

Bat
Contact
Advisory

See Page 4



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Cottage Grove

See page 4



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Aug. 12, 2026
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South Lane Wheels closes, ends service

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

For more than 44 years, South Lane Wheels has been a lifeline for rural residents who depended on door to door transportation for medical appointments, shopping, work, and community activities.

On July 31, the organization announced it will cease operations effective August 7, 2026, ending a service that thousands of riders have relied on for decades.

FUNDING LOSSES LEAD TO SHUTDOWN

Board President Tim Steck said the decision came after the loss of key funding contracts that made it impossible to continue operating.

“Our hearts are heavy as we share this news,” Steck said. “We explored the realistic options to continue service, including grants,

community fundraising, business sponsorships, advertising, and fee for service models. While community support was clearly there for us, we could not secure the resources needed to continue operating.”

Founded in 1982, South Lane Wheels (SLW) built a reputation for courteous drivers and dependable service, helping seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and other riders stay connected to essential services.

“People could count on us,” Steck said.

“Transportation has always meant more than getting from one place to another in Cottage Grove. It has meant helping neighbors



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

A bus stands idle at the South Lane Wheels property in Cottage Grove following the closing of the transportation service Aug. 7.



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Janine Nilson and her son Eric have been riders for 25 years. With no car and living 11 miles out of town, losing South Lane Wheels bus service creates a significant hardship with few options.

maintain their independence, access healthcare, stay connected to family and friends, and continue participating in the communities they call home.”

IMPACT ON LOCAL RIDERS

The closure leaves many riders uncertain about how they will manage daily needs. Janine and her 52 year old son Eric live 11

miles west of Cottage Grove. Eric has Down’s Syndrome and has depended on SLW for 25 years to reach his volunteer jobs in school cafeterias in the South Lane School District.

“He does a fantastic job and the staff love him and it has made a huge difference in his life related to his mental health and independence,” Janine said. “The loss of the bus service will be very difficult for us. We don’t have a car because I have glaucoma and can no longer drive.”

Eric can still use Lane Transit District’s rural service on Mondays or Wednesdays, but the system

requires riders to walk from the Walmart Park and Ride to their destinations and back again.

“It makes it difficult loading groceries on and off the buses,” Janine said. “I’m very concerned. This closure will affect my son in a negative way. He loves doing his job. It helps him get up in the morning with a purpose and being unable to do that now will have a negative impact on his mental health.”

See more ENDS
On Page 6

‘The General’ anniversary event slated Aug. 28-29

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

One hundred years after Buster Keaton filmed *The General* in Cottage Grove, fans from across the country are returning to celebrate the silent film masterpiece that helped define the town’s place in movie history.

The two day anniversary event scheduled for August 28–29, and organized by the Cottage Grove Historical Society, will bring screenings, tours, and tributes to the 1926 production that transformed local streets and railroad tracks into a living set.

Film historians note that the locomotive crash in *The General* is widely regarded as the most expensive single shot of the silent film era. Keaton’s decision to stage a full scale wreck using a real locomotive and trestle was unprecedented, and scholars say that when the cost is adjusted for inflation, the stunt would rank among the costliest ever attempted in early Hollywood.

The American Film Institute ranks *The General* among the greatest films ever made, praising its precision, physical comedy, and groundbreaking stunt work. Modern directors, including Martin Scorsese



Courtesy photo from the Cottage Grove Museum

The famous locomotive crash in *The General* is widely regarded as the most expensive single shot of the silent-film era.

and Christopher Nolan, have cited Keaton’s influence on their own approach to practical effects and visual storytelling, pointing to his “engineering level precision” and “mathematical timing” as foundational to the craft.

A LOCAL EXPERT WITH NATIONAL RECOGNITION

For Cottage Grove, the film’s legacy has been kept alive largely through the work of Lloyd Williams, co chair of the Historical Society’s Buster Committee. Williams has spent 25 years studying Keaton’s life and work, beginning with his contributions to the Society’s book *The Day Buster Smiled*

and continuing through annual Keaton conferences in Muskegon, Michigan.

“The longer I hung around Buster, the more I learned about him,” Williams said. “And the more I learned, the more people started asking questions of me.”

A TRADITION 25 YEARS STRONG

The Historical Society’s annual Buster Keaton Night began shortly after the publication of *The Day Buster Smiled*. What started as a small gathering to show rented 16mm films quickly became a popular October tradition that has now run for 25 years. Every five years, the celebration expands to include invitations to the International Buster Keaton Society, known as the Damfinos, bringing fans to Cottage Grove to see the locations where *The General* was made.

This year’s centennial event marks the largest gathering yet. The celebration is being organized by an 11 member committee: Alice Christianson, Hideki Tomeoka, Dana Merryday, Suzanne Huebner

See more EVENT
On Page 6

Oregon sees record wildfire season

JEREMY C. RUARK
Country Media

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) continued an Air Quality Advisory, through last week due to the wildfire smoke.

Wildfires burning in the region combined with forecasted conditions caused air quality to reach unhealthy levels at times, according to the advisory.

Pollutants in smoke can cause burning eyes, runny nose, aggravate heart and lung diseases, and aggravate other serious health problems. Limit outdoor activities and keep children indoors if it is smoky. The DEQ and LRAPA urged residents and visitors to follow medical advice if they have a heart or lung condition

As of Aug. 3, Oregon has set a new wildfire record for total acres burned, at approximately 2 million acres, according to the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center (NWCC).

The NWCC is the Geographic Area Coordination Center for the Northwest Region which includes the States of Oregon and Washington.

The NWCC serves as the focal point for interagency resource coordination, logistics support, aviation support and predictive services for all state and federal agencies involved in wildland fire management and suppression in the region. Cooperating agencies include the: Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Oregon Dept of Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington Dept. of Natural Resources and the National Park Service.

The majority of the wildfires have been in Central and Eastern Oregon. Several of the fires were sparked by lightning.

Due to Oregon’s increasing drought and new heat waves forecasted for much of the state, the state’s public safety services, natural resource agencies, and tourism office are encouraging residents and visitors to practice wildfire prevention, prepare their home and a go-bag for evacuation, and know where to go for real-time alerts and information.

According to the NWCC’s predictive services, each year the Pacific

See more RECORD
On Page 6



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INDEX

Police Blotter

Calendar of Events

Opinion

Classifieds

Sports

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Arrested deputy resigns

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Lane County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) reports that Dylan Ford has resigned from his employment.

Ford was arrested July 28 by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents and charged by criminal complaint with actual and attempted sexual exploitation of a minor, enticement of a minor, and receipt of child sexual abuse material.

The LCSO said Ford's resignation follows formal notification of the internal investigation to be completed in accordance with Lane County Sheriff's Office general orders and the contractual labor agreement,



Courtesy photo
Dylan Food faces numerous crimes against children charges.

LCSO will still complete the internal labor investigation and submit the completed findings to the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training for board review

of his corrections certification, according to the LCSO release.

According to court documents, Ford allegedly exchanged sexually explicit chats, images, and videos with multiple children under the age of 16. He used Telegram, an encrypted chat platform, and disappearing photo apps to begin conversations that would develop into sexual exchanges with the children.

Ford had been employed with LCSO for approximately 7 and a half years.

Read previous coverage and follow new developments online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

Lane County issues land use planning scam alert

STAFF REPORT
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Lane County Land Management has been made aware of a scam email targeting people involved in active land use applications.

The email asks for additional fees to be paid via wire transfer to finalize approval of a special use permit.

"These scammers are particularly good at mimicking a lot of the language and terms we use when communicating with applicants and others involved in a land use process," Lane County Land Management Division Manager Keir Miller said. "Please remember that we will never ask for a wire transfer of funds and that it is okay to call us first to confirm something is legitimate. Trust your gut."

The email references specific permit numbers and attempts to impersonate a real Lane County employee, but there are portions that should cause a reader to question the email's legitimacy, including:

- The originating email shows up as "UnileverServices@mail.com" rather than a real Lane County email.



- Asking for payment via a non-refundable and unusual method (wire transfers).
 - Demanding all communication be conducted via email.
- Lane County never accepts payment via wire transfer, cryptocurrency, or gift cards. Lane County never asks you for financial information such as bank account numbers, PIN numbers, investment accounts, or access codes.
- Although the current scam is targeting residents that have applied for land use permits, other jurisdictions have reported similar scams involving building and sanitation permits. Remember – when in doubt, reach out and

confirm the request is legitimate.

Other signs of a scam from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau include:

- Asking you to pay money or taxes upfront to receive a prize or a gift.
- Pressuring you to act right away by telling you the deal won't last or doesn't give you time to ask questions.
- Creating a sense of urgency or emergency to get you to act quickly.

People can protect themselves by slowing down and verifying requests. Do not click on links, scan QR codes or download attachments in messages you don't recognize, weren't expecting or do not trust. Do not use the contact information provided by the possible scammer; call the organization using their official phone number or website.

If others have been targeted by this scam, please consider contacting Lane County Land Management at 541-682-4065 to help build an understanding of how active this scam is in our community.

POLICE BLOTTER

The police blotter relates to the public record of incidents as reported by law enforcement agencies.

All individuals arrested or charged with a crime are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Information printed is preliminary and subject to change.

For specific details about cases listed, contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.

COTTAGE GROVE POLICE

MONDAY, JULY 27

01:27: Suspicious vehicle, 900 block Row River Rd.

02:14: Drug activity, 100 block S. 5th St.

04:42: Abandoned vehicle, Harding Pl/6th St.

07:33: Dog at large, 16th/Harvey

09:45: Suspicious vehicle, 700 block Hwy 99

10:02: Theft, 200 block Gateway Blvd.

11:09: Found property, 200 block Davidson Ave.

11:37: Disorderly subject, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

11:57: Motor vehicle theft, 2000 block Hwy 99

13:33: Found property, 600 block E. Main St.

14:58: Suicidal subject, 300 block Quincy Ave.

15:41: Order violation, 1400 block W. Harrison Ave.

19:24: Suspicious condition, N. River Rd/Main

20:20: Fire, 79000 block Delight Valley School Rd.

20:47: Missing person, 900 block Arthur Ave.

23:12: Disturbance, 37000 block Row River Rd.

TUESDAY, JULY 28

08:34: Animal info, 19th/Main



11:12: Agency assist, 800 block N. 11th St.

11:41: Motor vehicle theft recovery, 400 block E. Main St.

13:02: Fraud, 1200 block S. 7th St.

18:55: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

20:53: Disturbance, 77000 block Hwy 99

23:04: Suspicious vehicle, 1300 block E. Main St.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

00:14: Juvenile trouble, 100 block S. 10th St.

02:03: Warrant service, N. River Rd/Woodson

08:30: Motor vehicle crash, 1900 block S. 8th St.

10:51: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block S. 17th St.

11:21: Trespass, 1700 block E. Main St.

12:04: Harassment, 500 block Grant Ave.

14:37: Abandoned vehicle, 1600 block Clark Ave.

16:11: Abandoned vehicle, 100 block North H St.

16:37: Wanted subject, 200 block S. River Rd.

17:44: Disturbance, 77000 block Hwy 99

17:49: Agency assist, 77000 block Hwy 99

18:37: Disturbance, 79000 block Hwy 99

18:44: Fire, Hwy 99/Davisson

18:53: Suspicious condition, 1100 block Hwy 99

20:44: Missing person, 100 block S. 10th St.

20:48: Disturbance, 800 block N. 16th St.

21:58: Agency assist, 200 block N. 9th St.

THURSDAY, JULY 30

01:12: Disorderly subject, 200 block S. River Rd.

03:48: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block S. 10th St.

07:24: Abandoned vehicle, 100 block N. 16th St.

10:22: Dog at large, 1300 block S. River Rd.

11:04: Animal info, 900 block Row River Rd.

14:09: Menacing, 900 block S. River Rd.

15:01: Menacing, 900 block S. River Rd.

17:27: Animal info, 1800 block E. Main St.

19:09: Suspicious condition, 700 block E. Gibbs Ave.

19:27: Suicidal subject, 500 block Grant Ave.

19:54: Suspicious condition, 700 block E. Gibbs Ave.

FRIDAY, JULY 31

00:32: Suspicious vehicle, 700 block Hwy 99

02:38: Suicidal subject, 8th/Benjamin

08:20: Death investigation, 2100 block Wilson Ave.

09:10: Abandoned vehicle, 3rd/Jefferson

18:53: Abandoned vehicle, 100 block N. 16th St.

11:09: Trespass, 1700 block E. Main St.

13:31: Nuisance, 700 block S. 13th St.

13:37: Animal info, 900 block Row River Rd.

13:51: Animal info, 1500 block E. Main St.

14:15: Fire, 300 block S. River Rd.

14:39: Motor vehicle crash, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.

16:09: Fire, I5 SB 174

16:27: Abandoned vehicle, Harvey/19th

19:48: Drug activity, 900 block Chestnut Ave.

20:39: Vicious dog, 100 block South S St.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

00:31: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

02:41: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block S. 10th St.

03:10: Suspicious vehicle, 700 block Hwy 99

03:47: Suspicious subject, 78000 block Currin Blvd.

09:35: Barking dog, 900 block South T Ct.

09:46: Fire, Main/S

09:52: Alarm, 300 block S. 6th St.

13:25: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

13:46: Suspicious subject, 700 block E. Main St.

14:29: Theft, 1600 block W. Main St.

15:02: Welfare check, 1100 block S. 8th St.

15:22: Trespass, 1600 block E. Grover Ave.

16:59: Motor vehicle crash, Exit 174 NB On Ramp

17:20: Juvenile problem, 100 block S. 10th St.

18:58: Disturbance, 77000 block Dugan Ln.

19:20: Juvenile problem, 600 block S. 13th St.

19:43: Alarm, 2800 block Row River Rd.

20:29: Assault, 1000 block Villard Ave.

20:49: City ordinance violation, 200 block N. 12th St.

20:54: Motor vehicle crash, 400 block N. River Rd.

23:10: Juvenile problem, 1100 block Geer Ave.

23:39: Suspicious condition, 300 block S. 6th St.

23:48: Suicidal subject, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

01:35: DUII ATL, 2700 block Row River Rd.

14:46: Theft, 1500 block E. Main St.

15:34: DUII ATL, Gateway/Tyler

16:44: Disturbance, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

17:51: Agency assist, Exit 174 NB On Ramp

19:09: Suspicious subject, Bluebird/Pond Turtle

19:33: Juvenile problem, 600 block Johnson Ave.

21:03: Assault, Gateway Blvd/Main

21:05: Trespass, 2700 block Row River Rd.

22:07: Trespass, 1500 block Hwy 99

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262300412, 262300413, 262300414, 262300415, 262300416, 262300417, 262300418, 262300419, 262300420, 262300421, 262300422, 262300423, 262300424, 262300425, 262300426, 262300427, 262300428, 262300429, 262300430, 262300431, 262300432, 262300433, 262300434, 262300435, 262300436, 262300437, 262300438, 262300439, 262300440, 262300441, 262300442, 262300443, 262300444, 262300445, 262300446, 262300447, 262300448, 262300449, 262300450, 262300451, 262300452, 262300453, 262300454, 262300455, 262300456, 262300457, 262300458, 262300459, 262300460, 262300461, 262300462, 262300463, 262300464, 262300465, 262300466, 262300467, 262300468, 262300469, 262300470, 262300471, 262300472, 262300473, 262300474, 262300475, 262300476, 262300477, 262300478, 262300479, 262300480, 262300481, 262300482, 262300483, 262300484, 262300485, 262300486, 262300487, 262300488, 262300489, 262300490, 262300491, 262300492, 262300493, 262300494, 262300495, 262300496, 262300497, 262300498, 262300499, 262300500, 262300501, 262300502, 262300503, 262300504, 262300505, 262300506, 262300507, 262300508, 262300509, 262300510, 262300511, 262300512, 262300513, 262300514, 262300515, 262300516, 262300517, 262300518, 262300519, 262300520, 262300521, 262300522, 262300523, 262300524, 262300525, 262300526, 262300527, 262300528, 262300529, 262300530, 262300531, 262300532, 262300533, 262300534, 262300535, 262300536, 262300537, 262300538, 262300539, 262300540, 262300541, 262300542, 262300543, 262300544, 262300545, 262300546, 262300547, 262300548, 262300549, 262300550, 262300551, 262300552, 262300553, 262300554, 262300555, 262300556, 262300557, 262300558, 262300559, 262300560, 262300561, 262300562, 262300563, 262300564, 262300565, 262300566, 262300567, 262300568, 262300569, 262300570, 262300571, 262300572, 262300573, 262300574, 262300575, 262300576, 262300577, 262300578, 262300579, 262300580, 262300581, 262300582, 262300583, 262300584, 262300585, 262300586, 262300587, 262300588, 262300589, 262300590, 262300591, 262300592, 262300593, 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Team Botswana trains at Cottage Grove High School to compete at the World Athletics U20 Championships

WILL LOHRE
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Team Botswana's Cottage Grove visit was over in a flash, but they still took full advantage of their time in town, working hard to prep for the world championships and enjoying their recreation time when they got a break.

The Botswana delegation prepped for the World Athletics U20 Championships, but also got to enjoy some lake time, a trip to the Cottage Grove Speedway, arcade fun, a farewell dinner at Saginaw Vineyard, and a police escort to make sure they got to Hayward Field in Eugene alright.

The team arrived in Cottage Grove ahead of the World Athletics U20 Championships, which were held at Hayward Field in Eugene Aug. 5-9. To ensure they were ready for the challenge of taking on the world's best, Team Botswana held training sessions at the Cottage Grove High School track on August 1, 2, and 3.

The delegation was made up of 11 athletes, including 10 male and 1 female,

along with four team officials. Competing on the big stage in Eugene, they had athletes in the 100m, 200m, 400m, 4x100m Relay, and 4x400m Relay. Results of their races are unknown at the time of press.

With just a few days in town, there was plenty of action on the docket. The team arrived on July 31, but got straight to work on Aug. 1, training at CGHS before heading to dinner in the evening. The night was capped with a night at the Cottage Grove Speedway, where the team enjoyed a reserved box for the races.

Sunday saw the team hit the lake for some swimming and paddleboarding, followed by a jaunt around historic downtown. The team then closed out the evening with dinner at Jack Sprats and gaming at Quarter Drop Arcade. On their final day in town, the team had dinner at Saginaw Vineyard, where they dined with elected officials and other community members.

Their time in Cottage Grove came to an end



Courtesy photo from the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce Facebook page

Team Botswana trains at Cottage Grove High School to compete at the World Athletics U20 Championships.

when they headed to Eugene on Aug. 4. While they were only in Cottage Grove for a weekend,

Team Botswana had plenty of action to make the time fly.

Results from their races at the World Athletics U20 Championships can be found at <https://worldathletics.org/competitions/world-athletics-u20-championships/oregon26>.

Party in the Park



Courtesy photo from the Cottage Grove Faith Center

Organizers said the annual Cottage Grove Party in the Park and Emergency Preparedness Fair was a success in bringing the community together at Coiner Park Aug. 1. The celebration combined games, crafts, facepainting, food, backpacks with grade-level supplies giveaways, inflatables, and a variety of information booths on ways families can prepare for emergencies. "City staff coordinated with 27 vendors from local, state, and federal entities to provide the community with important emergency information. The weather was very cooperative, and we had an incredible turnout. It was a huge success," Cottage Grove Senior Planner Leni Crow said following the event.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AUGUST 12

- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 3–5:30 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Senior Center Pinochle Games. 1 p.m. Senior Center. 700 E. Gibbs Ave.
- Chamber Concerts in the Park: Andrei Andreev (classical piano).
- Bohemia Park Amphitheater. Vendors 5:30–8 p.m. Concert 6:30–8 p.m.
- Acoustic Jam with Gregg Biller. 6–7:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Axe and Fiddle Game Night. 6:30–9:30 p.m. Free 657 E. Main St.
- Elks Lodge Bingo. Early Bird 6:30 p.m. Regular Games 7 p.m. Elks Lodge.
- Concerts in the Park After Party 8–9 p.m. Cottage Grove Public Market.

AUGUST 13

- T.O.P.S. Club. 9:30–11 a.m. Delight Valley Church of Christ, Saginaw.
- Baby Laptime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
- Community Center Table Tennis. 4–6 p.m. Community Center
- Bread Club. 5–7 p.m. CG Public Market.



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage grove Sentinel

Coast Fork Willamette River rapids.

- Celebrate Recovery. 5:15 p.m. Calvary Chapel. 1447 Hwy 99N.
- Stone Hart (rock). 6–8 p.m. CG Public Market.
- Open Mic Night. 7 p.m. (Sign Up 6:30 p.m.) Axe and Fiddle.
- Cottage Theatre Play: “I Hate Hamlet”, 7:30pm, 700 Village Drive

AUGUST 14

- Storytime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
- Kids Heritage Fair, Noon-6 p.m., Family Relief Nursery, 720 N. 14th St.
- CG Library Free Family Movie. 3–5 p.m. “Gnomeo and Juliet”
- American Legion Bingo. 5–7 p.m. American Legion Post 32. 826 W. Main St.

- Elks Lodge Ham Dinner. \$12. 5:30–7 p.m. 775 N. River Rd. \$12
- Saginaw Vineyard Friday Night Live. Katie Roe 6–9 p.m. 80247 Delight Valley School Rd.
- Cottage Grove Speedway Kart Night. 6 p.m. 1250 Douglas Ave.
- Jackson’s Pub Karaoke Night with Jesse Hart. 6:30

p.m. CG Public Market. 912 E. Main St.

- Sassafra (Americana). 6:30–9:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Weekly Pool Tournament. 7 p.m. Bohemian Tavern. \$5 entry. BCA rules.
- Cottage Theatre Play: “I Hate Hamlet”, 7:30pm, 700 Village Drive

AUGUST 15

- Share Fair, 9 a.m. 1133 E. Main St.
- South Valley Farmers Market. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. 7th and Main Street.
- Cottage Grove Museum. 1–4 p.m. Birch Avenue and H Street.
- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 4–10 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Cottage Grove Speedway Back to School Night. 6 p.m.
- Steel Wool (Americana). 6:30–9:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- AlAnon “Courage to Change.” 7 p.m. Sinclair Room. City Hall.
- Cottage Theatre Play: “I Hate Hamlet”, 7:30pm, 700 Village Drive
- Haley Johnson (alt pop). 8:30–10:30 p.m. Axe and Fiddle. Cover \$10

AUGUST 16

- Cottage Grove Museum. 1–4 p.m. Birch Avenue and H Street.
- VFW Bingo. 2–4 p.m. VFW Post 3473. 3160 Hillside Dr.
- Cottage Theatre Play: “I Hate Hamlet”, 2:30pm, 700 Village Drive
- South Valley Athletics Bingo Fundraiser. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Johnny Sidney Davis (country-rock). 6–8 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

AUGUST 17

- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 1–5:30 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Senior Center Bingo. 12:30 p.m. Cottage Grove Community Center.

AUGUST 18

- Ukulele Club. (for adults) 9 a.m. CG Public Library.
- SVA Free Bowling. (first 25 kids). 2 p.m. Cottage Bowl
- Bilingual Story Time. 5 p.m. CG Public Library.
- Trinity Lutheran Free Take-Out Dinner. 5:15–6:15 p.m. 675 S. 7th St.
- Trivia & Games with Gerald and Cribbage with Ted. 6–8 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.

Rabid bat reports increasing, prompting state advisory

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Oregon could exceed a record number of rabid bats this year, according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The two agencies are urging people to prevent exposure to rabies while highlighting the importance of bats and other wildlife to the state’s ecosystems.

So far, 22 bats have tested positive for rabies in 2026, according to OHA data. That numbers illustrate that the state has matched – and is poised to surpass – its record for the number of bats that test positive for rabies in a single year.

Bats have carried the rabies virus in their populations for thousands of years and are well known to carry rabies today, but generally at a very low level. Nevertheless, they account for the most human exposures to the virus more than any other species in the U.S, according to a release from the OHA and ODFW.

The highest number of animals testing positive for rabies since 2000 was in 2006, when 22 bats and two foxes were found to be carrying the disease. In 2023, 20 bats tested positive for the virus.

Emilio DeBess, DVM, public health veterinarian at OHA’s Public Health Division, said the more contact someone has with bats, the higher the risk of exposure to rabies.

“Unfortunately, when people find a dead or dying bat, they may pick it up with their hands because they want to help it, or maybe they’re just curious,” DeBess said. “When a bat or other wild animal is sick or dying with rabies, there’s an increased chance they will bite or transmit the virus in other ways.”

Colin Gillin, DVM, ODFW state wildlife veterinarian, said that bats and other wildlife rarely bite people but may do so if they are sick or feel threatened. Oregon bats, in particular, eat only insects—about 1,000 insects every hour—and avoid people, Gillin explained.

“Bats provide important ecosystem services in Oregon, but also globally with insect control, seed dispersal, and pollination of specific plants, supporting agriculture and forest

systems,” Gillin said. “And like many animals that can carry disease, bats can also prevent or suppress disease by reducing mosquitoes and other vectors that carry human and animal pathogens.”

WHAT DO TO IF YOU FIUND A BAT

Bats are protected wildlife, which makes it illegal to harm or keep them. If you see a bat that appears to be sick:

- Stay calm, do not touch it, and keep people and pets away.
- When the sick or dead bat is indoors, do not release the bat. It may have exposed someone or a pet to rabies. If it is safe to do so, place a container or box over the bat.
- When the sick or dead bat is outdoors and may have exposed someone to rabies, cover it with a box or bucket to keep it in place, if

safe to do so. Finding a dead bat does not require any action unless someone was bitten or scratched before the bat died.

- Contact your local health authority or veterinarian for your area right away to discuss potential exposures to humans or pets.
- If there are multiple sick or dead bats observed in an area, report to ODFW.
- When a person or pet has been bitten or scratched by an animal that may have rabies, report this exposure immediately to your local animal regulation services or local public health authority. Seek medical care immediately from a medical provider or veterinarian.
- Teach children to avoid all contact with bats and other wildlife.
- Avoid bats seen in the wild, such as while hiking.
- Make sure your dog or cats’ vaccinations are up to

date, whether they are indoor or outdoor pets.

- Unvaccinated pets that come into contact with a bat may be quarantined for up to four months or euthanized.
- Protect your home from bats by covering vents, chimneys, and other entry points with screens.

If you have roosting (nesting) bats living in your attic or other areas of your house, call a wildlife control operator (WCO). ODFW is unable to respond to homeowner requests for bat removal.

RESOURCES

Find additional information about rabies and bats at:

- OHA’s bats and rabies website
- ODFW’s bats website
- “Help Oregon’s bats with a bat-friendly home” article (ODFW)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s rabies website

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Constitutional hunting, fishing protections proposed

ALEX BAUMHARDT
Oregon Capital Chronicle

To counter a failed ballot initiative from animal rights activists that attempted to ban hunting, fishing and animal slaughter in Oregon, the state’s Republican leaders pledged to introduce their own constitutional amendment to guarantee fishing, hunting and farming rights.

State Sen. Christine Drazan, R-Canby and the Republican nominee for governor, is leading the campaign to enshrine the right to “hunt, fish, gather wild foods and raise animals or crops” in the Oregon Constitution.

She announced the proposed amendment Tuesday at White’s Country Meats in Gresham, along with Senate Minority Leader Bruce Starr, R-Dundee, House Minority Leader Lucetta Elmer,

R-McMinnville, Sen. David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford, and Rep. Court Boice, R-Gold Beach.

Another lawmaker will need to introduce the 1.5-page proposal because Drazan vacates her Senate seat next January whether she wins the governor’s race or not. If the Legislature approves the measure during the 2027 session that begins in January, it would go to Oregonians for a vote in November 2028.

“Oregon should not be the testing ground for extreme measures that threaten affordability, local food production, consumer choice and thousands of jobs that connect us with putting food on the table with our farms and ranches,” Drazan said. “Activities like farming, ranching, hunting and fishing are all a part of

our heritage, our economy and our everyday lives.”

David Michelson, an animal rights activist from Portland who led the campaign for Initiative Petition 28, said even if the Republicans’ ballot referral is successful, he and other petitioners could still try to put forth a ballot initiative in the future that would ban the killing of animals.

In late July, the Oregon Secretary of State’s Office announced the petitioners had less than 75% of the valid signatures needed from Oregon voters to make it onto the November ballot.

“We would still be able to use the ballot initiative process to advocate for a world in which animals in Oregon are protected from being killed,” he said.

It was the third election cycle that animal rights advocates have introduced a version of the initiative, and the closest they’ve come to making the ballot. It faced widespread opposition from Democratic and Republican political leaders, the farming, ranching and fishing industries and Oregon’s federally recognized tribes, whose treaty-protected rights to hunt and fish in their traditional land would not have been exempted from the ban.

Drazan and Starr repeatedly talked about hunting and fishing protections as a bipartisan issue and said they expect the amendment to pass handily through the Legislature. Drazan said she invited Democratic state lawmakers from the Clackamas County area to the event but they did not respond.

DEATH NOTICES

Dennis Halford, 86, of Eugene, Oregon, passed away on July 14, 2026. Arrangements are in the care of Sunset Hills Funeral Home, Crematorium & Cemetery.

John Richard Atchley, 65, of Eugene, Oregon, passed away on July 22, 2026. Arrangements are in the care of Sunset Hills Funeral Home, Crematorium & Cemetery.

See More
PROPOSED
On Page 5

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COMMUNITY EVENT

Western Oregon Expo
Heritage Fair countdown

With the Heritage Fair now approaching its final stretch, volunteers at the Western Oregon Expo are preparing the fairgrounds and confirming the last details for opening day. Organizers say this year’s event will feature expanded demonstrations, additional youth activities and a renewed focus on local history.

Building One will showcase dozens of community exhibits, and volunteers have been arranging display areas for flowers, vegetables, canned goods, photography, art, hobbies, baked goods and textiles. Judges will begin reviewing entries shortly after the final submission window closes on Thursday, Aug. 20, at 5 p.m.

Fair organizers say they are especially excited about the number of first-time exhibitors who have signed up this year. They hope the growing interest will encourage more families to participate and help strengthen the long-standing tradition of sharing local skills and creativity.

The W.O.E. Heritage Fair Exhibitors Handbook that details the many categories to submit entries for judging is available at local businesses and at the Fairgrounds Office at 2000 Douglas Street.

In addition to the exhibits, visitors can expect food vendors, entertainment, a logging show and hands on activities throughout the weekend. Fair hours are Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Attendees are invited to bring nonperishable food items for Community Sharing.



Courtesy photo
The Western Oregon Expo will open its annual Heritage Fair on Aug. 21, at 2000 N. Douglas Avenue next to Cottage Grove Speedway.

PROPOSED
From Page 4

“I think that that is not a big deal because the reality is all of them opposed IP 28. Nobody supported it, and the chief petitioner said: ‘We’re going to do this again and again and again,’ and so I think that we will continue to establish alignment,” she said.

Her Republican colleagues, as well as the president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, Angi Bailey, and several farming and fishing industry representatives also used the event as an opportunity to stump for Drazan.

“With Governor Drazan’s leadership and both parties working together, we can send this constitutional amendment to the voter,” Starr said.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/08/04/>

oregon-gop-leaders-push-for-constitutional-hunting-fishing-protections-in-response-to-ballot-measure!

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EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

Ranked choice voting
makes sense for Oregon

BLAIR BOBIE
Oregon Capital Chronicle

It’s hard to imagine a scenario where ranked choice voting — or, more to the point, the lack of ranked choice voting — won’t have an impact on this year’s race for governor.

Ranked choice voting eliminates concerns about “spoiler” candidates and ensures that the winner has broad support among voters. Right now, we’re teeing up a close gubernatorial election with at least one minor party candidate in the mix — with the potential for more to join the fray. Any time you have an election with more than two candidates in our current winner-take-all, first-past-the post system, you run the risk of the winning candidate being elected with far less than a majority of the vote.

Although ranked choice voting is used in Corvallis, Portland, Benton County, and Multnomah County, it has yet to be used at the statewide level where winner-take-all reigns supreme.

Under the current statewide system, a candidate only needs to secure a plurality of the vote—meaning more votes than anyone else. At first blush, this sounds both sensible and fair, until you consider what elections look like with multiple candidates in the race. If, for example, you have a three-way election, a plurality of the vote could translate to a candidate winning with just 34%. That means that 66% of the voters would have preferred that someone else won.

We don’t have to look far back in Oregon’s history to see examples of this. In the recent May primary, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate won that election with less than 30% of the vote. On the Democratic side of the equation, Chris Beck emerged victoriously from the 2nd Congressional District race with a mere 34% of the vote.

One of the many beautiful things about ranked choice voting is how it eliminates the need for needless runoff elections. Ranked choice voting—which is also known as “instant runoff voting” — essentially combines two rounds of elections into one.

As voters in a number of Oregon jurisdictions have discovered, voters get to rank candidates in order of preference — 1, 2, 3, and so on — and if their preferred candidate can’t initially muster enough support to win a majority, the voters’ back-up choices come into play. Votes are counted in rounds until a candidate secures a majority and is declared the winner.

Both Washington and Clackamas County will have runoff elections in November between the top two candidates for two seats on their Boards of Commissioners because no candidate secured a majority of the vote in the May primary.

That means eight candidates will have to campaign in two separate elections, just months apart. That seems like an incredible waste of time, money, and resources when a ranked choice/instant runoff election can produce a winner with candidates only having to run once.

So, while using ranked choice voting has many benefits — more choices for voters and elections which produce winners with broader public support among them — adopting its use might just come down to a matter of dollars and sense. Combining two elections into one, and the savings that would generate, could provide local jurisdictions with sufficient motivation to make the switch.

Oregon’s use of ranked choice voting, for now, is limited to a handful of cities and counties. 2024’s Measure 117, which would have established ranked choice voting for all federal and statewide offices, proved to be a bridge too far for Oregon voters, garnering just 42% of the vote.

Rolling out ranked choice voting at the local level, where voters will have more opportunities to get familiar with it, is a likely path for its continued adoption. Another route could be adopting it in bite-sized pieces and using it for specific elections—such as the governor’s race—where multi-candidate races are common and the risk of electing a candidate without the support of a majority of voters is high.

There are many threats to the democratic process; some more overt than others. Winner-take-all elections may not seem nefarious, but elections which thwart the will of the majority are incompatible with the basic principles of democracy. Ranked choice voting is a simple and elegant solution to this problem.

Blair Bobier is a co-founder of the Oregon Center for Voting & Elections. He initiated the campaign making Benton County the first in Oregon to use ranked choice voting.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/08/04/ranked-choice-voting-makes-sense-for-oregon/>

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Quote of the Week

“August rain: the best of the summer gone, and the new fall not yet born.”

Sylvia Plath



THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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RECORD
From page 1

Northwest is at elevated risk of significant fires from now until October. With fire crews responding to new fire starts every day, Oregonians and our visitors need to be prepared for wildfires, help prevent future ones, and be aware of up-to-date conditions as they travel across the state.

How can I prepare myself in case I need to evacuate?

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) urges everyone to prepare for wildfires and

other emergencies by knowing evacuation levels, staying informed, having a plan, and having a go-kit ready.

Evacuation Levels

- Oregon follows a three-level evacuation notification system, each structured around safety threat level.
- Oregonians should become familiar with “Be Ready, Be Set, Go!” evaluation levels to make informed decisions when receiving evacuation notices.
- OEM urges people to evacuate whenever they feel unsafe, conditions can change rapidly; individuals should always make the best decision for their safety.

- Following evacuation, people should not return to the area until public safety officials state it is safe.

Stay Informed

- Stay informed, sign up to receive evacuation at, ORALert.gov remember to update information if need be.
- Find the website for your county emergency management, sheriff’s office, or tribal police and follow them on social media.
- Check your photo settings to ensure wireless emergency alerts are turned on.
- Build redundancy into how you can access alerts. Have a personal C.E. Plan

for what you will do if your cell phone stops working. A good place to start is a hand-cranked NOAA radio.

- If you use a third-party app for alerts and situational awareness and notice discrepancy information, default to the information provided by your local emergency management office.

Have a Plan

- Do you know what to do during an evacuation? See the evaluation checklist with this story at the Lincoln County Leader website that explains what to do before, during and after an evacuation.
- Establish a communication plan with a list of

important contacts and a safe place for loved ones to meet if they are separated during an emergency.

- Identify multiple evacuation routes from home, work, or school and plan for transportation needs.
- People with disabilities should consider individual circumstances and specific needs when planning for evacuation, such as special equipment, transportation, and service animals. Then plan extra time, when possible, this may mean treating a level 2 notice like a level 3 notice.
- Have an evacuation plan for pets, make a pet

evacuation kit in a tote bag or pet crate, and plan for transportation and sheltering of large animals such as horses and other livestock.

Make a Go-Kit

- Assemble an emergency kit of essential supplies that can be grabbed quickly.
- Pack an easy-to-carry backpack or bag for each household member with health and safety items such as food, water, medication, flashlights, phone chargers, clothing, and important documents. Visit American red Cross to learn more.

Find more information and resources at Wildfire.Oregon.gov.

EVENT
From page 1

Sannes, JoAnn Gray, Casey Woodard, Susan Carver, Carolanne Sudderth, and Jennifer Ferraez. Williams co chairs the committee with Katy Vaughn. They report to Historical Society president Holli Turpin and the CGHS board of directors.

GROWING INTEREST FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Organizers initially planned for 55–60 attendees, but registrations quickly exceeded expectations. The conference has expanded to 70–75 participants. A charter bus with 58 seats will carry most guests, with additional carpools following behind. Many attendees are traveling from out of state, including longtime Damfinos who have studied Keaton’s work for decades.

With the Village Green under renovation, organizers returned to the Cottage Grove Inn — formerly the Comfort Inn — where the first Keaton conference was

held. The Inn offers the only hotel conference room in town, and Williams said the staff has been eager to help.

“The staff has made us feel welcome and have been a delight to work with,” he said. “I wanted to have our conference within the same hotel as our guests will be staying. This has worked out very well.”

A FULL TWO DAY CELEBRATION

Guests will arrive Thursday evening for short films, snacks, and wine. Friday’s program includes speakers and film screenings at the Cottage Grove Inn from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At 5 p.m., attendees will head downtown for dinner at the historic Cottage Grove Hotel, where Keaton and his crew stayed during the 1926 production. The evening continues with the downtown Art Walk, a 1920s costume contest, and a themed dance at the Odd Fellows Lodge.

On Saturday morning, guests will board a charter bus for a guided tour of The General filming sites. The tour includes the stretch of track where the locomotive

crash was staged — still considered one of the most ambitious stunts in early filmmaking — along with other locations used during production. The celebration concludes Saturday night with a gala screening of The General at Cottage Theatre.

A LEGACY THAT STILL DRAWS VISITORS

Cottage Grove’s film history stretches across a century, with The General, Animal House, Stand By Me, and Emperor of the North among the most notable productions. Williams said visitors come for many reasons — covered bridges, murals, bike trails, and film locations — all contributing to the local economy. “All these varied demographics result in a huge economic boost to the community,” he said.

For Williams, the celebration is also personal. He remembers it was a big deal to attend the weekend matinees at the Arcade and later the Diane Theatre with his brothers in the late 1950s.

“Those days with my brothers at the movies are some of my most cherished memories of childhood,” he



Cottage Grove Sentinel

This mural painted by Howard Tharpe on a building in downtown Cottage Grove shows a scene from The General, with Buster Keaton on the front of the locomotive.

said. “We earned our admission by moving lawns and collecting cans and bottles. And I still enjoy watching old movies today.”

As Cottage Grove prepares to welcome fans from around the world, the town’s connection to Keaton’s masterpiece feels as strong as ever. A century after the

cameras rolled, The General continues to find its audience — and Cottage Grove continues to embrace the legacy it helped create.

ENDS
From page 1

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MEDICAL TRAVEL CHALLENGES

The closure also impacts riders who depend on SLW

for medical transportation into Eugene. Janetta Overholser, caregiver for 90 year old community volunteer Don Williams. She said the change leaves them without a clear alternative.

“I don’t know what we’ll do now that South Lane Wheels is ending its service we depend on so much,” she said. “Don’s income too high to qualify for RideSource and LTD no longer provides medical transportation to Eugene.”

Overholser said Williams’ doctors and

specialists are part of the Oregon Medical Group, making frequent trips to Eugene essential. Without Wheels, she said they are unsure how they will manage those appointments going forward.

REMAINING RESOURCES

The Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) offers guidance for seniors and disabled residents seeking transportation options. ADRC can connect riders to Senior Connections Rural Medical Escort volunteers, though availability depends on volunteer capacity.

Lane Transit District’s Anni Katz responded to The Sentinel’s inquiry about the closure.

“Over the years, South Lane Wheels has reliably served the Cottage Grove

community. This included their contract with Lane Transit District (LTD), providing services to rural South Lane County through their contract with the City of Cottage Grove and their non-profit. South Lane Wheels was a collaborative champion of rural transportation.

LTD contracted with South Lane Wheels to operate our LTD Connector service and our NEMT Medicaid services. South Lane Wheels staff were also active within LTD, serving on our Accessible Transportation Committee.

Cottage Grove riders can access LTD’s existing services, including Route 98. This operates both within Cottage Grove and connects riders to the broader transportation system in

the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area.

The LTD Connector provides on-demand service within Cottage Grove city limits. For those unsure how to navigate transportation going forward, we encourage reaching out to LTD’s customer service team or visiting our website for assistance.

Many people are surprised to learn they qualify for services or resources they didn’t know existed. If you’re unsure how to navigate your options, we encourage you to call LTD’s Customer Service. That’s what we’re here for!”

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STEPS DOWN

South Lane Wheels Executive Director Ruth Linoz, who stepped down the same day the closure was announced, said she remains grateful for the community she served.

“For sixteen years, it has been a privilege and honor to become part of this community as I worked for a wonderful board of directors and led a team of compassionate people that provided high quality, rural transportation services for the community we loved to serve,” she wrote.

Linoz said she will continue volunteering on projects she committed to and hopes to stay connected with residents. “I wanted you to know how blessed I feel to have met you, learned from you, shared great conversations, and experienced support for each other as we invested our time, talents, and energy for the betterment of the Cottage Grove community.”

Steck said the Board hopes the partnerships built over the years will inspire future solutions.

“We extend our deepest gratitude to our employees, volunteers, donors, partners, and the thousands of riders who trusted us over the past 44 years,” he said. “Your support created a legacy of neighbor helping neighbor that will always be remembered.”

Worship Guide

COTTAGE GROVE:

COTTAGE GROVE FAITH CENTER
33761 Row River Rd.
541-942-4851
Lead Pastor: Kevin Pruett
www.cg4.tv
Full Children’s Ministry available
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DELIGHT VALLEY
Church of Christ
33087 Saginaw Rd. East
541-942-7711 • Pastor: Bob Friend
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9am - Classic in the Chapel
10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium

LIVING FAITH ASSEMBLY
467 S. 10th St. • 541-942-2612
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Youth Worship Sundays: 11a (all ages welcome)
Mondays: 5:30p (6th-12th grades)

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541-942-3420
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Sunday – 8 am & 10:30 am
For weekday and Holy Day of Obligation schedule see website OLPHCG.net
Confession: 4 PM to 5 PM Saturdays or by appointment

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541-942-5213
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Worship Service: Saturday, 10:40
Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 1:00

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
6th and Quincy
541-942-2373
Pastor: John Westhafer
Sunday School and Adult Education 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
Comm. Kitchen Free Meal
Tuesday 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.
TLC Groups
tlccg.com

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
334 Washington 541-942-3033
Worship 10am
umcgrove.org

CRESWELL:

CRESWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
75 S 4th S • 541-895-3419
Rev. Seth Wheeler
Adult Sunday School 9:15am
Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am
website www.creswellpres.org

WALKER UNION CHURCH & CEMETERY
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94 Fine—
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95 In the form of
a circle
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happening
104 "It's my turn"
105 Remnant of a
burned coal
106 Kingdom
given to Esau
108 Some skin
scars
110 Mexican
111 — even keel
112 Filly's mother
113 Jack fish
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117 "Shoo!"
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119 Deeds
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COFFEE
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