

All signed letters to the editor should be 500 words or less and will be considered for publication if submitted by 1 pm the Friday prior to publication. Letters to the Editor are subject to editing. We reserve the right to not publish any letter.

Keep the children safe

In the darkest of nights and the brightest of days, nearly 2,000 children disappear, according to 2001 reports from National Crime Information Center.

They were snatched away by strangers or just running away from who they were, but lost within our world nonetheless.

Many will remember the story of Polly Klaas in California, abducted from what she and her parents believed to be a safe haven, her home; or perhaps the family abduction of nine-year-old Michael Thomas Carey in April 2001 from Albany, Ore. Then there's the sad truth of runaways such as 17-year-old Danielle Coryer from Medford, last seen in June 2001. One of the most recent of cases involved Ashley Pond of Oregon City, last seen Jan. 9, when she left the apartment she shares with her mother and two sisters for her bus stop a half-mile away. To some this may be new information, to others a new ache to add to the nation's already crumbling heart. However, on a lighter note, 2001 saw a 4.1 percent drop from 2000 in missing person's reports.

What astonishes me is that more than 840,000 people disappeared last year, and I still see children ages five and up walking the streets unsupervised. I am not by any means saying that we need to keep children under lock and key to protect them. I am saying vigilance where children are concerned is necessary. Safety is definitely in larger numbers. Make sure yourself, another adult or a friend accompanies your child. Tell your kids not to talk to strangers. Tell them that if they are approached by a suspicious person, to scream as long and as loud as it takes for them to feel safe.

The hard reality of what many

of us don't want to face is that some of these kids will never come home, some voices will

Say It Loud & Proud!



Salena De La Cruz
Opinion Editor

never be heard and some prayers will seem unanswered. If a child is a runaway, I hope for them to call home just to say, "Yes, I'm alright," just to ease the minds of his or her loved ones. If they feel lost in the world with no money and want to go home, Greyhound Bus has a program that will allow runaways to get a free one-way ticket home.

Yet, there is still one avenue that could be taken. Though this isn't pleasing, it's something I wish nevertheless: For the voices that can no longer cry out because they are at home, because they have gone back to God. I weep for them and their families; even though some have been gone for many years, the families still hope and pray for their safe return. Now, all I wish for them is closure. I'm quite sure there are shallow, unmarked graves throughout the world with bodies, but no names. I wish and pray in these saddest of circumstances that the bodies are found and families are notified so they can finally say good-bye and I love you for the last time.

I plea to everyone that if you see a missing person's poster, take one minute out of your busy schedule to see if you've seen that person. You may have seen that person and never thought about it.

Take a moment now and reflect. Wouldn't you want there to be help if someone you love disappears?

Questions or comments:
cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us.

"An Unamerican Soldier"

WE REALLY NEED TO KICK THIS HABIT...



By Jon Baggs

Letter to the Editor ...

'What has happened to Clackamas' switchboard?'

To the Editor,

What has happened to Clackamas' switchboard, and why?

This morning (Tuesday, Jan. 29) I called for the current school delay/closure information. In the past, that crucial information would have been the first words a caller would hear. Instead, I listened to a wordy message about how the switchboard was closed (as anyone would know at 5:30 in the morning—the staff aren't THAT dedicated!) and was finally given

another extension to access for the desired information.

Of even greater concern is the fact that the caller must wait through this entire message before being given any instructions about how to contact campus security. If I WERE in need of campus security, by the time the information was presented I'd already be robbed, raped, or dead! Perhaps this reflects a cost-cutting budget policy designed to avoid having to pay any "employee overtime" since they wouldn't be needed any more at all.

There has been a great deal of

time and effort expended by CC staff to identify and improve "customer service" opportunities in their respective areas. The switchboard is the public's first contact with Clackamas', and as such should present helpful, efficient example of our college's welcoming attitude. In my opinion, the current switchboard information system design has taken a giant leap backward in this respect.

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Secretary/T.A.
Tri-City Alternative Program
Harmony Site

The **CLACKAMAS PRINT**
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WE'RE WATCHING YOU!



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