

Cottage Grove Retrospective

A look back at Sentinel stories from 30 and 60 years ago

Investigation leads to drug raids, 16 arrests

Sentinel Staff of 1988

A two-month undercover investigation into drug activities in Cottage Grove culminated Friday morning in a series of raids in the area and led to the arrest of 16 people on drug-related charges.

The raids on four residences, three in Cottage Grove and one in Creswell, were conducted by a Springfield Police SWAT team and officers from the Cottage Grove and Springfield police departments. Ten Oregon State Troopers also were involved. No injuries resulted from the raids and no shots were fired. Cottage Grove medics stood by in case of trouble and two staff members of Lane County District Attorney's office witnessed the operation.

A drug-sniffing dog helped find four ounces of methamphetamine at the residence. Smaller amounts of the drug were found in the other raids along with a small amount of marijuana.

While local police were pleased with its results, the investigation revealed some alarming facts about Cottage Grove.

Don Bond, a Springfield police officer,

began undercover work on the case last February. He was involved in 25 hand-to-hand buys in two months of undercover investigation.

"Buying drugs in this town is as easy as going to the 7-11," Bond said, adding that it might be easier because you don't have to wait in line to buy drugs.

Bond, who has been with the Springfield police for 14 years and is a veteran of three undercover operations, said there is a drug epidemic in Cottage Grove. He said drugs are more openly available in Cottage Grove than other communities where drug officers more frequently work. Bond said once he became acquainted in the town, people approached him openly to sell him drugs.

Methamphetamine and marijuana were the drugs Bond found most prevalent in the area. He called methamphetamine "the most drug I've ever seen." He said it is the most addictive drug he'd ever seen.

Bond said drug officers are needed in the area to combat the problem. Officials at Cottage Grove's Police Department agreed.

"The average person has no concept of what's going on," said Commander Larry

Worsham.

A total of 45 officers were used for Friday's raids.

Cottage Grove Chief Dick Hoffer said that potential for trouble in such raids is great. "The SWAT team may look like overkill, but I wouldn't trade them for anything Hoffer said.

The last drug raid of this magnitude was in 1985, Hoffer said.

A drug enforcement officer can keep in touch with the drug community in town, Hoffer pointed out.

The chief said if the manpower were available for any raid in the near future, he couldn't use them because there isn't a local officer to perform the necessary groundwork to execute successful raids. He said the superiority in manpower, weaponry and surprise keeps people from getting hurt during raids.

Bond said narcotics are closely linked to burglary and other crimes.

Hoffer agreed. He estimated that 85 percent, maybe more, of the thefts in Cottage Grove are drug motivated.



News from the state and around the nation

From around the state

- The Oregon Health Authority has issued a reminder to residents that as summer starts, so do algae blooms in the state's lakes and rivers. The agency said most blooms are not harmful but some can lead to illnesses for both people and animals. If a body of water appears "foamy, thick, pea-green, blue-green, brown or red in color" the agency says residents should avoid it.
- Oregon has grown 1.1 million pounds of marijuana causing an imbalance in the traditional supply and demand equation. Prices of recreational marijuana continue to drop causing uncertainty for the industry. However, the state continues to see tax revenue from the legalization of the drug.
- Former Oregon mayor Kenneth Barrett, 72, was sentenced last week to one year and four months, in addition to three years of supervision, for soliciting sex from who he thought was a 14-year-old girl on Facebook. It was a police officer.
- Car owners in Oregon will soon be able to choose a license plate featuring a gray whale after Oregon State University produced enough potential buyers to move forward with the design. The plates will be an additional \$40.

From around the nation

- Four people were killed on Sunday after a 29-year-old shooter entered a Waffle House in Nashville, TN with an AR-15 and opened fire. Travis Reinking arrived at the restaurant at approximately 3:30 a.m. wearing only a green jacket and shot two individuals outside the building. He killed two more people inside, injuring four more before an unarmed man identified as 29-year-old James Shaw, Jr. wrestled the gun away. Reinking, who reportedly has a history of suffering delusions and was arrested at the White House in July, managed to flee before being captured on Monday. His father, Jeffrey Reinking may have reportedly broken federal law when he returned the guns to his son after his arrest.
- Authorities in Canada have named Alek Minassian, 25, as a potential suspect in the killing of nine pedestrians in Toronto on Monday, April 23. A white van reportedly drove onto the street into a crowd killing nine and injuring 16.
- A complaint has been filed against the 18 students identified in a racist video associated with the fraternity Theta Tau at Syracuse University. The complaint was filed by the university's department of public safety and student affairs. The video shows fraternity members pledging to have "hatred in their heart" for people of color and those of Jewish faith, using racial pejoratives. A second video emerged earlier this week showing the fraternity members mocking a disabled person.

POLICE BLOTTER

Cottage Grove Police Department 24-Hour Anonymous Tip Line: 767-0504



April 19

Two people, wearing black, were seen climbing out of an SUV and a sedan to start walking on Johnson Ave.

An unknown vehicle struck the 'no vehicles allowed' sign on the bike path.

A UPS package was stolen from a front porch on S. 6th St.

An older Winnebago was reported as camping illegally.

A dog at large was reported on S. 8th St.

April 18

Very loud music was reported as disturbing other tenants at a building on N. J St.

A couple reported they were nearly struck by a drunk driver while they were walking on Main St.

April 17

Graffiti was reported in an alley on Main St.

A check was reportedly stolen from a complainant and copies were made. The checks were reportedly being cashed.

Two cars were reported as doing "cookies" at the south end of

the high school.

A man ran a car into a tree on N. River Rd.

April 16

Dog at large reported at Getty Circle.

Suspicious condition reported at Middlefield Golf. Complainant believed they interrupted the theft of gas. Syphoning hose left behind.

April 15

Possible gun shot and argument reportedly heard on S. 7th St.

A person in a fast food drive thru reported that they were stabbed. Proceeded to pound on the window and then ran away. A loud crash and two males heard yelling on Gateway.

April 14

A green Ford Ranger was reported as driving recklessly in a parking lot before proceeding to the roadway and nearly striking a van.

A man wearing a red baseball hat was reportedly standing in the street on S. 5th preventing buses from using the road.

Criminal mischief was reported in the men's room of the community center.

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6-day weather forecast

THURSDAY April 26 73° 47° Showers	FRIDAY April 27 58° 46° Showers
SATURDAY April 28 54° 43° Showers	SUNDAY April 29 54° 38° Showers
MONDAY April 30 58° 39° Showers	TUESDAY May 1 64° 40° Sun

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