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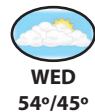
Local teams compete at North Douglas Winter Invitational B1

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2018

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Community rallies to 'Bring Anna Home'

By Caitlyn May
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Anna was last seen bolting from a car on Friday, Nov. 23. Her disappearance ignited a frantic search effort, mobilizing dozens of volunteers and plastering the city in posters bearing her image before it all culminated in a dramatic story of theft and abuse until she appeared, stuck in a blackberry bush less than half a mile from where she had vanished 18 days before.

"The craziest thing is all the magic that has happened," said Cassie Asleson from her home in Washington. When she lost Anna, her white pit bull on Black Friday, she was devastated and in the weeks that passed, her weight fell, her mood darkened and her hope dashed. "The people that had her told us I was never going to get her back because they loved her more than I did. It was such a dark time for me."

Asleson had been visiting Cottage Grove for the Thanksgiving holiday and had brought along her new dog. It was Anna's first trip out of state and Asleson had been nervous about it. Anna didn't know her name yet,

was skittish and her new mom could not stomach another loss. Just weeks before, Asleson had to say goodbye to her companion of eight years, Roxy — another white pit bull — after Roxy was diagnosed with cancer and the chemotherapy treatments had stopped working. "I texted the vet on Oct. 8 to schedule Roxy's at-home euthanasia and an hour later, I got an email about Anna. It felt like Roxy's way of saying it was going to be ok," Asleson said.

So, Anna made the trip from Washington to Cottage Grove setting off what would be an 18-day ordeal that would rally the community and provide a rare happy ending.

When Anna jumped from the Asleson's parked car at the Village Green Inn, her mom immediately took to Facebook posting on com-



COURTESY PHOTO

Greg Howe emerges from blackberry bushes with Anna during her rescue Dec. 11.

munity sites and creating her own page: "Bring Anna Home." The page racked up 498 followers within days and eventually hit 50,000 engagements. It's the page Roxann Spevak was on and followed closely.

Spevak, a Creswell resident, does business in Cottage Grove and began spending time searching for Anna a few times a week. It filled the

See ANNA 8A

Latham decision looms

By Zach Silva
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The next step in the march toward Latham's future was taken at Monday night's school board meeting as the board discussed in great detail the "Latham School Report" that was released earlier this month.

While the decision of whether to close the school or have it remain open for at least the next five years is set to be made at the upcoming January 7 board meeting, it appears the writing is on the wall. And the outcome seems bleak for those in favor of seeing the school remain open.

"I guess, there's nothing good to say about facilities and maintenance. And the commitment this district would have to make for the students and staff and the school to continue, it just does not — I don't know of any person who would say that would be a good investment," said board member Jerry Settelmeyer during the meeting.

After the December 3 meeting, the board requested additional information on funding around the district and how Latham compares. At Monday's meeting the district presented findings in an amended version of the report including a section detailing where \$2 million in maintenance funds across the district would go next year.

If Latham were to stay open, it would cost \$775,000 to repair and upgrade the building. However, only \$353,000 of the district's total \$2 million deferred maintenance funds are currently budgeted for Latham. In order to make up the \$422,000 difference, the board would have to direct funds away

See LATHAM 10A

Habitat for Humanity dedicates 14th home

By Caitlyn May
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Misty Hutchinson is in love with her house. She loves the color—a soft gray with a white trim—and the small porch. The big windows in the front let light into her living room that, on Dec. 15, was absent of furniture, but full of love.

More than two dozen people crammed into the house, a pile of shoes on the front porch to protect the new floors. They were there to see how far construction had come, to wish Misty well and to celebrate the 71st home built in the region by Habitat for Humanity.

The celebration took place three months to the day of the raising of the first wall for the house located on Harvey Ln. The area is home to at least two other Habitat for Humanity homes and marks the 14th in Cottage Grove.

Hutchinson will join homeowners Bryan and Lindsey Parsons who stood in her shoes last March, receiving the keys to their own Habitat for Humanity home, along with their three children.

"I walk into this house every time knowing that I didn't do this on my own," Hutchinson said during Saturday's dedication. A single mother of two grown daughters, Hutchinson is a Cottage Grove resident and currently lives in an area apartment complex—until the final touches on Harvey Ln. are completed.

Both Habitat executive director Kellie DeVore and field office manager Linda Oxley reiterated that the effort was made by a team from contractors to volunteers to Hutchinson and her



CAITLYN MAY/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Misty Hutchinson poses with her family outside her new home as part of the Habitat for Humanity program.

family who put in the hundreds of required sweat equity hours into the construction.

The event didn't go off without a hitch when, hours before a trailer full

of tools and material was stolen from the job site. DeVore thanked the community for its response to the social media call and eventual help in tracking down the stolen cart.

Additionally, the dedication unexpectedly fell short

See HABITAT 10A

Deadlines to advance for holiday:

Due to the Christmas holiday, the deadline for the Dec. 16 edition will be this Thursday at 5 p.m.



MUSIC SCENE

Seattle singer in CG

Jill Cohn will perform this Friday at CG Events Venue Cottage Grove

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HISTORIC DISTRICT

A new (old) narrative

Local writer creating narrative for historic Downtown Walking Tour.

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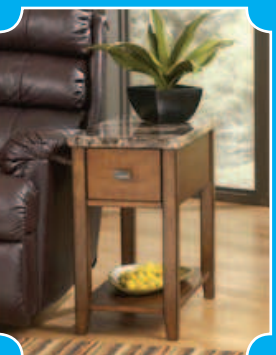
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