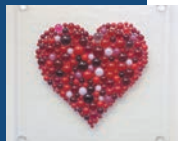




Light Up the Valley Returns
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Page 6



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HW Happy Valley NEWS

December 2025

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Tis the season

City of Happy Valley

There is a lot of debate about when the holiday season officially kicks off. Some early celebrators start decorating their homes as soon as Halloween is over, while others wait until after Thanksgiving. In Happy Valley, the holidays officially kick off at the event of the season: the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony!

Tree Lighting Ceremony
■ Sunday, Dec. 7, 4-6 p.m.
■ Happy Valley City Hall, 16000 SE Misty Drive

Hosted by Happy Valley Parks and Recreation, this family-friendly event features activities for all ages. Little ones can write and mail letters to Santa. At the same time, parents can peruse community booths, and everyone can grab a hot cocoa or coffee and head outside to enjoy musical performances from local band and choir groups. And of course, no celebration would be complete without a visit from Santa Claus himself! So grab your winter jackets and enjoy the holiday spirit with your friends, neighbors and family!

for the Happy Valley tree lighting



Join your neighbors and friends at the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony! (CITY OF HAPPY VALLEY)

Stephani Hern: Dedicated to supporting Happy Valley

Parks and Recreation Supervisor voted ‘Person of the Year’



“I have an incredible team and feel very fortunate to work with the group that I do.”
— Stephani Hern

By JAMES KENNETH PRESLEY
For the Happy Valley News

Earlier this holiday season, Stephani Hern, Parks and Recreation Supervisor for the City of Happy Valley, was named the Happy Valley Business Alliance’s (HVBA) “Person of the Year.” “Stephani’s commitment to our community over the years has been truly unmatched,” notes the HVBA in their social media post. “Her passion for helping others-especially local businesses-continues to inspire everyone around her. We’re so lucky to have such a dedicated advocate supporting and uplifting Happy Valley.” Hern, a city resident since 2004, has seemingly always had a passion for helping others with her skills in both organization and communication, dating back to interviewing a slew of school principals to determine which school was the right fit for her kids when her family moved to the area. “The area, the landscape, everything about

See Hern / A2

Trees of Hope offers a way forward from addiction

By JONATHAN DYER
For the Happy Valley News

Christmas trees symbolize many things to different people. They can be the center of a family tradition or a place for gathering and fellowship. They can represent the hearth, or represent the joy of holding presents for a small child. For one organization, the Portland campus of Adult and Teen Challenge PacWest, Christmas trees symbolize hope. Adult & Teen Challenge PacWest is a nationally recognized residential recovery program serving the Pacific Northwest for more than 40 years. Their approach includes vocational training in their SuperThrift Stores,



Trees of Hope is an annual Christmas Tree lot fundraiser for the Portland campus of Adult and Teen Challenges PacWest held at Sunnyside Foursquare Church in Happy Valley. Adult and Teen Challenges is a residential treatment center for men suffering from addiction, and the Trees of Hope provides an opportunity for them to not only raise money, but also provides valuable work experience for the men, and it also gives them a chance to connect with community members. (IMAGE PROVIDED BY AGENCY)

structured residential care, certified counseling, and community outreach. “It is a place where people can go to find hope, freedom, and healing from addiction and all the chaos of life,” explained Zory Kirakossian, the campus

See Hope / A2

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Hern

Continued from A1

Happy Valley yelled ‘community’ to me,” Hern said. “We still live in the same place that we moved into over 20 years ago.”

Hern began working for the city in 2008, watching Happy Valley grow from both a personal and professional perspective, and quickly became encouraged by the character Happy Valley was developing.

“While growing, I still saw a tight-knit community,” says Hern. “I started by volunteering at Happy Valley Elementary and eventually met Steve Campbell, Director of Community Services and Public Safety, and began doing some part-time work for him. I worked a few hours a week while still able to fill my most important role as a mom.”

Hern also played an important role in Happy Valley’s establishment of its own Parks & Recreation Department in 2020, while spearheading community events throughout the city’s calendar year.

“We as a department do a lot of programming, partnering with different businesses to create events in the community by building partnerships and fostering relationships,” says Hern. “We find places to rent and sometimes have to get very creative at what we can do and where we can do it. I’m also one of the youth council advisors which we started back in 2010. It gives teens a platform to voice their own feelings and concerns in the community while also helping out with local events.”

Hern prefers to operate behind the scenes rather than standing on a stage with a mic. However, little did she know the surprise that awaited her at November’s event.

“This was the first year of having a Gala in the Business Alliance’s 20 years,”

Hern said. “It was a big celebration and, to be honest, I really wasn’t planning on going until my boss pressed the issue. I ended up going, and had no idea that they were even doing an award until I



Steve Campbell, director of Happy Valley Parks and Recreation, with Stephani Hern, supervisor at Happy Valley Parks and Recreation.

saw the slideshow presentation. My photo kept popping up and then it clicked... I turned to my boss and jokingly said, ‘I hate you!’.”

With friends surrounding her, Hern was presented with the “Person of the Year” award from the HVBA, where board members and the Gala committee fittingly saw Hern as their MVP, gifting her a basket full of impressive goodies.

“It was better than any plaque I would’ve gotten,” joked Hern.

That being said, it is not lost on Hern that what she’s able to accomplish is all thanks to a team effort.

“I am not able to do what I do if it weren’t for the wonderful people around me,” says Hern. “I have an incredible team and feel very fortunate to work with the group that I do.”

From the Happy Valley Fourth of July celebration to Oktoberfest to Hern’s favorite city events, the summer concert in the park series, Happy Valley’s community clock simply does not tick if not for the efforts and dedication of Hern and her team.

“I have to get bands booked for the summer events very early,” says Hern. “But it’s really important for me that people get to learn and see their own neighbors while also giving thanks to the first responders and safety officials of the community. These events give that opportunity and it’s a huge accomplishment. This summer, which was a series of tribute bands to celebrate the city’s 65th birthday, saw concerts with up to 5,000 people there. It was unbelievable!”



A worker holds up a tree for sale at Trees of Hope, an annual Christmas Tree lot fundraiser for the Portland campus of Adult and Teen Challenges PacWest held at Sunnyside Foursquare Church in Happy Valley. Adult and Teen Challenges is a residential treatment center for men suffering from addiction, and the Trees of Hope provides an opportunity for them to not only raise money, but also provides valuable work experience for the men, and it also gives them a chance to connect with community members. (IMAGE PROVIDED BY AGENCY)

Hope

Continued from A1

director, who has been with the organization for 10 years.

For the past seven years, the organization has sponsored the Trees of Hope, a Christmas tree stand at the Sunnyside Foursquare Church in Happy Valley, as a fundraiser, with 100% of the proceeds going to the Portland Campus.

“Since we do not charge for our residential services, these fundraisers are very important to us,” said Kirakossian.

He added that the fundraiser also provides an opportunity for the men in the program to get some vocational

training, “as well as tell their story.”

Additionally, the Trees of Hope seasonal program donates trees to families in need through local not-for-profits and churches.

“It’s a tradition that brings hope home for the holidays and blesses countless families across the area,” Kirakossian said.

Getting the message of hope out to the community is very important to Kirakossian, himself a program graduate. Quoting the mission statement, he explained, “This is just one more way to put ‘Hope Within Reach Until All Live Free.’ We want to be the light to the neighborhoods of Happy Valley.”

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Everybody needs friends — even libraries



Karen Hubbard prepares for the Friends of Happy Valley Library book sale at the Happy Valley library on Friday Nov. 14.

Friends of the Happy Valley Library aim to promote this beloved local resource

By **JOSIAH PENSADO**
For the Happy Valley News

When visitors walk into the Happy Valley Library, they are met at the welcome desk, where someone is always eager to answer any questions they may have.

As you continue to the left, books and computers greet you, inviting you to explore unknown worlds. If you take a right after entering, you will find a sales stand.

The sales stand features books that would spark conversations when placed on a coffee table, cookbooks, CDs, travel guides, comics, rare books and more, and is run by the Friends of Happy Valley Library.

According to Cam McAllister, President of the Friends, they have existed since the library's establishment.

"It's volunteer, and every one of those people loves the library. They want to do whatever they can without being an employee," says McAllister.

The Friends is a nonprofit that raises money, champions and supports the Happy Valley library through volunteering and fundraising.

The Friends are responsible for helping fund programs at the Happy Valley Library, such as the summer reading program, concerts, and cultural passes to Portland-area venues.

"There are cultural passes.

You can go to the library and get a pass [to the Japanese Garden] to get in for free," McAllister says, "Those are purchased by the Friends of the Library."

According to McAllister, the Happy Valley library offers a wide range of resources, but not many people are aware of them. McAllister even says that people have trouble locating the library. His goal is to increase community outreach to make the library more accessible.

"I have always enjoyed libraries because they are a treasure trove. They can transport you places you couldn't ever get to," says Karen Hubbard, who is in charge of the library book sales.

"We wanted to support our community library," says Hubbard.

The Friends raise funds through memberships, book sales, and cash donations. Any books donated to the Friends are either sold at their book market or used as prizes during the summer reading program.

According to McAllister, many books are brought back to the Friends, and they sometimes see the same book up to three times.

"My attitude is buy it, read it, leave it. That is what we tell people. You don't have to bring it back," McAllister says, "If you bring it back, we are going to sell it again."

Allan Dunn, treasurer of the



The Happy Valley Library.



Volunteers prepare for the Friends of Happy Valley Library prepare for a book sale at the Happy Valley library on Friday Nov. 14.

Friends, says it is very cyclical. According to Dunn, more people have been donating since COVID, and people feel comfortable that it goes back to the library.

This summer, the Friends expanded their outreach to include a table at the Happy Valley Farmers Market, to educate the public about library resources they might not otherwise know about.

The Friend's table included games and prizes for attendees, including free books for children and adults. Dunn says the table was a success, with one child saying, "This book made my day."

Hubbard and McAllister aim to continue expanding



Volunteers prepare for the Friends of Happy Valley Library prepare for a book sale at the Happy Valley library on Friday Nov. 14.

community outreach with book sales, donating over \$55,000 to the Happy Valley library in the last four years.

More information can be found at: happyvalleyor.gov/community/happy-valley-library/friends-of-the-library/

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HAPPY VALLEY CITY COUNCIL

Council Meetings are held
1st and 3rd Tuesdays
of the month at 7 p.m. at
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16000 SE Misty Drive
Happy Valley, OR 97086
(503) 783-3800
www.happyvalleyor.gov

COUNCIL CORNER

ELECTION UPDATE

Bond Measure 3-626, to fund the construction of the Happy Valley Community Center, did not pass.

Over the last decade, the City of Happy Valley has heard directly from residents about the need to build a multigenerational gathering place where residents can connect, recreate, and learn. This ballot measure was created in response to those conversations. However, the outcome of this vote shows that more work is needed to determine the best way to deliver this facility to the community.

Over the coming weeks and months, the City will determine how to move forward. We respect and appreciate everyone who participated in this election.



Light Up the Valley returns: *Share your holiday spirit!*

City of Happy Valley

The holiday season is here, and Happy Valley Parks & Recreation is inviting everyone to join in the festive fun!

Whether you live in a house, apartment, or run a local business, now's the time to decorate your outdoor space and create a sparkling winter wonderland.

We want to see your holiday creativity! Take a photo of your lights, decorations, or festive displays and submit it on the City's website. Your display could be featured on the City's social media pages and website, helping spread cheer throughout the community.

Let's make Happy Valley shine bright this season, one light at a time!



Submit your photos here:
hv.city/light-up-the-valley

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Dec 10, Noon - 1:45PM

Public Policy/Gov't Affairs Dec 2, Noon - 12:45PM	Ambassador Meeting Dec 9, 7:30 - 8:30 AM
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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Veteran's Day school assembly

*Celebrating Veterans Day
with Mt. Scott Elementary*

On Nov. 7, I had the honor of attending Mt. Scott Elementary's Veterans Day Assembly.

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade filtered into the school's gymnasium and sat in rows by grade, while family members watched from the bleachers. After we all recited the Pledge of Allegiance, students performed their morning song, and each class shared a rousing chant about their grade. I was invited to the front by Principal Jeff Green.

I appreciated the opportunity to speak about my time serving in the United States Coast Guard, including my time aboard the research vessel, USCGC Staten Island. During my four years of service, I was fortunate enough to travel to many places around the globe, including Antarctica. Students especially enjoyed seeing one of my photos from that time, which features a curious penguin in front of the ship.

The assembly was a wonderful opportunity for students to learn about the significance of Veterans Day, and I enjoyed getting the chance to share my experience. I hope some students were inspired and consider military service in the future.



HAPPY VALLEY NEWS STAFF



Publisher's Note: Have an idea for a story? We are always on the search for new people, places, and things to write about. If you have an idea for an uplifting story that would benefit the community, then we want to hear from you!

To submit your idea, send an email to happyvalleynews@youroregonnews.com and include as many details as possible, so our publication team can review your story idea. The best stories highlight the spirit and values of the Happy Valley community and showcase meaningful happenings in the lives of residents and local businesses. We invite you to include anecdotes in your story proposal that are funny, astonishing, heartwarming, and inspiring. If we think your story idea is a good fit, our community writer will get in contact with you to discuss the possibility of it being featured in an upcoming issue.



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Tiffany O'Dell,
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12281 Southeast Bari Avenue	3022	4	2.5	ACT	9/8/2025	\$840,000	N/A	N/A
12491 Southeast Capri Court	4664	7	4	ACT	10/1/2025	\$1,190,000	N/A	N/A
12482 Southeast 155th Avenue	5925	6	4	ACT	5/14/2025	\$1,199,000	N/A	N/A
12473 Southeast Bari Avenue	3989	4	3.5	SOLD	6/14/2025	\$919,900	\$880,000	9/26/2025
15533 Southeast Chelsea Morning Drive	3842	4	3.5	SOLD	6/20/2025	\$1,050,000	\$1,043,000	7/25/2025
15557 Southeast Chelsea Morning Drive	3922	4	3.5	SOLD	6/19/2025	\$1,050,000	\$1,074,625	7/11/2025

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City of Happy Valley

At the time of print, the following events were scheduled. Please check hv.city to confirm timing of events and instructions on how to participate virtually. You can also opt in to receive notifications about upcoming meetings by visiting hv.city/notifications

Dec. 2

■ City Council Work Session, City Hall: 6 p.m.

■ City Council Meeting, City Hall: 7 p.m.

Dec. 6

■ Leaf Drop, Public Works Building: 10:00 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Dec. 7

■ Tree Lighting Ceremony, City Hall: 4 p.m.

Dec. 11

■ Traffic and Public Safety Committee, City Hall: 6 p.m.

Scan QR code to sign up for notifications



Find your heart in Happy Valley

Happy Valley Parks and Recreation is kicking off the new year with a city-wide winter treasure hunt!

From Jan. 5 through Jan. 30, residents of all ages are invited to search for handmade glass hearts, each one lovingly created by Sweet Lomy Art, hidden at various locations throughout the community.

Each Monday morning at 10 a.m., a new clue will drop online, leading explorers to a new secret spot somewhere in Happy Valley. Use your sleuthing skills, think outside the box, and follow the riddles carefully... they just might lead you to a hidden treasure. If you're one of the lucky adventurers who find a heart,



you'll get to take the beautiful glass piece home as a keepsake!

This is a free, family-friendly adventure designed to get people outside, connect with public spaces, and enjoy a little bit of mystery this winter season. A very limited number of glass hearts will be hidden throughout the month, so stay tuned and don't miss your chance.

The first clue will be released at 10 a.m. on Jan. 5. Check our website and follow Happy Valley Parks and Recreation on social media for weekly clues and updates.

Start the new year with curiosity, community, and a little adventure. Go out and find your heart in Happy Valley!



Glass heart from Sweet Lomy Art. (CITY OF HAPPY VALLEY)

Holiday giving in December

Support community members who need help this season

Winter Blitz

Winter Blitz is a popular donation drive that serves local families in need. Students from Clackamas High School and Adrienne C. Nelson High School are once again combining efforts to help local families struggling this season by ensuring essential items are available and accessible.

Drop off gently used clothing, household items, gift cards and monetary donations to these locations:

Clackamas High School – 14486 SE 122nd Avenue, Clackamas.

- Saturday, Dec. 6 – 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Friday, Dec. 12 – 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

OakGrove Methodist Church – 14700 SE Rupert Drive, Oak Grove.

■ Now until Thursday, Dec. 11, every Monday through Thursday – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information about the items needed and ways to contribute directly to this cause, head to hv.city/winter-blitz.

Operation Santa Claus

Celebrating 51 years of giving back to the community!

A beloved annual toy and food drive, Operation Santa is coordinated by firefighters at Clackamas Fire District #1 and benefits individuals and families throughout the communities served by the district.

Once again, the crew will be collecting new, unwrapped toys and non-perishable food items at this year's City Tree Lighting event, making it even easier to give if you plan to attend. Specifically, you may drop off items for Operation Santa at City Hall from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7.

For those who can't make the big event, but would like to participate, there will be additional drop-off locations coordinated by the district throughout December.

Save the date for the annual Operation Santa parade! Clackamas Fire will also conduct a non-collection holiday-themed parade in the Happy Valley area on the evening of Friday, Dec. 5. Again, no donations will be collected during this event.

Head to www.clackamasfire.com for parade route information and all donation opportunity details. The website also has a Santa tracker for the parade route.



It's time to clean out your closet and donate much-needed gently-used clothing and household items as part of the Winter Blitz donation drive. (COURTESY: PIXABAY/STOCKSNAP)



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CLACKAMAS FIRE

Holiday safety tips from Clackamas Fire



The holidays are a time for celebration, family, and community, but they also bring an increase in home fires and safety hazards. Clackamas Fire wants to help you keep your home and loved ones safe this season. Here are a few simple reminders to ensure a joyful and fire-free holiday.

Stay safe in the kitchen

Cooking remains the leading cause of home fires during the holidays. Never leave cooking unattended. Stay in the kitchen when frying, baking, or broiling. Keep flammable items such as towels, oven mitts, paper, and decorations away from the stovetop. Turn pot handles inward to prevent spills and burns. If a small grease fire starts, smother it with a lid. Never use water!

Tree & decoration safety

Holiday decorations make your home festive, but they also pose risks if not handled carefully. Choose a fresh tree and keep it well-watered. A dry tree can ignite in seconds. Keep trees and decorations at least three feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators, and space heaters.

- Use lights rated for indoor or outdoor use as appropriate and inspect them for frayed wires or broken bulbs.
- Turn off all lights and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

Candle caution

- Candles add a warm glow, but they're a leading cause of holiday fires.
- Use battery-operated candles whenever possible.
- If you use real candles, keep them at least one foot away from anything that can burn and never leave them unattended.
- Always place candles on a sturdy, uncluttered surface and blow them out before leaving the room or going to sleep.

Be prepared

- Test smoke alarms and replace batteries as needed.
 - Plan and practice your home escape plan with everyone in your household.
 - Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1 in an emergency.
- From everyone at Clackamas Fire, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season!
- For more safety tips, visit www.clackamasfire.com or follow us on social media for updates and community resources.

Make your plans now for tree and wreath recycling

Boy Scouts annual fundraiser returns

City of Happy Valley

Local Boy Scouts of America Troop 611 is once again hosting their annual Christmas Tree Recycling Fundraiser. For the past 30 years, Troop 611 has helped Happy Valley residents dispose of their live trees and

wreaths after the holiday season. There are two ways to participate this year: either by signing up for curb-side pick-up of your tree or wreaths, or by dropping them off at CVS Pharmacy on Sunnyside during one of the four designated drop-off days. For more information, scan the QR code below.

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Clackamas High School Athletic Director AWARDED HALL OF FAME HONORS

For John Arntson, coaching will always be a part of his life



John Arntson, the Clackamas High School Athletic Director, was recently inducted into the Oregon High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

By JONATHAN DYER
For the Happy Valley News

Five years ago, Coach John Arntson, head baseball coach of Clackamas High School, walked away from the field after 25 years to take up the reins of Athletic Director.

“That was a very hard decision,” explained Arntson. “I felt I needed a new challenge.”

This year, in recognition of those 25 years of coaching, along with three state championships, John Arntson was inducted into the Oregon High School Baseball Coaches Association (OHSBCA) Hall of Fame.

“It was a huge honor,” said Arntson.

Born and raised in Montana, Arntson said, “I always kind of knew I wanted to coach.” After playing football and baseball for a year in college, he had an opportunity to assist his brother, who was coaching football in a small

town.

“It was eight-man, and I ran his defense for him,” Arntson reminisced.

That summer, back from college, he ended up coaching the local Little League All-Star team.

“I was hooked,” he conceded.

He joined Clackamas High School as a social studies teacher and began his coaching tenure in 1997 as head coach of the school’s baseball team. Throughout the years, he said the thing that was most special about coaching was the “relationships you build with the players.”

“You get to know those kids, you get to see the growth that they do...just seeing them grow up and mature not just as athletes, but as people,” he said.

However, for Arntson, the experiences don’t end with the athletes.

“The coaching staff that I was able to assemble, those

guys to this day are still some of my best friends. Those relationships have lasted for sure.”

Looking back more than 25 years, Arntson described the experience as “very lucky.”

“Phenomenal kids, who came from good families who wanted to work hard and do the right thing. A phenomenal coaching staff, not just great coaches, but great people. And then, this community. This community supports athletics as well as any I’ve ever been around in my life.”

The decision to walk away from coaching and become the Clackamas High School Athletic Director was a tough one, Arntson explained.

“I felt we had taken our program where we wanted it to go, and maybe I could share some of those things with other programs,” he continued.

His new favorite part of the job as AD, however, “and this was getting to interact with athletes from other sports — especially our female athletes.

As a baseball coach, you don’t do that much.”

In the end, however, Arntson doesn’t see his role as AD much differently than as coach. He sees the AD’s role as an extension of his coaching role, describing it as a “coach of coaches.”

“Head coaches become your coaching staff, you get to oversee them, and trying to help them and guide them,” Arntson said. “I just want us to be competitive in every sport and most importantly that the kids are having a positive experience, and that our athletic participation numbers are high because the kids want to be involved in it. They see it as a positive and they are going to have a good experience.”

Coaching remains in his life, though. He currently coaches his nine-year-old daughter in softball.

“I’ll keep doing it as long as she wants to play,” Arntson said.

PRINCIPAL CONNECTIONS

Happy Valley area principals came together for their triannual meeting

City of Happy Valley

Three times a year, principals from Happy Valley area schools meet at City Hall to get an update on city events and projects, share updates from their schools and spend time connecting and

building partnerships in a casual setting. The latest installment of this meeting took place on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

Presenters included staff from various City departments, the Happy Valley Police Department, and Clackamas Fire. Discussions ranged

from upcoming development projects, information on forthcoming Parks and Recreation programming and safety. Each principal then provided an update on their school, including upcoming events and how the City could provide additional support.

These meetings offer area principals a chance to hear directly from the City on projects and programs that will affect their schools and build connections that could lead to greater partnership in the future. Our community is at its best when our institutions work together!

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IT'S THE GREAT PUMPKIN, Gary Kristensen!

Happy Valley local paddles his way to a World Record

By JAMES KENNETH PRESLEY
For the Happy Valley News

When Woody Guthrie first sang ‘Roll on Columbia’, we highly doubt he was referring to a giant pumpkin rolling down the river of the west, yet ... here we are.

Earlier this year, Happy Valley local and real estate appraiser Gary Kristensen paddled nearly 46 miles down the Columbia River in a pumpkin grown inside his own greenhouse. What did he get out of it? A new Guinness World Record for starters, beating his own efforts from the previous year.

Equally, a story and a journey that will live on for generations to come.

“I really felt like I could’ve gone further the first time,” says Kristensen, who paddled down the Columbia in October of 2024 before realizing one key variable in his mission to set a new record. “You need current, and the best current is typically in the late spring and early summer.”

Kristensen, who began his hobby of growing large pumpkins years earlier, first found his knack for paddling pumpkins when, in 2013, he entered Tualatin’s West Coast Giant Pumpkin Regatta — an event Kristensen has emerged victorious from multiple times.

“I’ve gotten pretty good at competing in that event,” Kristensen said. However, his



Gary Kristensen celebrates carving out his pumpkin kayak. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

sights were set on something even bigger and wackier, and that was to topple the 39-mile trek-by-squash set the previous year on the Missouri River.

“Growing a racing pumpkin is a little different than simply growing the biggest pumpkin you can,” notes the strategic-thinking Kristensen. “You want it a little smaller. Around 700-800 pounds was a good weight for someone like me. You also want it to actually look like a boat, too. For longer distances, you want a larger boat (pumpkin), so you have room for your legs and possibly room to take on some water without sinking.”

To accomplish this, Kristensen jammed wood boards along the sides of the pumpkin so it would grow long and skinny, with a flatter bottom.

In October of 2024, Kristensen finally set off on his journey to set a new record,



“My original goal was to paddle all the way to Hammond.”

— Gary Kristensen

paddling for more than 24 hours and crossing 45.69 miles to earn the title of “longest journey by pumpkin.”

However, Kristensen wasn’t satisfied. He had won the battle, but not the war. It was a beef with Mother Nature that he was ready to



Gary Kristensen sets off to achieve the impossible in his pumpkin kayak. (PHOTO COURTESY OF NOAH THOMAS/OPB)

squash, once and for all.

First, Kristensen would need to plan when and where he would grow his new pumpkin, noting that pumpkins in the Pacific Northwest aren’t usually ready to harvest until late summer, which wouldn’t align well with his desire to paddle in the late spring.

“I pollinated the pumpkin in March of 2025 in my greenhouse,” says Kristensen. “Typically you wouldn’t do this till early July. Luckily the pumpkin’s final weight was around 916 pounds.”

Finally, this past May, Kristensen launched his squash into the Columbia River at North Bonneville, Washington, and paddled 58.57 miles to St. Helens, Oregon, accompanied by a friend in a pontoon boat to provide nourishment, safety,

and overall company.

“It’s the perfect boat to float along with me at a slow pace,” says Kristensen. “A pontoon boat is essentially just a floating living room.”

After completing his journey and setting a new world record, one previously owned by himself, Kristensen gave his pumpkin a burial at sea, but not without a bit of regret.

“My original goal was to paddle all the way to Hammond,” says Kristensen. “Even with a better spring current there were still too many factors that slowed my pace.”

With regard to future attempts to break his own record, Kristensen is going to take some time to relax and enjoy the fall and holiday season — without thinking about pumpkins.

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Building social skills and growing confidence through dance

By JAMES KENNETH PRESLEY
For the Happy Valley News

Since 1999, Tippi Toes has provided recreational dance classes for children around the country, teaching through imaginative storytelling and empowering today’s kids with skills that breed confidence, positivity, and joy through the bliss of dance.

The Happy Valley franchise, owned by Amber Pederson, has a few scattered classrooms in the area that prioritize accessibility and variety for today’s busy families.

“The Happy Valley franchise has been around since September of 2023,” said Jessica Colvin, franchise manager and dance instructor. “I have been a part of this wonderful franchise since December of 2023. The opportunity sort of fell in my lap, and I cannot be happier to re-enter the world that I love.”

Colvin, who grew up in the world of dance and even majored in dance during her time in college, notes that classes sort of move around based on availability and class level, with classes held at the annex at Rebstock Park, The Grange off Sunnyside, and Kindercare off Sunnyside.

“I fell in love with the mission of Tippi Toes and I get to do what I love everyday with a company that’s been amazing to me,” Colvin said.

Tippi Toes offers classes from “Toddler and Me” to “Baby Ballet” to “Hip Hop & Jazz,” and plenty more, giving parents and students alike variety in the



“Letting kids be silly while connecting through music has proven to be a successful part of the growing experience.”

— Jessica Colvin

styles of dance they’re learning and the friends they meet along the way.

“What’s really great is that we’re non competitive dance, offering classes for kids as young as a year and a half so kids and parents or loved ones can interact together,” says Colvin. “It builds confidence through dancing. Letting kids be silly while connecting through music has proven to be a successful part of the growing experience.”

Colvin then touched on the ultimate outcomes Tippi Toes instructors hope to achieve with their students, noting that both the music rotation and the encouraging atmosphere play important roles in each child’s experience.

“Watching these little humans come into class a little



Students await instruction at a recent Tippi Toes class.

shy but slowly learning how to interact with other children is very rewarding,” says Colvin. “We want these kids to explore the music however they feel best doing it. As they continue to come to class they begin to run around, get excited to be

there, and allow us to uncover their personalities.”

Initially, classes required a 12-week commitment.

“Now, starting in the new year, parents will be able to sign up for a monthly class, with one class a week. It gives more

Instilling joy and confidence is all part of the classes at Tippi Toes.

wiggle-room for families with difficult schedules or even kids who might just not be into it.”

However, classes aside, Colvin gets so much more from being an instructor.

“Honestly, I can get kind of emotional talking about my time in the classroom with these kids,” she said. “When these kids have a really good class, as opposed to a bad previous week, and show off what they’ve learned, it makes it so rewarding on every level. I always tell new instructors: ‘You can have a bad day, but once you teach a class at Tippi Toes, there’s no such thing as a bad day.’”

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As Christmas approaches, we all look for the perfect gift but, quality time may be the most precious gift you can give this holiday season. If you are unable to spend time with your loved one sending a thoughtful gift may be a great option. If your loved one is in a care community, speak with the staff to see if you could send your family member something to make them more comfortable or provide an activity.

A single holiday gift is wonderful, but you can extend the holiday by purchasing a monthly subscription box. You can find a box for anything from supplies for hobbies and crafts to artisan foods, coffee, teas and gourmet snacks! Subscription boxes range in price starting around \$20 a month and go up from there. If your loved one enjoys flowers check out BloomsyBox. If you have a foodie, coffee, tea or snack boxes may be a great option. Grandbox is specifically tailored to seniors and include personal care items, brain-boosting activities, and healthy treats. A digital frame is an excellent option. Families can easily send photos from their phone directly to the frame! It’s a great way to share memories with a few clicks of a button! At Caring Places we know it’s important for our seniors to be remembered by their families. Spend extra time with them or send a simple gift, just let them know you care. (We aren’t affiliated with any company listed and receive no compensation from sales)

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City exploring different ways to enforce modified exhaust complaints

City of Happy Valley

Over the past few years, many Happy Valley residents have raised concerns about increasingly loud vehicles driving through neighborhoods.

In most cases, a factory-installed exhaust system is designed to keep noise at a reasonable level. The issue arises when those systems are modified. Aftermarket exhausts can make a car two, five, or even 10 times louder than normal, and that sudden jump in noise can disrupt sleep, disturb families, and affect overall livability.

The City does have rules to address this. Happy Valley’s municipal code prohibits noise that rises to the level of a nuisance, and that includes vehicles with altered exhaust systems. Oregon law also requires every vehicle to have a properly functioning muffler and prohibits operating a car in a way that creates excessive or unusual noise. In short, both state law and city code support enforcement against loud or modified exhaust systems.

However, enforcing these rules is not always straightforward. City enforcement generally relies on a formal complaint from a resident who is willing to serve as a witness and, if necessary, explain in court

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY



Steve Campbell

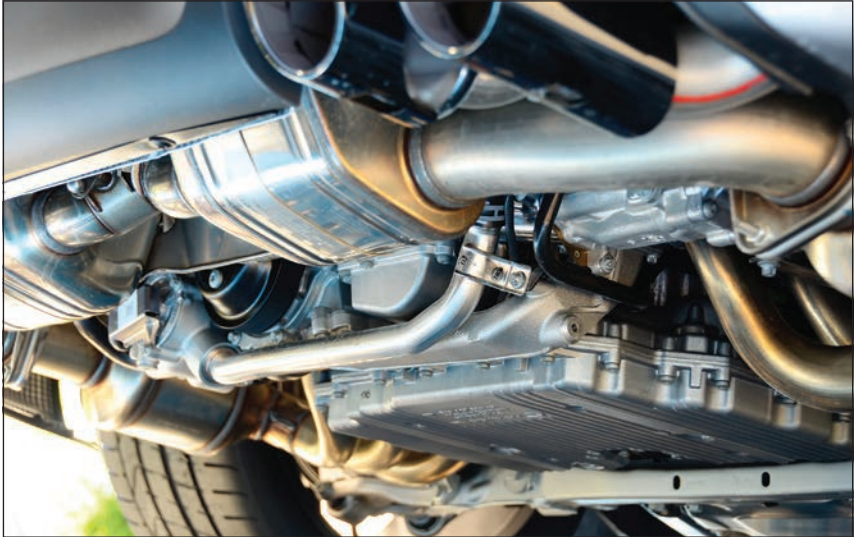
how the noise affects them. Proof can also involve showing that the car’s exhaust has been altered from its factory setup, which may need to be verified in court. And because these noise events are often brief — when a car accelerates loudly and is gone — it can be difficult for officers to observe the violation in real time. Factors like engine revving and driving behavior also affect how loud the vehicle becomes, making consistent enforcement a challenge.

The city is actively researching better tools and strategies, including the use of noise-monitoring cameras, updates to local ordinances, and expanded public outreach. The goal is to both reduce the noise impact on residents and help vehicle owners understand the laws that apply to modified exhaust systems. Happy Valley is also working to make it easier for residents to document concerns and report them so patterns can be identified.

At the end of the day, maintaining peace and quiet — especially during nighttime hours — comes down to simple respect. A loud vehicle might be fun to drive, but it can easily disrupt hundreds of people trying to rest. If we all do our part to be considerate neighbors, it makes for a better community for everyone.



Enforcement of complaints about noise from modified exhaust systems can be challenging. (COURTESY: PIXABAY/HEUSCHRECKE99)



Engine revving and driving behavior can also affect the noise level of a vehicle. (COURTESY: PIXABAY/CONTRATEMPO)

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT A CONCERN:

Visit the City’s website and use the “Report a Concern” tool, or reach out directly to Steve Campbell, Director of Public Safety at 503-783-3800.

Clear Storm Drains to Protect Your Property and Our Water

Regularly clearing your storm drains of leaves and debris helps reduce flooding and property damage while protecting watershed health and the quality of our drinking water.

Follow these tips:

- Find the storm drain grates in the street by your home or business and clear them of leaves and debris.
- Use a rake or pitchfork to clear leaves, limbs, and debris from the storm drain. Do not try to remove the grate, only the debris on top of it.
- When leaves fall into the street, rake them at least one foot away from the curb so they won’t block the path of rainwater. Please do not rake or blow leaves from your yard into the street.
- Never dump anything into a storm drain.



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As the festive lights twinkle across our wonderful city, the team at Happy Valley News wants to take a moment to wish you and your loved ones a season filled with warmth, connection, and joy.

It's been a busy year keeping you informed on all the local happenings, from community events to city council updates, and we are grateful for your continued support and engagement. We look forward to sharing more news and stories with you in the new year.

Wishing you all the best for a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and a prosperous New Year!





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On Saturday, Dec. 6, Happy Valley residents can drop off yard debris at the Public Works building at no cost. (COURTESY: PIXABAY/PHOTOSHARING/LIZ W)

Drop off yard debris for free!

City of Happy Valley

Happy Valley Parks and Recreation is again offering the opportunity to drop off your yard debris at no cost. City residents can drop off seasonal yard debris (leaves, woody debris, and grass clippings) at the Public Works building for recycling on Saturday, Dec. 6, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The Public Works building is located at 13910 SE Ridgecrest Road, adjacent to Happy Valley Park. Residents are responsible for unloading and de-bagging their drop-off materials on-site. This is a residential service only, which means no commercial landscaping or contractor loads will be accepted. Please remember to bring proof of residency with you.



The Happy Valley Parks and Recreation Department is once again offering a free yard debris drop off event. (COURTESY: PIXABAY)

Get your tires and chains ready so winter doesn't catch you off guard

Mark your calendar for Les Schwab's Tire Check & Chain-Up clinic on Saturday, Dec. 6

City of Happy Valley

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Recreation is proud to partner with our local Happy Valley Les Schwab for the annual Tire Check & Chain-Up Clinic—a free, hands-on event designed to ensure drivers are ready for icy roads and snowy adventures.

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DECEMBER 2025 LIBRARY EVENTS

Please note the library will be closed Dec. 24–26 and will close at 5 p.m. on Dec. 31. Bookdrops will be open. Please visit go.lincc.org/hvupdates for any additional impacts.

Winter Reading Returns!

Wintertime is here once again. Fortunately, cold, dark evenings are perfect for spending time with a good book! The Happy Valley Library is having a Winter Reading program to encourage adults and teens to keep reading this winter. There will even be prizes for some lucky participants!

Submit an entry for every book you finish reading between now and Jan. 31. Enter at least once a month to get that month's special button. Prize drawings will be held at the end of each month, with final drawings on Jan. 31. Area residents ages 13 and up are eligible to participate. Visit go.lincc.org/hvwr to submit your entries.



Jane Austen Turns 250!

Dearest Readers, The Happy Valley Library invites you to join in the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birthday.

Austen wrote 6 novels before her death at age 41, and was relatively unknown. But her characters and situations have had an enduring legacy, with retellings in both print and on the screen. Explore



some of these retellings at go.lincc.org/hvausten.

Those who would like can join a celebration with a fancy-dress tea and trivia night on Wednesday, Dec. 17, at 6:30 p.m.. Prizes generously donated by Storiarts include beautifully bound books, bookmarks, a candle and more. RSVP available.

PROGRAMS

Celebrate the Season

Looking for some fun, free ways to celebrate the season? Your Happy Valley Library has lots of ideas from quiet walks through the park to a New Year's party, or maybe you'd rather pick up a puzzle to enjoy at home or let it go with a movie matinee.

Solstice Lantern Walk

Saturday, Dec. 20, 3:30-5 p.m.
Community Room A & B

Decorate a jar into a solstice lantern! We'll take our lanterns for a nighttime walk through Village Green Park.

Puzzle Exchange

Sunday, Dec. 28, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Community Room A & B

Do you love jigsaw puzzles? Come to our puzzle exchange to get some new-to-you puzzles! Bring and take as many puzzles as you like. You'll find a wide variety of puzzles on the tables -- all sizes, piece counts, shapes, styles, and degrees



Craft a lantern and then take a walk through Village Green Park at the Solstice Lantern Walk event.

of difficulty. No puzzles with missing pieces, please!

Family Movie: Frozen Sign-Along

Monday, Dec. 29, 1:30 p.m.
Community Room A

You know you know all the words! Come sing-along as we let it go in this frozen world adventure.

Let's Build

Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1-2:30 p.m.
Community Room A & B

Drop in for some free building fun with LEGO and Duplo blocks.

New Year's at Noon Party

Wednesday, Dec. 31, 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Community Rooms A & B

We're counting down to the new year a little early! Celebrate with crafts, games, and a mini dance party.

Chess Meet Up

Saturday, Jan. 3, 10:15-11:45 a.m.
Meeting Room

Calling chess enthusiasts of all ages and levels, it's a morning of chess-playing fun at this friendly meetup! Some boards are available.

Adult Programs

RSVP for programs at <https://go.lincc.org/hvRSVP>

English Classes

Community Room B
Intermediate: Mondays, 10:15 a.m.
Advanced: Mondays, 1:00 p.m.

All are welcome to drop in to this weekly class. Each student will receive a free textbook to use in the classes.

Mah Jongg

Fridays, 12:30-3:30 p.m.
Community Room A

Those who enjoy playing American and/or Chinese Mah Jongg are invited to join our fun and friendly group! For those playing American Mah Jongg, be sure to bring your current National Mah Jongg League cards. Contact the library if you would like to learn to play.

Making Cents of Caregiving

Thursday, Dec. 4, 1:00 p.m.
Community Room B

In this informative and educational session, you will learn how to incorporate financial tips into your caregiving. Additional resources will be provided. We hope that as a caregiver, you will begin to build your own financial plan and gain a better understanding of financial planning for your care recipient. Provided in partnership with AARP Oregon. RSVP available.

Oregon's Natural History

Saturday, Dec. 6, 3:00 p.m.
Community Room A

Aaron Campbell returns with a talk about some of Oregon's Natural History. From prehistoric creatures and fauna to unique rock formations, there's plenty to explore in Oregon's natural history. RSVP available.

LizBeth's Life-Changing Moment!

On November 16, 2025, LizBeth became **LizBeth L. Abbott.** The wedding took place at the Wedding Venue, The Chateau de Lis. thechateaudelis.com

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PROGRAMS



Relax to the soothing sounds of Graciela Teofield.

Vibrational Sound Bath

Sunday, Dec. 14, 2:00 p.m.
Community Rooms A & B

Experience the soothing and restorative nature of sound with Graciela Teofield. This therapeutic experience will offer a time to slow down and connect. For those who want to lie down, please bring a yoga mat or blanket, and pillows. A blanket or shawl is also recommended. Registration required.



Bring your crochet projects to the Crochet Club.

Crochet Club

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 6:00-7:00 p.m.
Community Room A

All levels are invited to bring their crochet projects for a social sit-and-stitch! This friendly group offers an opportunity to share ideas, get help with tricky projects, and hang out with other crochet fans. You bring your supplies, and the Library will provide hot water, tea, and a cozy atmosphere. RSVP available.

Jane Austen Tea & Trivia

Wednesday, Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m.
Community Room A

You are cordially invited to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen with an evening of tea and trivia. Fancy dress is always appreciated but not required. There will be prizes. RSVP available.

Spanish Conversation Group

Sunday, Dec. 21, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
Community Room A

Practice your Spanish conversational skills through fun role-playing scenarios and conversation topics with other language learners. Please note this is not a Spanish class, but a conversation group. Participants should have at least a beginner's level of conversational Spanish. Registration required.

Youth Programs

Storytimes

To see our complete listing of storytimes and playtimes for ages birth to five, visit our website or go.lincc.org/hvbirthto5.

Stretch, Dance, Play

Thursday, Dec. 4, 10:15-11:00 a.m.
Community Room A

For 2-5-year-olds and their caregivers. Join Iris Nason for dance, yoga, singing, sign language and play!



Come craft during family time at the library.

Giờ Sinh hoạt Gia Đình / Family Time

Sunday, Dec. 7, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
Community Room A

Giờ gia đình vui chơi tại thư viện! Hãy đến cùng vui chơi, ca hát, đọc sách và làm thủ công với các gia đình khác.

It's family time at the library! Come and enjoy songs, games, reading and crafting with other families.

Homeschool Club: Meet Up!

Thursday, Dec. 11, 10:15-11:30 a.m.
Community Room A

Hey homeschool families! Bring the whole family for a morning of fun with crafts and games.

Sign & Sing

Friday, Dec. 12, 10:15-11:00 a.m.
Community Room A

For 2-5-year-olds and their caregivers. Sing, dance, and sign with Shira Fogel of Tiny Talkers.

Craft Time with Kenny / Kenny雙語手工時間

Saturday, Dec. 13, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
Community Room A

Teen Art Contest

What? An original artwork. One winner will receive a \$100 prize, and their art will be featured in the 2026 Teen Summer Reading materials at Happy Valley Library. The winning design will be chosen by library staff based on originality, design, and reproducibility.

Who? Teens in grades 6-12 who are members of

the Happy Valley Library community.

How? Pick up an entry form in the Library, Dec. 13 through Jan. 11. Note: Digital images may be used, but all components must be completely original. No part of the image may be AI-generated.

When? Entries are due by Sunday, Jan. 11, at 6 p.m..



Join Kenny on the second Saturday of every month to learn about and integrate the creativity of various cultures into our daily lives through crafts. Through crafts, we can make our lives more joyful, fulfilling, and beautiful.

歡迎在每個月的第二個星期六，跟著Kenny一起，透過不同文化的手工，了解並將各種文化的創意融入日常生活，讓我們透過手工，讓生活更加地歡樂、充實、美好。

欢迎在每个月的第二个星期六，跟着Kenny一起，透过不同文化的手工，了解并将各种文化的创意融入日常生活，让我们透过手工，让生活更加地欢乐、充实、美好。

On the Move!

Saturday, Dec. 20, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
Community Room A

For 3-5-year-olds and their caregivers. Join Maria Fe Picar for a special story, songs and games that encourage creative movement.

Tweens & Teens

For teens in grades 6-12.

Manga and Anime Club

Thursday, Dec. 11, 6:00-7:00 p.m.
Community Room A

Hang out with fellow manga and anime fans! Chat about favorites, eat snacks, make crafts, and play games. Drop-ins welcome. For teens in grades 6 - 12.

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ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Clackamas High School



Adrienne C. Nelson HS



Jimmy Van Blarcom Senior

Boys Cross Country

Jimmy Van Blarcom capped off a great cross country season by running a huge PR of 16:27 at our district meet, earning second-team all-league and a berth at the state meet. Jimmy, a senior, participated in his first full season of cross country and achieved the 16th fastest time in school history.

Congrats, Jimmy! Go Cavs!

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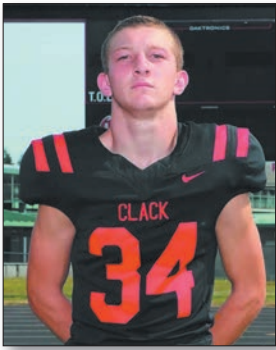
Natalie Baker Junior

Girls Soccer

Natalie Baker's dedication to the CHS Girls' Varsity soccer team this season involved her taking on the role of goalkeeper, a position that was unfilled and is not her natural position. Her commitment and unselfishness to playing the unfamiliar role was a big part of her teammates' positive experience, while she also greatly improved her abilities in the net as the year progressed. Natalie earned 6 shutouts and helped the team reach the playoffs for the first time since 2019. Natalie is also a four sport athlete, takes a full load of AP classes, works with the FCA club and volunteers at her church on the weekends.

Congrats, Natalie! Go Cavs!

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Tyson Fahlman Junior

Football

Tyson Fahlman, a junior running back for the Clackamas Cavaliers rushed for a season and career high of 164 yards on 18 carries while scoring 2 touchdowns in the Cavaliers 1st round game against Liberty High. The Cavaliers rushed for a season high 323 yards in their win on November 8th. Tyson has been instrumental in the Cavs football success this year. Tyson also competes in track at Clackamas as a pole vaulter.

Congrats, Tyson! Go Cavs!

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Alex Nord Freshman

Girls Cross Country

Alex Nord finished her freshman XC year with a stellar performance at our district meet to garner second team all league honors. She has steadily improved all season, starting as a JV athlete at her first race, to soaring onto our varsity team and regularly finishing races as our third fastest athlete. She has such a joy for running and is a fierce competitor in every race. We know that she will do great things in the coming years!

Congrats, Alex! Go Cavs!

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Madi Andrews Senior

Varsity Volleyball

OH, Senior Captain, Class of 2026: 2025 Mt. Hood Conference Player of the Year, 2025 MHC First Team, 2025 All-State OSAA All-Tournament Team. The Hawks had another stellar season, led by senior standout Madi. It was only fitting that Madi scored the final point of the season against South Eugene to secure 4th place for the Hawks at the OSAA 6A State Championships. With Andrews on the court, Nelson Volleyball has left the state tournament with a trophy for four years straight, and earned the OSAA 6A Sportsmanship Award for the third time. Madi's impact on the program is extraordinary. She closes her high school career with: 1,833 kills / 1,029 digs / 350 aces / 130 assists /106 blocks. Madi heads to Michigan State University, ready to begin her collegiate career and undoubtedly make her mark at the next level. Her legacy at Nelson will be remembered not only for her incredible stats and leadership, but for the passion, intelligence, consistency, and character she brought to the game every single day.

Way to go, Madi! Go Hawks!

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Corbin Croslin Senior

Varsity Football

Corbin Crosslin 30 carries for 151 yards and 4 TD's in our 26-6 week 8 victory over Central Catholic.

Way to go, Corbin! Go Hawks!

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Malachi Garlington Junior

Varsity Football

Malachi Garlington had 4 catches, 91 yards and 3 TD's in the round 1 playoff victory!

Way to go, Malachi! Go Hawks!

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Luke Harris Sophomore

Varsity Cross Country

Luke had a great race at the OSAA state championships, finishing in a time of 16:35. He was 70th overall, and in the top 15 of all sophomores in 6A state.

Way to go, Luke! Go Hawks!

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