

# OPINION

## YOUR VOICE

### For 4S2!

Cheers to all the pilots, aviation ground crew, local fire and police that put out or supported the extinguishing of the East Hills ground fire on Monday, Aug. 17.

Without your skill and expertise, that could have been a disaster. They licked it in about an hour and 15 minutes, judging from where I watched the organized water assault while having tacos at The Gorge White House with my family.

We are lucky here in Hood River to have 4S2, Ken Jernstedt Airfield. This airfield and its many organizations that help train, support, and educate current and future pilots and aviation enthusiasts alike are vital to our local economy, growth, education and culture.

Small airports like this that allow for curious youngsters to get their first flight or train in a glider or powered aircraft is what sparked my distant cousin Neil Armstrong's interest in learning to fly. The pilots that train here become the pilots that fly you to your vacation or see your loved ones, allow for your Amazon Prime item to be delivered in a couple of days, fly for Life Flight, volunteer fly for Angel Wings West, volunteer fly for Pilots and Paws Rescue Services, fly and defend our borders or other countries boarders that are less fortunate as ours, fly to put out fires, fly to stop animal poaching with the Fish and Wildlife, on and on, and yes fly for fun as given to them by their free rights in our Constitution of our United States of America.

Please help support 4S2 Ken Jernstedt Airfield and it's many amazing organizations, most importantly Hood River Soaring, Tac-Aero, and the world's premiere antique aviation museum WAAAM.

Mark A. Stanfield  
Hood River

### Add a ballot box

As a resident of Mt. Hood, I urge Hood River County to install a ballot box in both Parkdale and Odell. The nearest ballot box at this time is in downtown Hood River. That is a huge inconvenience for residents in the Upper Valley, especially for elderly people.

This doesn't seem like much of an expense, and with recent federal efforts at voter suppression it would be a patriotic and honorable thing to do.

Thank you.

Tracie Horning  
Mt. Hood

### Pro-choice reasons

I am pro-choice, and here's why: Even if I grant the other side some questionable presuppositions, such as life beginning at conception, at the end of the day, I don't want people who do not want children, or do not have the resources to be able to adequately raise a child, to be forced to have said children. This does nobody any good.

Does that mean that abortion is fun and easy? Hell no. It's sad and painful, and the vilification of exercising bodily autonomy with respect to reproduction only adds to the negative experience.

Conservatives would happily use the power of the government to force you to birth and raise children that you don't want, while simultaneously and systematically disabling the social safety nets that you probably rely on, as well as destroying the environment for the future of those children.

Meanwhile, it is progressives that are literally and figuratively planting the trees that our children's children's children will sit under.

Benjamin Sheppard  
Hood River

Benjamin Sheppard is employed as a social worker.

### Sturgis

I saw the pictures from the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Been there and it is very entertaining. Not just a bunch of rich guys dressing and behaving like pirates for a week. Thousands of people from all over the country will have a good time and take home pleasant memories. Hopefully that is all they will take home.

Jonathan Terharr  
Hood River

### Save the Census

The U.S. Census Bureau recently announced it would prematurely end census operations on Sept. 30, 2020, despite disruptions due to COVID-19 that have significantly slowed data collection. The counting date had been extended

through Oct. 31 for that very reason.

This is an intentional and transparent move designed to sabotage the census, thereby skewing Congressional representation, redistricting, and critical funding allotments for every state in the nation.

Nearly four of 10 households have not yet been counted. To a large degree, these are immigrants, people of color, and traditionally undercounted groups. The results of this misrepresentation will last a decade.

Congress can and should act to protect the census by ensuring adequate funding in the next COVID stimulus package to continue census counting through October as planned. Please encourage our elected officials, Rep. Greg Walden and Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, to fight for the necessary funding.

Daera Dobbs  
Hood River

### Mail is essential

The finest man I have ever known spent his entire career working for the United States Postal Service. With the exception of the years that he spent fighting for this country in three different wars (World War II, Korea and Vietnam), he worked to make sure that Americans got their Social Security checks, letters to and from grandparents, tax refunds, and grocery store coupons (a big deal for my grandma every week). If he were still alive and working, he would be delivering stimulus checks, prescriptions, and, in states lucky enough to have vote-by-mail, ballots.

The USPS delivers over 472 million pieces of mail in this country every day. In contrast, UPS delivers approximately 22 million packages (worldwide), and FedEx delivers approximately 6 million packages a day. The drafters of the U.S. Constitution believed regular interstate communication to be so important that they wrote it into the document (Article I, Section 8, Clause 7: "Congress shall have the Power to establish Post Offices and post Roads"). For my entire life, I have taken the mail for granted. The mail carrier comes, we get and send mail. There are, of course, complaints, especially lately as its funding has been cut and Amazon has come in to compete — but for the most part, it has been a reliable, constant, and quiet part of life.

Now we see reports that mailboxes are being removed, mail is being delayed, and Pres. Trump is saying the quiet part out loud, admitting that he is holding up post office funding because "that means that you can't have universal mail-in voting because they're not equipped to handle it." It seems that he believes that only Democrats vote by mail or care about getting mail. In the midst of a pandemic, vote-by-mail in an election year is the logical, safe way to ensure that Americans can exercise their right to vote but that will not happen if the president is blocking the mail.

My grandpa loved this country and he hated cheaters. I am grateful that he is not here to see what Pres. Trump is doing right now.

Jennifer Hackett  
Hood River

### Responsible Planning

I live at the Skamania/Clark County line. Our well went dry in February and it cost us \$30,000 for a new well. People live in rural areas because they love the lifestyle. But rural life has limitations, one of them being that we have no alternative for water if our well dries up.

The West End Comprehensive Plan was created over several years

with guidelines for the number of wells this area can support, and parcel sizes that allow growth in a sustainable way.

This plan's intent was to protect the rural way of life, water temperature for fish survival, and availability of well water. With hotter summers becoming the new "normal," the risk of wells going dry is very real. For this reason I ask that you support Jeremy Bechtel for Skamania County Commissioner District 1. Jeremy understands the importance of responsible planning. He will work to protect our rural lifestyle, and in return protect our water so that we can remain living in the beautiful area.

Sherri Irish  
Washougal

### Support Turner

Klickitat County is beautiful, safe, and full of vibrant communities. These are not the reasons my family moved here, but they are the reasons we have stayed for 15 years. Klickitat County is a great place to raise children. As a parent of two teenagers, I want my kids to grow up in a supportive community. As an active volunteer with

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## Want to write a letter?

COLUMBIA GORGE NEWS ENCOURAGES READERS TO SUBMIT letters to the editor for the weekly opinion page. Letters of all topics are welcome.

Writers must add their name and hometown (for publication) and daytime phone number (for verification, not for publication.) Email letters are welcome, as well as hand-written or typed.

Letters must be 350 words or fewer; generally, the briefer the message, the better. Opinion pieces longer than 350 words may be submitted after contacting Columbia Gorge News.

Letters are published as space allows, and efforts are made each week to provide as much space as possible.

Deadline for letters is noon on the Friday prior to publication.

Letters using vulgar or inappropriate language will not be considered, nor are those containing malicious, false or misleading statements. Letters criticizing a particular business over a particular complaint or grievance will not be considered.

Letters must run with the name and hometown of the writer; anonymous or "name withheld by request" letters are not accepted.

Letters may be submitted online at [www.thedalleschronicle.com](http://www.thedalleschronicle.com), [www.hoodrivernews.com](http://www.hoodrivernews.com) or [www.whitesalmonenterprise.com](http://www.whitesalmonenterprise.com).

Letters may also be sent via email to Kirby Neumann-Rea ([kirbyn@gorgeneews.com](mailto:kirbyn@gorgeneews.com)) or Mark Gibson ([markg@gorgeneews.com](mailto:markg@gorgeneews.com)).



Demonstrators taking place in a national "Save the Post Office" peacefully mingle with those manning a Recall Kate Brown/Voter Registration booth outside the United States Postal Service building in The Dalles. The Saturday protest rally was organized locally by Indivisible Columbia Gorge and Protect Oregon's Progress (POP). The recall booth in The Dalles has been present at times for the past three months, according to an organizer. The Recall petition is the third filed against Gov. Brown, submitted by Bill Currier on June 2. Signatures for the recall are due on Aug. 31. Both prior recall attempts failed to gather enough signatures to move forward. The "Save the Post Office" rally occupied all four corners of the intersection for approximately an hour. Mark B. Gibson photo

## Regional news for the Gorge

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### CONTACT US

The Dalles  
541-296-2141 | F 541-298-1365  
THEDALLESCHRONICLE.COM  
ORNEWS@GORGENEWS.COM  
Hood River / White Salmon  
541-386-1234  
HoodRiverNews.COM  
ORNEWS@GORGENEWS.COM  
WANNEWS@GORGENEWS.COM

Publisher  
Chelsea Marr  
[chelseam@gorgeneews.com](mailto:chelseam@gorgeneews.com)

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[Trishaw@gorgeneews.com](mailto:Trishaw@gorgeneews.com)  
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[WANews@gorgeneews.com](mailto:WANews@gorgeneews.com)

[nikip@gorgeneews.com](mailto:nikip@gorgeneews.com)  
[MarylouA@gorgeneews.com](mailto:MarylouA@gorgeneews.com)

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