

Bob's Corner

No one dislikes, abhors and otherwise detests mistakes in print more than I, especially when there is nothing I can do about an error except to apologize. I can't fix something that's concluded. If we were a daily newspaper, we could have recovered from the goof we made on page 1 last issue by reporting that the chamber of commerce Christmas event would begin at 6 p.m. It actually began at 4 p.m. So, we have received some missives from upset folks, and I can certainly sympathize with them. But that's all I can do, besides apologizing, and noting that with three grown children and five granddaughters, plus dealing with other youngsters, we are familiar with disappointment of little ones. To prevent such blunders in future editions, the staff and I (all four of us in the office) are going to begin utilizing a triple-check format. We really don't like mistakes, and hopefully one will not occur again. However, I can't promise. I can only say we are striving to avoid them. And as Linus said to Charlie Brown: "Why worry about minor embarrassment when you can achieve total public humiliation." Regarding my inaccuracy, there are only so many ways to express my regret, except to say Lo siento, Прошу прощения, Excusez-moi, Es tut mir furchtbar leid, Moushiwake gozaimasen -- and I'm sorry.

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from Michael & Karen



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(Classified ads & uncomplicated display ads can be accepted until noon Fridays with an additional charge.)

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

* * *

Typed, double-spaced letters are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered. "Thank you" submissions are not accepted as letters.

Editor made mistake From Tonia Lavine Cave Junction

My mom and I took my 4-year-old son to the tree lighting at 6 p.m. Saturday night, Dec. 6 like the paper stated. When we showed up, the tree was lit, and everyone was gone, including Santa. Not only did we show up at the appropriate time, but so did about 20 to 25 other families with their young children in hopes of seeing Santa, and go caroling with the high school choir, and have cookies and cider. We asked the people at the Junction Inn, and they said that everything had happened between 4:15 and 4:30 p.m. So now I and a lot of other families have a bunch of disappointed children, and it is up to us to try and explain to them why Santa let them down and was not there. Merry Christmas from a very disappointed parent.

Editor big Grinch From Karen L. Cave Junction

Last night (Dec. 6) was the saddest night I have seen in Cave Junction. It wasn't about someone dying or a bad accident, it was the sound of around 20 cars of children at 6 p.m. when Santa Claus was not there (on the Junction Inn vacant lot) as printed by the newspaper.

So we as parents, grandparents or loving relatives gathered our beloved children out in the cold to go see "the man of the hour" for all kids, only to see that at 6 p.m. as the paper said he would be there, turn to a large disappointment and to calm their crying children trying to explain to 2-to-8-year-olds what happened and why everything was gone.

Neither the newspaper nor the Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce had this awful duty. Did the editor even care when he was carefully typing out the night's events: was it a typo in the time? Can this town explain to our kids why Santa did not show at the hour they were told by us all day, while they waited for the right time?

It was pretty sad, like the *Who* who stole Christmas. My grandson was crying and saying that "all he wanted to do was see Santa Claus and have a nice Christmas," now in his 4-year-old mind he feels that he won't because he didn't get to "tell" Santa his Christmas wishes.

This was so wrong and there is no way the editor can

fix this big "Uh Oh!" This town and the paper that we rely on to guide us needs to get it straight, especially in these times when we are all trying to give our kids a good Christmas and enjoy all the things that town has to offer at the times the paper has told us. I won't say "Thank you" at the end of this note because there was no thanks last night for these children, maybe they are (the children) more forgiving?

(Editor's Note: The error is entirely mine, and no fault of the chamber. Also see *Bob's Corner*.)

'David & Goliath' From Jean Blevins Grants Pass

A David & Goliath-type story emerged during the Dec. 3. Grants Pass City Council meeting when it upheld the Urban Area Planning Commission's decision to deny Hellgate Jetboats Excursions a major site plan review and major variance.

Hellgate, a multimillion dollar corporation, and one lone woman, locked horns several years ago. The issue was an above-ground 4,000-gallon gasoline tank used to fuel the jetboats.

Since 1995, Arden McConnell, whose home is across the street from Hellgate's gas tank, often had complained to owner Robert Hamlyn that toxic diesel fumes from the gasoline delivery truck fueling Hellgate's tank, and the fumes released during the transfer of the fuel to the tank, were polluting the air in and around her home and grounds, as well as the rest of the neighborhood.

When McConnell eventually filed a formal complaint with the city of Grants Pass, it became apparent that the above-ground gasoline tank should have originally been classified as a Marine Fueling Station, a classification that requires compliance with stringent safety codes. The city found that the gas tank had been operating under a misclassification since its installation in 1991.

Marine Fueling Stations have safety codes which the existing tank does not meet. The tank sits next to the Riverside Inn Motel, behind a fence, on S.E. Eighth Street overlooking Rogue River. Hamlyn, faced with replacing a nonconforming gas tank, filed for a major variance to replace the existing tank with a larger 6,000 gallon gasoline tank in the same location. That variance was denied.

McConnell has persisted since 1995. "This is a community issue. I'm grateful city officials have taken this action," she stated. "Our community comes first. Toxic fumes overpower our homes, yards, and pollute the very air we breath each year during Hellgate's yearly five-month operating season. It's been going on for nearly 20 years with little cooperation offered by Hellgate to provide a solution." McConnell proposed keeping the new fueling operation away from residences and neighborhoods.

Hamlyn stated that he is undecided if he will appeal the council's decision. "It's been a 13-year struggle. What

a wonderful Christmas present," said McConnell. One person can make a difference.

WOPR needs rewriting From Roger Brandt Cave Junction

BLM wants to create timber jobs by increasing logging in Josephine County under the new Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR), but acknowledges that these jobs would be created at the expense of losing an undetermined number of jobs and income in other economic sectors.

BLM provides no information to explain what these losses might be and who would be affected.

The following is an attempt to answer the question about who would be affected, and how much we might lose under WOPR. The information comes from a report that can be downloaded from a link at the bottom of the highway199.org home page.

The report explains how increased clear-cutting of BLM forest could result in most Illinois Valley homes losing approximately \$11,000 in property value. Josephine County can expect to lose a total of around \$500 million and the state of Oregon some \$9 billion. Ironically, many land owners support WOPR because of "O&C tax savings" without realizing that it would take more than 80 years for these so-called "tax savings" to pay back to land owners what they likely would lose in land value.

The report also explains how WOPR would impair the future of travel-and-recreation dependent businesses in Oregon by eliminating forest assets that the community needs to make it attractive to the traveling public. In Josephine County, this represents an impairment that could cost us an annual loss of tens of millions of dollars in tourism revenues and related jobs.

Quality of life could be significantly diminished under WOPR, which would reduce the marketability of Josephine County to retirees, home-based entrepreneurs, inventors, telecommuters and knowledge-based industries looking to locate their enterprise. This represents thousands of future jobs and income sources that would be driven out of Oregon to places that offer quality-of-life assets these people want.

WOPR would commit each acre of BLM land to an unimaginable sluggish economic production cycle of 80 to 100 years while rejecting all other participants who

could help to make this land productive every year. In the vicious playing field of the global economy, WOPR is sending the slowest player onto the field of fast-moving global economic challenges while the rest of us are forced to sit on the bench and hope for the best.

The current WOPR version must be rejected and rewritten to assure that the timberland is managed to retain our property value, increase our marketability, and contribute to our economic adaptability by creating jobs for timber and non-timber industries. The plan needs to focus on timber management that makes these lands economically productive every year, not once in the lifetime of a human.

Wonders about sheriff From Donna Lasater Redmond, Ore.

What was Sheriff Gilbertson thinking when he wrote that letter to the editor in response to Carol Dickson's complaint to the Grants Pass newspaper?

What prompted him to call her a despot; of accusing her of attacking the sheriff's office with misleading questions? His response came across as paranoid and unprofessional.

What was he thinking when he responded by e-mail to her letter? Mrs. Dickson simply complained about the use of manpower for a cross-walk sting in Cave Junction when there is such a shortage of deputies to provide services to the county. He called her "unethical, evil, a true despot and vindictive." Is this the example he set for his employees on how to treat the public?

He is an elected official, the chief law enforcement officer in Josephine County. He certainly isn't acting like it. Does he treat all his constituents that way when they question/disagree with the way he runs his department? Last I knew, Josephine County was still part of the United States, where we are allowed to hold our elected officials responsible without fear of recrimination.

What was he thinking when he claimed to have learned a lot about the type of employee Mrs. Dickson was while employed at the sheriff's office, and then saying he would have fired her? His sources are woefully wrong, and the conclusion he drew from them shows poor judgment on his part.

I am a retired Josephine County Sheriff's Office ser-
(Continued on page 3)

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