



Cottage Grove baseball and softball fought the weather to open the season. **B1**

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

Swinging Bridge cost nears \$1 million

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove City councilors were shocked at a March 12 agenda item that called for their permission to apply for a grant to repair the Swinging Bridge. The document placed in front of them showed the price jumping to more than \$750,000. But, it was incorrect. The price was actually closer to \$1 million. A call had come in after informational packets for the city council meeting had been completed and the actual cost estimate for repairing the Swinging Bridge was \$950,805.50.

The estimate was completed by OBEC—the company the city uses for bridge inspections and design work—as a way for the council to have an accurate number as it prepares to apply for grants to fix the bridge that has been out of commission for more than a year. The actual cost of the bridge is approximately \$500,000—up from 12 months ago when the board was presented with three options to replace the bridge. During the March 27, 2017 city council meeting, city engineer Ron Bradsby informed the board that a replacement structure that would have similar movement to the current Swinging Bridge would cost approximately \$260,000. It was the option the board voted to support but according to Bradsby at the time, the

option would create a bridge that did not meet state codes. "Basically, the option is using the existing bridge and replacing the aspects that have failed like the upper cables and the decking," Bradsby told The Sentinel. While the replacements would enable to bridge to swing, OBEC reported that it would exceed the 50 pounds per lineal foot safety standard. Public Works and Development Director Faye Stewart was not on the job last year and said he's not sure where the costs laid out at the March 27 meeting came from. Speaking on current costs, he said the estimate includes approximately 30 percent in contingency fees which he noted was high. Other than the \$500,000 in construc-

Please see **BRIDGE PG. A6**

They know what you call them...

"BAD KIDS"

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

By Zach Silva
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An integral part of the Kennedy High School education experience is the act of being outside. For students at this alternative high school, where the norms of school and sitting in a desk every period are resisted these students can often be found in wetlands, gardens and forests as they learn about what it means to create both a sustainable world and life. Through field trips or working to preserve the wetlands at Quamash this has become their new normal. "But it's fun because they are out in nature," said Principal Halie Ketcher as she discussed students going on a field trip to the Leaburg Dam. It's not just a one-liner from a principal promoting what the school is doing but rather the unofficial model for the school. Fun because they are out in nature.

While nature can be fun, it can also be messy. Or more accurately, muddy.

On a wet Wednesday in early March, a group of about 15 students and a teacher take a bus to Quamash Prairie Wetlands in Creswell. The 265-acres that are managed by Lane County Waste Management has been developed to be, according to the county, an "out-door classroom."

Through a grant process, students at Kennedy have worked at Quamash since November of 2010 to help with wetland restoration. This can take a number of different shapes but on this particular day, a cold and rainy morning that seems to prove that Northwestern weather stereotypes are accurate, the students were working on clearing fencing and removing barbed wire from a section of the property. They earn credit and money that helps sustain other field trips.

The rain doesn't impact the students as the mood has a greater feel of hanging with friends then working on a school day. Equipped with saws and clippers, they poke fun at each other, talk about the world and are reminded by teacher David Heritage to both keep working and not use inappropriate language.

"It's okay they can't put that in the press," retorts a student. "Cuss words can't be in the Sentinel."

When it comes to sustainability at Kennedy, principal Ketcher is looking at the bigger picture.

"Essentially the idea of the sustainability is around the environmental sustainability so we're teaching about ways of being that help sustainability in the environment. But more so the part that is not as obvious is we are talking about the sustainability of education," she said. "And that we want them to be learning things, things here on a daily basis that are going to be relevant to their life after they leave school."

For a number of reasons the traditional education model was not working for this group of students. While a statistical few of these students will go on to pursue higher education, the reality is that these students will be working in the world and most likely in Cottage Grove.

"The part that we're really passionate about is the sustainably around what they're learning here is going to sustain them through their adult life. And we're going to be sending kids out after gradu

Please see **KENNEDY PG. A8**

Guns and our Schools

Part II

By Caitlyn May
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Bill Thompson taught in the South Lane School District for 40 years. In the beginning, he'd conduct locker checks on his own. Towards the end, he'd wait for law enforcement. "I found weapons from pencils to switchblades to loaded pistols," he said. "Living in a rural town like Cottage Grove is much different than a city environment. This was in 1977, students would bring rifles in their cars to go hunting after school." Jeff Gowing went hunting after school. And before school. And sometimes cut school to go hunting.

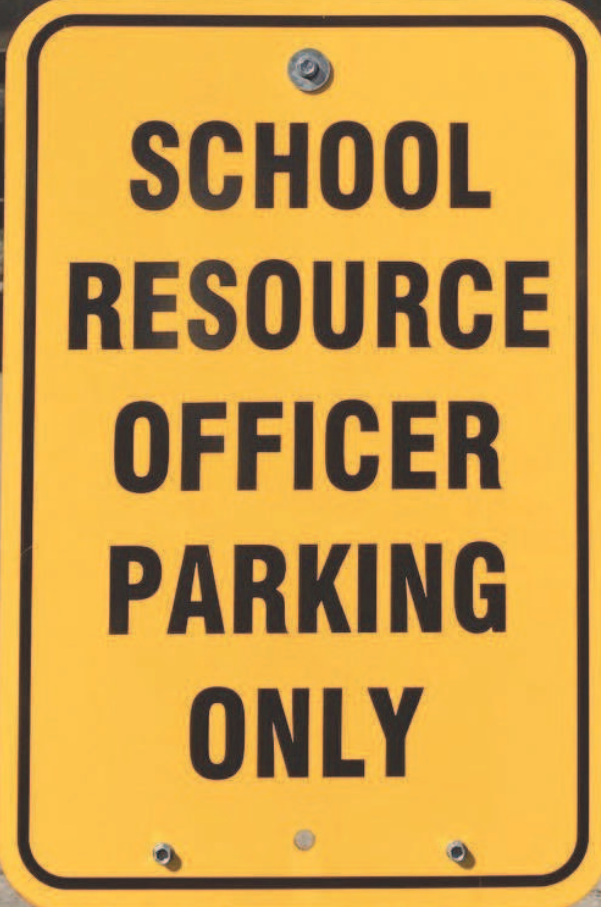
"It was normal back then to see a gun in the gun rack on a truck in the parking lot," he said.

Gowing has spent his life in Cottage Grove, outside of his military service, and now serves as the city's mayor, elected in 2016. He remembers the shooting at Thurston High School in 1998 when Kip Kinkel killed his parents and then two of his classmates. Gowing was working the swing shift and remembers his boss calling to tell him about the shooting.

"He said 'if you're connected in anyway and need not to come in, stay home,'" Gowing said. "That's another one, it really bothered me because when you start looking at the issues, his parents they said he had an obsession with guns so they bought him guns hoping he'd get over it. He killed his parents and stayed in the house with them overnight. That's something deranged going on. I have an issue with the parenting on that one."

Kinkel was 15 when he committed the crime. The federal Gun Control Act (GCA) prohibits the sale of shotguns, rifles and ammunition to individuals under the age of 18. The sale of firearms outside of shotguns and rifles are restricted until the age of 21. However, the law is less strict on who can possess a gun and often times, the line is drawn between rural and metropolitan areas where gun culture and gun control vary.


According to a 2017 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center—a non-partisan organization that surveys individuals on national trends and social issues—46 percent of adults in rural areas identified as gun owners compared to the 28 percent in suburbs and 19 percent in urban areas. Individuals in rural



Please see **GUNS PG. A7**

COMMUNITY

Souper event
The annual Souper fundraiser draws big crowd. **PAGE A11**



EDUCATION


Board moves forward
The South Lane School Board moves forward with superintendent pick process. **PAGE A8**

INDEX

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


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