



For the trees — 4A
Bird count — 6A
Hoops teams hot — 1B



A tale
of two
Garriss
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Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2014

SOUTH LANE COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889

VOLUME 125

Inside:



To keep on trying

Seiffert shares
inspirational message,
page 3A

TEAMING UP



Combining the Rock, Roll and Rumble Car Show with the Chili Cook-off has brought mammoth crowds to Main Street in July, and more events are planning to pair up this year.

Woman found after six days on Mt. Diablo

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Initially, Corporal Conrad C the Cottage Grove Police I didn't have much to go on in their 52-year old Sharon Ruth Bates. Gagner told the Sentinel last Tuesday that Bates, 52, had been missing Saturday, Feb. 8, and that upon returning home that day, Bates' sister had the door to her home unlocked and loved dog still at home, her car



OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Valuable source of information

We have been subscribers to the Sentinel since before we moved to Cottage Grove. We really value this community newspaper and feel that anyone that is involved in this town's activities should subscribe. The Sentinel is a valuable source of information and for the most part reflects the values and interests of the community. Every dealing we have had with the Sentinel personnel has been positive.

In response to the editor's appeal for suggestions to "...reflect the life and times and values of its readers," we would suggest a more balanced approach to editorial comments in the form of the political cartoons. These seem to primarily have a liberal viewpoint. Granted, this is the prerogative of the editor, but these are opinions we get from the Register-Guard and mainstream media. Those of us with a conservative viewpoint (and there are many in this community) would like to see that reflected at least some of the time.

After seven years in Cottage Grove, one of the things we value most is this newspaper and its staff. We have been particularly impressed with Jon Stinnett and his talent and sensitivity during interviews. We have personally been involved in his news reporting and appreciate the discretion and accuracy displayed in the resulting published articles.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our suggestion.

Charley and Laurel Hay
Cottage Grove



'Breaking' news:

It could have been worse, but opportunities to move forward and address tree issues abound

BY BOB ZYBACH

For the Sentinel

I shared an experience with many of my Cottage Grove neighbors a week ago Friday, when my power abruptly went out during the beginning hours of the worst local ice storm in more than 30 years. About an hour or so later, the transformer across the street from my home burst into flames and lit up the sky to the point where I had first thought the neighbor's house had caught on fire.

Sometime around midnight I began to hear trees falling and limbs breaking all around the neighborhood from the weight of the ice, sounding at times like gunfire or firecrackers. I also began putting on extra clothes and adding blankets to my bed because I have electric heat and the temperature in my house was

plummeting to the same freezing level as the falling rain.

At 3 a.m., just as I was beginning to finally doze off, a loud crash and a shaking house caused my black cat to shriek in fright, jump into the air, and immediately dive beneath my bed.

When I went outside to see what had happened, I discovered that the neighbor's silver maple had split in two, falling against my home and totaling my prized 2002 Mitsubishi Lancer O-Z Rally Sport in the process. I had owned the car since it was new and had maintained it in perfect condition for more than 12 years and 200,000 miles, and now it was suddenly ruined and unable to be replaced.

Everything was frozen and covered with a sheet of ice and rain was still falling. Every few minutes there would be the cracking sound of giant limbs

The 2014 Cottage Grove Ice Storm

and large trees snapping from the weight of the thickening ice and smashing to the ground. There were no visible lights anywhere and the ice coating of all surfaces – including the previous day's snow – combined with the booming sounds of trees and ice crashing to the ground, made for a very eerie environment.

The trouble with trees

As I was checking my car out and avoiding the wires that had also come down with the tree, I encountered local KNND radio DJ Aaron McClendon, who was returning from a late-night appraisal of storm damage on Main Street.

We compared notes about what we had seen and what we knew while taking a short walk around the neighborhood, avoiding falling branches and fallen powerlines, watching PP&L trucks and crews trying to repair the damage. It was kind of like



photo by Bob Zybach

The silver maple that destroyed the author's car, post-destruction on Feb. 10.

a scene from the 1997 movie, "The Ice Storm," but without anyone getting electrocuted.

Branches and trees continued snapping and dropping around us as Aaron and I talked and checked things out, and we could hear the sharp cracking and booming of other ice-covered trees and limbs as they fell and crashed for blocks in every direction. It was the worst

By Sunday, as the last remnants of the ice storm played out, it became obvious that Cottage Grove's residents and neighbors had been very lucky.

No one had been seriously hurt or killed during the onslaught of ice-covered falling limbs and trees, flaming transformers and fallen powerlines, or ice-coated streets and sidewalks. Mostly, a lot of people lost their electrical power for several hours or a few days, and there still remain thousands of dollars and days needed for home and car repairs, city-wide clean up, and the legal and insurance claims that go with such damages.

Still, there was a lot of needless damage caused by the event, and almost all of it caused by – in my opinion -- poorly selected, placed and/or badly maintained trees. The silver maple that hit my car, for example, is not a good choice for a tree grown next to houses or powerlines. And it had not been properly

Cottage Grove gets lucky

Please see **STORM**, Page 7A

STORM

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pruned or treated during most of its existence.

Silver maples grow fast, look fine to many people, and provide a very nice shade during the handful of days Cottage Grove goes above 80 degrees in July and August. The problem is that they grow fairly large very quickly and are extremely brittle as one result. The bigger they get, the more damage they can cause by breaking apart during heavy winds and heavy snowstorms. And during ice storms.

The tree that hit my car, for example, had split into two trunks many years ago, and that had never been corrected. The problem was compounded

by the growth of intruded bark at the juncture of its split top and at a number of its largest branches.

I had talked with my neighboring renters and the seasonal fence repairmen on several occasions during the past few years regarding my concerns with the tree, but on the surface (and to an untrained eye, including my own), it had appeared to be relatively healthy and vigorous, despite being poorly formed and maintained.

The February 2014 Cottage Grove Ice Storm was relatively benign and inexpensive compared with other storms of similar magnitude, and it provided a common educational experience

for those of us who shared its effects and aftermath.

The storm revealed the structural weaknesses and related risks and costs of thousands of the City's trees and their branching parts and performed some much-needed pruning of many of those trees. And, fortunately, no one was seriously hurt or injured during the process.


Current opportunities

Having my parked car ruined by a falling maple in Cottage Grove during a storm is somewhat ironic because it is the very topic I had written (and warned) about in an editorial that was published in this paper last Oct. 9 — only that time my example was a native bigleaf maple that had fallen during a heavy rainstorm a few blocks away from my house.

The focus of the October editorial was on warning other residents about the hazards posed by the City's aging and poorly maintained trees, as well as the opportunities they presented to local students, workers, and businesses through strategic planning and management.

With the ice storm those opportunities have become more immediate: cleaning and repair services are needed to remove the remaining broken limbs and trees from streets, parks, and lawns; many damaged vehicles, homes, and other buildings are still in need of significant repairs; power has been restored throughout town and adjacent residents, but many structures still need to have electrical, phone, and cable lines replaced or restrung, etc.

There are immediate and continued needs for expert consul-

**CROSSFIT**
COTTAGE GROVE

Athlete of the Month

STEVE SMITH


Steve took a few moments to answer some questions, and here is what he said:

What improvements and results have you seen since you started with CrossFit Cottage Grove?

Since starting CrossFit back in December I've noticed huge improvements in both my overall endurance and my upper body strength

What are your goals?

I want to continue to push myself to become better than I was the day before... Continual progress.



541-505-1532
www.crossfitcottagetrove.com



photo by Bob Zybach

A closer look at the intruded bark that had replaced more than 90 percent of the tree joint's holding wood, causing the tree to split apart under the weight of accumulating ice.

tations with licensed arborists, accountants, lawyers and insurance adjusters.

The sudden accumulation of large, woody materials and litter creates opportunities for marketing local wood products, such as firewood, chips and mulch.

There is a lot of work needing to be done identifying and re-shaping the City's trees and shrubs following the widespread "natural pruning" that took place during the ice storm. Diseased, weak, and neglected trees have been clearly identified by their failures, and now they need to be cared for or replaced.

When I talked to the PP&L workers on Saturday morning that were restoring power to my neighborhood, they said they had been sent from Roseburg. That seemed reasonable, because Roseburg had not had a storm at all, and these were emergency needs requiring immediate attention and specialized personnel.

On Monday, the crew that arrived to remove the tree from my car was also from Roseburg. I'm not sure why a Cottage Grove business or local employees weren't used in that instance, but I allowed access for removing the tree via my property under the agreement that the firewood would be donated. Their work, equipment and attention to detail were excellent.

Future plans

How can future risks and damages be mitigated by what we've learned from this ice storm? How can such lessons also be put to the best advantage of local students, business owners and employees?

The Cottage Grove Urban Forestry Committee (UFC) was formed 20 years ago to address those very types of questions, and not coincidentally, this will be the 20th year that Cottage Grove is being nationally recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City, USA.

In addition to its advisory position, the UFC is charged with conducting an inventory and making a management plan for the City's trees. The advent of Internet communications, digital photos and videos, GIS, GPS, Lidar, Excel, etc., since that time have entirely changed the inventory process today.

On Feb. 10, just as the ice storm had finally ended, the UFC held its regularly scheduled meeting at the City Library to discuss the meetings and consultations of the previous two months, and to begin focusing on mitigating the current storm damage.

What does the future hold?

At this time UFC, the City, local schools, local businesses, and concerned residents are discussing what needs to be done, now, with the damage from the recent ice storm. There will also be a lot of work needed in the coming year to fully fix this damage, and steps need to be taken to reduce such damages when the next big storm hits town.

In an ideal situation, these steps could be taken within existing budgets, by using discretionary grants, and through direct service contracts with local businesses. Students could obtain on-the-job training, mentoring, school credits and part-time jobs if those components were also integrated into the mitigation and planning processes.

Cottage Grove was very lucky with the limited amount of damage and inconvenience caused by the 2014 Ice Storm. We shouldn't become complacent, though, but rather recognize this as a learning opportunity to make things better for the community, our environment and our fellow residents.

Bob Zybach has a PhD from Oregon State University in Forest Sciences. He spent the earlier part of his career as a reforestation contractor.

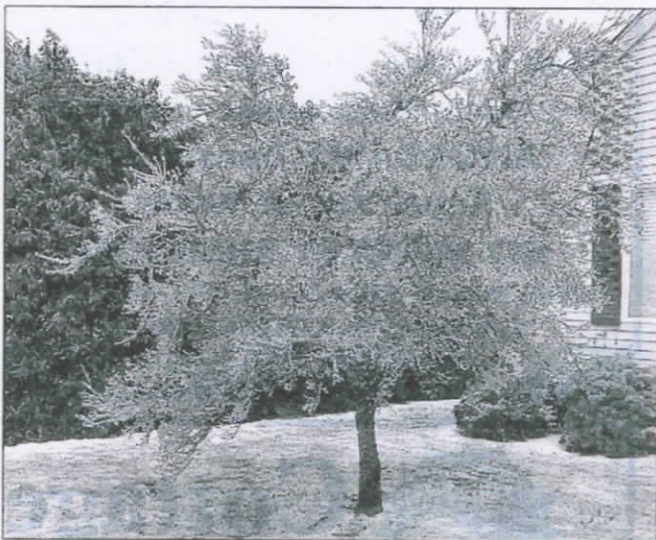


photo by Bob Zybach

Smaller trees suffered little damage in the storm.