

OPINION

Letter to Trump

President Trump:
On behalf of the Klickitat County Republicans located in the great state of Washington, I would like to express our gratitude for your strong leadership and fight for truth for the American people.

We are in support of your decision to use the pocket veto to prevent the COVID Relief Bill from being enacted. As you clearly stated in your speech on Tuesday, Dec. 22, the bill is massive, unread, and clearly directs taxpayer dollars toward other nations, special interest groups, and lobbyists that do not directly benefit the health and welfare of the everyday lives of American citizens and their families.

Wasteful, hidden, unnecessary, and dishonest spending has occurred in Congress for decades. Thank you for taking a common sense, and thus non-partisan, approach to objectively examine the bill and to publicly announce and share your grievances that expose the truth that the deceptively-titled "COVID Relief Bill" does little to provide the relief that suffering American families and small businesses truly need.

On behalf of the Klickitat County Republicans, we thank you for your action, honesty, and leadership, and we strongly support your use of the pocket veto.

Regards,
Lisa Evans, Chairwoman
Klickitat County Republicans

Amoral braggart

Republican lawmakers should not concern themselves with supporting President Trump in his demand that economic impact payments to be increased to \$2,000. He is not interested in helping Americans by putting more money in their pockets.

He is embracing the Democrat amount merely to disrupt the work of Congress. This is not a policy issue; this is a tantrum.

Donald Trump does not represent any party, only the Trump family and their inner circle. He needed a party to nominate him for president and Republican values were most closely aligned with his own interests.

I wish we could drain the swamp of lobbyists and special interests. We now see that an amoral braggart who disregards facts is a step in the wrong direction.

Tom Hart
The Dalles

The best gift

I feel like our country is running without a president, only a dictator, seeking to keep power. I'll be a proud American when Trump is gone. My birthday is on Jan. 20. The best gift I'll get is a new president! I want to thank everybody that voted for our new president.

Steve Cochenour
The Dalles

Trail needs work

In the dozen years I have lived in Hood River, I have walked the nearly 4-mile long Indian Creek Trail almost daily in all weather. During that time I have seen the trail properly maintained, thanks

in part to the work of retired board member Art Carroll and his teams of volunteers.

This winter, however, things are different and much of the trail is a quagmire, hazardous to those of us challenged to stay upright (I am 85), as well as those mothers and young children I encounter often. The problem is lack of gravel that was applied regularly by those crews, none of whom I have seen at work this year.

When I arrived here I soon learned that Hood River residents are justly proud of their trail systems, and that these trails draw visitors as much as other outdoor activities do. It is time to get this fixed.

I write to encourage readers who use these trails to join me in asking the Hood River Park & Recreation District (541-386-5720) to rebuild the volunteer program that Art so ably managed and get back to proper maintenance of this fine trail system.

David Hupp
Hood River

Mitch, think!

Dear Mitch McConnell: Why in the world do you say that Joe Biden is president-elect? As one of the signs raised at the White Salmon rally said, "Trump won — Dems and Biden cheated." How can you concur with the same fake news opinion?

Encompassing all of the United States, and especially those whose election results are questionable, there are more than 1,000 sworn testimonies to election fraud. These are true, and submitted by people who want fair and honest elections. And yet you will never hear of these truths because of the shenanigans of the fake news liberals.

Are you and some of the Republican (Republicans in Name Only) spineless chickens looking out for your big retirement or, perhaps, a future opportunity as a lobbyist to help destroy our constitution and country, or a go-along-to-get-along Senator?

Quit trying to not make waves, do what is right. Read, believe in, and support our Constitution.

Bruce B. Amos
Snowden

Thank you

We, the minister and members of the Board of Trustees of the Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, would like to express our great appreciation for the way our community has come together to support the Hood River Warming Shelter in this most challenging year.

Sarah Kellem's of Hood River Shelter Services has demonstrated creativity and foresight in organizing a brand-new, pandemic-appropriate model for the shelter. Scores of community volunteers (including many from our own congregation) are providing support services and needed donations. Local restaurants are providing hot meals. And special kudos to Valley Christian Church for making their parking lot available for shelter operations for this entire winter.



A bald eagle snatches a fish from the water at The Dalles Dam. The large raptors winter in the Gorge every year. Gary Elkinton photo

In this era of so much strife and division, it is heart-warming to see how our community has come together to protect the most vulnerable among us.

Cindy Allen (Hood River), Elaine Castles (Mosier), Pat Evenson-Brady (Hood River), Ray Klebba (White Salmon), Kathy Jubitz (Hood River), and Rev. Judy Zimmerman (Parkdale)

Firework thanks

I want to thank all those who put on the New Years Eve fireworks show in Hood River. It was wonderful to see the beautiful lights in the middle of winter.

And it was a non-partisan, pandemic free moment to be both reflective on the past year and optimistic about the coming year.

I'm hoping that it becomes an annual tradition.

Avery Hoyt
White Salmon

Sick of car prowls

In the early hours of the morning of Dec. 16, after a long day of work and my husband's birthday and spending hours in the ER with my neighbor, my car parked in my driveway was ransacked and my purse was stolen.

I had many things to carry in after leaving ER and forgot about my purse; it had everything in it that women carry in their purse. Our truck also was ransacked. In their rush to do evil, they left a backpack on the ground that was a Colts Blue string-type backpack, left on the ground by my car.

My neighbor that was in quarantine for COVID, their car too was ransacked and they stole some Christmas presents in it. Now just the other day sometime after Jan. 1, some other neighbor's truck that

was locked was broken into and they tried to steal the truck.

This is getting out of hand. I doubt very much that the perpetrators will read this because they probably can't read. I have lived here for 38 years in the same little house on the same corner and so everyone knows I am ready. This time, I lock everything up and when I see people just walking around, now I watch them. Sad that we live in a community that we don't feel safe and secure in. It's time for us to stand up and help fight the crimes there are occurring in our neighborhood and take back our neighborhoods.

The police can only do so much because the money that we pay in taxes goes to everything else but what we need, but I am ready to defend my property and my neighbor's property.

I am waiting.

Mika Clark
Bingen

Recognition deserved

White Salmon Mayor Keethler and the city council deserve recognition for their important step to fund a social service position to address our community and mental health concerns. A trained person working in cooperation with other social resources, police departments and community mental health (Comprehensive in White Salmon and Goldendale) can usefully assist with individual/family needs and help deescalate stressful situations, rather than immediate police involvement.

As a former mental health professional with Comprehensive for 11 years, I know first hand the range of mental health problems people face, as Mayor Keethler also

referenced in a recent news article. I was on the crisis team to assess the degree of risk for harm and public safety that individuals may pose and find workable solutions. The police and sheriff departments were appreciative of having a professional deal with distressed and mentally ill people.

I was also aware that I was only seeing a small percent of those who needed help, but had not risen to the level of requiring "crisis" intervention. For example, in Eugene, there is a CAHOOTS program using a team approach with a behavioral health worker that is dispatched by the police department to deal with a wide range of mental health related situations. These can include conflict resolution, welfare checks, substance abuse, suicide threats, etc. And very importantly, rely on trauma-informed deescalation and harm-reduction techniques — the standards for effective intervention and treatment.

Here's the clincher: Last year CAHOOTS in Eugene responded to nearly 1 in 5 calls from 911, and out of the 24,000 calls they responded to, they requested police *only 1 percent of the time*. That's a lot of calls not requiring police attention, which leaves police to do regular law enforcement. It also is reported to have saved the city of Eugene more than \$8 million.

White Salmon is not Eugene, but we have the same human needs and common mental health issues here in our community, and COVID-19 has made things worse, as we know. Let's work together to make this first step successful by our support.

Steven Woolpert
White Salmon

Year in letters: Looking back at 'Your Voice' in 2020

■ By Trisha Walker
Columbia Gorge News



Trisha Walker

I've lost track of how many years I kept a running list of our letter writers for *Hood River News'* opinion page — maybe 5? — but I'm glad to be able to continue the tradition in *Columbia Gorge News*. Letters to the editor are an important part of any newspaper, and we give credit here to those who expressed their opinions in this space. Letters to the editor give a sense of what is important in our communities. It turns out that, even though we live in different parts of the Gorge, we share many of the same objectives and concerns.

Columbia Gorge News ran 709 letters to the editor in 2020 — beginning with our first edition on

April 8 (10 letters) and ending with our last edition on Dec. 30 (another 10 letters). In all, we had 464 writers (see page 5 for a list).

Our most prolific writer was Steve Kaplan of Hood River with a total of 18. In second and third were Benjamin Sheppard of Hood River with 13 and Gary Fischer of The Dalles with eight. We also had three people write six: Deborah Ferrer of The Dalles, Mike Goodpaster of Goldendale, and Jacob Kaplan of Hood River.

Letters came from all corners of the Gorge: Hood River, The Dalles, White Salmon, Bingen, Stevenson, Snowden, Trout Lake, Wishram, Mt. Hood, Dallesport, Cook, Husum, Cascade Locks, Lyle, Skamania, Parkdale, Dufur, Odell, North Bonneville, Mosier, Goldendale, Maupin, Wasco, Wamic, Mill A, Tygh Valley, Glenwood and Centerville.

We kept track of how many letters

were received each month: Our lowest was 31 total letters in April (our next lowest was November with 41). Our highest volume of letters came in October — 233 — with May (101) and September (100) our closest contenders.

Letter topics ranged from support for our new publication (nine — we also had three letters expressing disappointment in the change and/or content) to President Trump (10 in opposition to his COVID response, nine generally opposing his policies and handling of the presidency, and nine against a second term. He did get one letter of support regarding Chinese tariffs and two supporting his re-election).

In fact, politics was the most popular topic this year, with 279 letters endorsing candidates from Oregon and Washington races — not surprising in an election year (our Oct. 28 issue, the last one before the Nov. 3 general election, saw 34 letters

alone).

We had 91 political letters in the "other" category on various topics, with "register and vote" garnering the most attention (10).

Black Lives Matter — both the movement that began in 2013 and the protests that followed George Floyd's death in Minneapolis May 25 — was the topic of 49 letters to the editor. Twelve writers came out in support of the movement; another seven encouraged police reform and / or retraining officers. Four writers saw the movement and protests akin to religious extremism or mob mentality, and two said no reform or defunding is needed. Two letters criticized President Trump's handling of protests as too violent, and one disapproved of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's not calling in the National Guard to control the crowds in Portland.

The COVID-19 pandemic was another frequent topic on the editorial

page. We had 75 letters on the subject, with 19 of those urging others to wear masks. We had eight letters advising complying with to stay at home orders, six in favor of funding for businesses, worker protection or rent relief, five against Govs. Kate Brown and Jay Inslee's lockdown responses, and four believing COVID was overblown.

We also had 84 letters in the "other" category, meaning they were standalones on various topics that ranged from asking readers to pack out their waste when climbing Mount Hood, allowing growth in The Dalles and the need for affordable housing in Hood River, and participating in the 2020 census.

There were many other topics covered — too many to catalog here — but we will be keeping track of topics again next year, as well as tabulate a list of those who write. Please keep them coming.

Regional news for the Gorge

Columbia Gorge News

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