

# OPINION

The opinions expressed in the letters below are “your voice,” and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Columbia Gorge News*, its staff, publisher or advertisers.

## YOUR VOICE

### Thank you

Thanks to the photographer who chronicled the recent graduation at Hood River Valley High, from the rainbow portend to hats in the air celebrating (PHOTO GALLERY: Hood River Valley High School graduation in the Columbia Gorge News, June 17).

Americans are lucky to have such educational opportunities, not so around the world. With COVID, 1.6 billion children were out of school, many still waiting to restart.

Fortunately the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is partnering with low income countries to turn that around. The GPE mobilized \$500 million to help countries during the pandemic to keep kids learning, like a radio school program in Zambia. The GPE's new five year plan will put 175 million more children in school for the first time.

An American pledge of \$1 billion over five years will inspire other donors to contribute the other 80% of the money needed.

We can help by calling our members of Congress (202-224-3121), asking them to support this pledge. It will give millions of children the opportunity to graduate like the Hood River students, going on to healthier, happier, and more productive lives.

**Willie Dickerson**  
*Snohomish, Wash.*

### Oath violated

Sheriff Bob Songer of Klickitat County has published his manifesto. Wherein, he claims to be the law onto himself.

Sheriff Bob has violated his oath to “the Supreme Judge of the Universe ... to protect (me) from... threats to (my) liberties ...” by claiming, ultra vires, to be a tin pot dictator.

THEREFORE, I hereby PROCLAIM: Sheriff Bob does not have the power to arrest me anymore.

**James Barrett**  
*White Salmon*

### Continued threat

The Republican attack on American democracy that led to an insurrection at our Capitol, with the intent of violently interfering with the peaceful transfer of power, continues to threaten our nation today.

Republican state legislatures are introducing (and passing) laws that would drastically limit access to voting, allow partisan “poll watchers” to threaten and intimidate voters, strip secretaries of state of their powers and give partisan state legislatures power to take over county elections and overturn results they don’t like.

If the voter suppression laws from Texas, Georgia or Iowa were passed here in our neck of the woods, it would look like most voters having just one day to cast their ballot, in person, on a work day, at a location potentially an hour or more away from their residence.

And then when results come in that don’t look favorable to the current majority party in the state (Democrats), the partisan legislature could simply claim fraud and take over the counting, auditing and certifying of the results from our county auditor and bipartisan canvass board.

I’m guessing my Republicans friends here in the Gorge would have something to say about that.

The federal legislation known as the For the People Act would neutralize these partisan attacks on our democracy by setting basic voting practices for all elections.

It contains provisions that are broadly popular with Americans across the political spectrum, like the ability to cast your ballot by mail, early voting options, online and expanded voter registration time frames, ending partisan drawing of legislative districts, enhanced security through voter ID requirements and requiring paper ballot records and making Election Day a federal holiday so working people have the day off to make sure their

### Farmers Market



Roses bloom in the Tucker Sherman memorial rose garden at City Park as The Dalles Farmers' Market gets underway Saturday morning. Mark B. Gibson photo

ballot gets cast and counted.

This bill deserves to be championed by our Senators, who have pledged to uphold and defend the Constitution, which enshrines voting rights for all eligible Americans.

I urge them to make this their top priority and get this bill passed by whatever means necessary.

**Kirsten Dennis**  
*White Salmon*

### A Sad Story

I’m usually an upbeat person, but this story is sad all around. I’m writing on Saturday, June 19, and a friend and I were planning to come to The Dalles tonight to hear a musician we’ve been wanting to hear. She was playing at a place we didn’t know, so that was a bonus — maybe I’d find a new favorite spot.

But then I read in the June 16 issue of this newspaper that the Last Stop Saloon in The Dalles was fined \$9,000 by Oregon health inspectors for ignoring safety limits during the pandemic — and it did so “willfully,” not accidentally. That crossed a line for me and changed my plans, and it also created a lot of sadness.

Sad for me, since I missed exploring a new place and hearing a fine musician.

Sad for the musician, since she lost my usually generous tips.

Sad for the place, since it lost \$9,000 plus any money from me — tonight or in the future.

Sad for the owner of the place, who undercut his own claim in this newspaper in August 2020 that he wants to help “make The Dalles better for everyone” and “give back to the community.”

Sad for other businesses in The Dalles, since terrible publicity like this gives all of The Dalles a black eye it doesn’t deserve.

Sad for the Wasco County health department, which worked hard to fight the pandemic, only to have a hole blown in the community’s defenses.

Sad for local residents, who were needlessly put at risk. It’s ironic that Wasco County reported five new cases of COVID just today. That’s five more families now facing the fear, disruption and financial costs of a terrible disease that isn’t finished killing Americans.

Finally, sad for our country. David Brooks, the life-long Republican commentator, fears that the USA no longer has the willpower to sacrifice our self-interests to fight a common enemy. Sadly, the Last Stop Saloon case supports his point.

This is all so sad. Can’t we start working together to eliminate stories like this?

**Mike Hendricks**  
*Hood River*

### Sad loss

In 1978, I moved from Hood River to the upper valley, my property bordering East Fork irrigation’s open canal.

Many miles I’ve logged meditatively walking, writing prose and taking photographs, bike riding with shepherds, and introducing my little daughters to the wonders of this natural world— butterflies, bees, dragonflies, salamanders, lizards, wildflowers, bear, cougar, deer, elk, raccoon, towering trees, otter, ducks, skinks, snakes, birds and owls and bats — you get my drift, I hate to omit any. And it is for these, and those not mentioned, that I dedicate this letter.

Because if the pipeline project proceeds as scheduled, my little piece of heaven, will drastically alter beginning in 2023 when the open canal will be no more. Yes, technically the canal is drained every fall, but only in subfreezing weather is the canal dry. Water is life and life abounds here!

So, although farmers and residents may enjoy cleaner, pressurized irrigation — the pipeline truly comes at costs perhaps hidden. A cement wall I walk past daily has my birth date, the year 1946, pre-dating my birth year. Generation upon generation of flora and fauna have relied upon this stream for 80 years!

So when I read the celebratory pipeline news in last week’s edition (June 23) “enhancing fish and wildlife habitat in the Hood River watershed” I send out apologies to the aquatic and other wildlife that rely on the canal. Where the term demise is more accurate than enhancement.

When cruising Hwy 35, watch out for increased elk, cougar, bear, and deer crossing the road seeking water from the true East Fork of the Hood River in upcoming years. I write prematurely and in remembrance of this wild and scenic place.

I am well aware of climate change and drought, the critical need for water conservation, and livelihoods and food derived from our orchards, and the plight of the salmon. I’ve logged thousands of miles traveling “bone ditch.” My ghost will haunt these parts. I have been blessed beyond belief, and to East Fork Irrigation, I give my

thanks for the canal, its upkeep, and my memories!

**Ricki Duckwall**  
*Mt. Hood-Parkdale*

### Respect the law

On June 17 Klickitat County Sheriff Bob Songer posted a long letter on Facebook stating that the Constitution of the United States and of Washington State as interpreted by him led him to believe he has the power and the right granted by his God to ignore laws or regulations promulgated by mayors, governors, county commissioners or health departments. And therefore, he threatens to not only ignore laws he does not believe in (such as gun laws passed by the state legislature or COVID restrictions issued by the governor and the public health department), but to arrest any government official that tries to enforce or encourage enforcement of such laws.

The sheriff is elected by the people and needs to respond to

the needs and well-being of all the people, not only [those who] believe as he does. His is supposed to be a non-partisan position and he claims accountability to no one — not the board of commissioners, not the mayor, not the governor — only to the constitution as *he* interprets it (not even the courts).

If laws are not enforced are we not living in a lawless society? If one man gets to decide if he likes a law and whether or not he will enforce it, do we not live in a lawless society? How can this person be in a position of “law enforcement?”

It is time to re-evaluate how the sheriff is elected and to whom he reports. He must be held responsible to uphold and enforce the laws of Washington and the United States.

If there is a law that requires firearms training before purchasing a gun, he must enforce it. If there is a law stating a minimum

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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 on all topics are welcome.

Writers must include their name and hometown (for publication) and daytime phone number (for verification, not for publication). Letters from an agency or group must be credited to the author or a contact person.

Anonymous or “name withheld by request” letters are not accepted.

Letters must be 350 words or fewer; generally, the briefer the message, the better. Opinion pieces longer than 350 words may be published as a guest commentary at the discretion of the editor.

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.

We reserve the right to edit all letters:

Letters must be civil. Vulgar or inappropriate language will not be considered, nor

malicious, false or misleading statements.

Letters attacking an individual, rather than an opinion, are not acceptable.

Letters criticizing a particular business over a particular complaint or grievance will not be considered.

The opinions expressed in letters are “Your Voice,” and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Columbia Gorge News*, its staff, publisher or advertisers.

Letters may be submitted online at [www.ColumbiaGorgeNews.com](http://www.ColumbiaGorgeNews.com): Scroll to the bottom of the page and select “Submission Forms,” then select “Letter to the Editor.”

NEW — Letters also may be sent via email to [Letters@gorgenews.com](mailto:Letters@gorgenews.com).

Or mail your letter “attention editor” to any of the Post Office boxes listed at bottom of this page.



## Regional news for the Gorge

# Columbia Gorge News

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