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# Cross burning shocks small Oregon town

by Associated Press

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ALSEA, Ore. (AP) — A white woman who moved with her adopted African-American son to the small Coast Range town of town of Alsea in Benton County says she's shocked someone burned a cross on her lawn.

Summer MacLean says she found the 5-foot cross on her front lawn last weekend.

"I feel terrible, and I feel like I want to leave," she said. "It's so stupid. Prejudice is the height of stupidity."

Her 13-year-old son, Isaiah Cavanagh, told the Corvallis Gazette-Times it appears somebody wrapped an old sheet around the wood cross and set it afire.

"They're just proving they're ignorant," Cavanagh said. "It just means they don't have anything better to do with their lives."

A black charcoal line across the green grass marks the spot where the cross burned.

MacLean says she moved from Corvallis to Alsea about a year ago to provide a nice place and good school for her son.

The burning cross was made out of two-by-fours, said Sgt. Clay Stephens, and it appeared to have been thrown over a ditch and into the yard. Deputies did not have strong leads, he said.

Because there weren't any threats or other evidence of prejudice, the crime is not being classified as a hate crime, he said. Instead, it is classified as reckless burning.

Alsea School Superintendent Jon St. Germaine considers the town a welcoming and caring community, and he the incident shocked him.

"I was surprised something like that could happen up here," he said.