starting an annual event—Kickin' it with the Cops—allowing community members to engage with local law enforcement and piped up on issues from crosswalk requests and missing shopping carts to construction projects and the housing crisis.

And while she plans to continue manning Kickin' it with the Cops, she'll no longer have a voice on the council which means the council will no longer have a female voice.

The application for Slay's seat closed on March 5 and at noon, the

Please see **LEADERS PG. A10**

ENTERTAINMENT

Whale of a time

Opal Center stages its latest play. **PAGE A3**



SPORTS

Positive thinking

Local weight lifter recovers to set state records. **PAGE B1**

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COFFEE WITH THE EDITOR

Have a news tip? 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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