

Hood River News

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Subscription \$42 per year in Hood River trade area. \$68 outside trade area.



NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
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Printed on recycled paper.



OREGON NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Official Newspaper, City of Hood River and Hood River County
Published Every Wednesday & Saturday by Hood River News,
P.O. Box 390, Hood River, Oregon 97031 • (541) 386-1234 • FAX 386-6796

Game time

*Not the Ducks, but the
House and Senate*

The two squads will go head-to-head in a contest of strength and strategy. Heads will butt, sweat will pour and perhaps even some blood will flow, and supporters will fill the seats paying close attention to the gritty maneuvers by rivals on both sides of the ... floor.

No, we're not talking about Duck football anymore. We've witnessed that frustrating contest, in which we learned that Mr. Jones, Cardale, is the Real Deal, and a man who goes by Zeke is not the punchline, but the puncher of linemen. Marcus Mariota's future remains the big question, but otherwise our month-long football obsession can settle into the background along with the buckets of Buckeye confetti.

Can we focus on another bruising test of wills? The Oregon Legislature is about to back in session, and Ohio State is the least of our concerns now.

The 2015 Session's pre-game ceremony was Monday, with Gov. John Kitzhaber's fourth inauguration and the swearing in of Oregon legislators including Hood River's Sen. Chuck Thomsen and Rep. Mark Johnson. Congratulations to those gentlemen who survived tough challenges from able opponents in November and deservedly return for another term in Salem.

On laptops and chalkboards, coaches from both sides of the aisle are preparing for stiff competition over minimum wage, transportation funding, education reform, and how the state will make sense of enacting and enforcing the dramatic changes in marijuana laws.

Then there is the entire matter of how well the Legislature chooses to fund education, P-20: pre-school through grad-school, the new game plan under Kitzhaber's work-in-progress education strategy. Will Oregonians pay as much attention to that as they did to the Oregon Duck gridgers' glorious 2014-15 run?

The whole Ducks-Bucks lead-up and even the game were fun (despite the outcome) and rallying behind Mark Helfrich's lads gave Oregonians something to share. Taking nothing away from that heady experience, however, the real test of our togetherness starts in two weeks in Salem. Will the sense of unity of the past few weeks carry into what is sure to be a contentious session in Salem?

With more than 1,400 proposed bills introduced Monday, Democrats and Republicans have started doing a virtual taping up and reviewing of film as they prepare for what is sure to be a tussle kicking off Feb. 2, with a lot more on the line than a football game held in Texas.

Cold nights, warm bed

I got involved with the Hood River Warming Shelter program last year as a volunteer. It is one of those experiences that just leaves you feeling good. To be able to offer someone a warm cot on a cold night is a small thing to those of us with our own beds. But getting a chance to be warm and dry for awhile is everything to them. There are a variety of shifts available starting in the early evening. My personal choice is the late night when all I need to do is be there in a comfortable chair with my book and computer. There is Wifi available. All that is required is a little generosity of spirit. Please contact the Site Coordinators at hoodrivercares@gmail.com for more information.

Marg Guth
Hood River

A vision of peace

What an inspiration it was this Sunday to see the people in Paris and France join together to say, "Je Suis Charlie!" This was a spontaneous people's march — people of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds, the "silent majority" — more than 2.5 million people who came out on the street to show their unity. People like us.

It was a wonderful image, a vision to hold on to — all people working together in peace, standing for freedom with respect for others. Even though we may not see each other out on the street, I believe, the majority of us share this vision. That it will live on in our imagination in the coming years.

Lawrence Jones
Hood River

Good job, Obama

News flash: I am not a fan of Obama, but that being said, it gets me when the news media blasts Obama for not going to Paris to support France after the shootings. I did not see French or any of the leaders of any other nation standing on US soil after 9/11, so I say good job Mr. President.

Jim Burdick
Parkdale

Standardized testing a disservice

Standardized testing in schools has become increasingly harmful to your children and your public schools for reasons including unwarranted stress on children, loss of instructional time, and narrowing of curriculum. Recently, Superintendent Goldman extolled the virtues of Common Core Standards and Smarter Balance standardized tests. If he had stopped with Common Core, I wouldn't be writing. Since these standards are new, teachers' opinions are still developing. In general, though, teachers support and maintain high standards for students — provided

they are developmentally appropriate.

However, the overwhelming majority of educators working directly with children believe our decades long experiment in high stakes standardized testing is not only a complete failure but also harmful to children — so harmful that some Hood River teachers are taking the extraordinary step of exempting their own children from testing.

Supt. Goldman states he is "willing to be disturbed if it means [he] can help our children succeed later on." The problem with this statement is that there is absolutely no evidence these new tests — any more than the previous tests — will help our children succeed. What we know for certain, however, is that we now spend more time assessing our students and less time instructing. I hear from our high school that we set aside 16 hours for each student to complete testing. For the fourth graders I teach, we anticipate 6 to 8 hours. Additionally, there will be test-taking practice, and administration has other assessments for even more practice. It is likely that by the end of the year, an elementary student will spend more time practicing and taking standardized tests than in PE or Music. The amount of time, money, and effort we put into standardized testing is truly disturbing, and a huge disservice to our children.

We agree wholeheartedly with Supt. Goldman regarding the lack of resources. Oregon ranks 46th lowest in funding relative to GDP. If we aspire to lofty standards, policymakers need to be serious about providing adequate resources.

If you desire more information on exempting your child from harmful standardized testing, email optouthoodriver@gmail.com.

Kevin Calkins
President, Hood River
Education Association
Hood River

Our readers write

founders of Common Core have further increased standards, putting our most vulnerable students (English learners, learning disabled, etc.) at risk. It is a myth that more rigor equates to more or better learning as Fairtest.org offers: "If a child struggles to clear the high bar at five feet, she will not become a 'world class' jumper because someone raised the bar to six feet and yelled 'jump higher,' or if her 'poor' performance is used to punish her coach."

While the Common Core curriculum itself may be fresh and relevant to today's children, it will be the high-stakes testing that will eventually lead Common Core down the familiar path of NCLB. Pay close attention and do your own research. If you feel that high-stakes standardized testing is not right for your child, remember that you have the legal right to opt-out in Oregon. "Opting-out" is when a parent/guardian chooses to have a child not take the state standardized test, without personal penalty.

For details on how to opt-out and instead have your child assessed in a different way, logon to OptOutOregon.org. There you will find answers to many questions you may have about the consequences of opting out.

Karen Ford
Hood River

Budget solutions

Superintendent Dan Goldman's commentary about the Common Core Standards was both informative and upbeat in explaining the positive and necessary aspects of this progressive education reform. I fully agree that students need to process information and not merely memorize facts.

However, I found the portion of the commentary quite disappointing. In his second year as superintendent, Mr. Goldman has already played the budget card to explain our district's academic performance woes. This explanation has grown quite old over the years. As I taxpayer and father, I find it both disrespectful and unprofessional.

Our education budget has been reduced annually for a decade and this is a trend will likely continue. I find it unacceptable that the highly-educated and well-paid people responsible for our children's futures cannot work harder to come up any new ideas.

Our district continues to pass children who fail to meet grade standards, tolerates excessively rude and disruptive behavior, and continues to reward students for the smallest positive behaviors. Meanwhile, teachers' hands are tied to appropriate discipline repeat offenders. Instead, they are forced to spend their days redirecting and correcting behaviors, which should have been learned years ago.

How do these things affect the budget? Teachers, counselors, and principals are forced to devote valuable time to meet with parents, develop behavior plans, fill out countless forms, and communicate repeatedly with parents through emails and phone calls to address these students' special needs.

Maybe we could start by addressing some of the aforementioned problems and teachers can get back to teaching.

Steve Kaplan
Hood River

Standardized tests not working

In his Jan. 6 Another Voice letter, (Superintendent) Dan Goldman left out that the Common Core State Standards were designed, in part, to circumvent federal restrictions on the adoption of a national curriculum, hence the insertion of the word "state" in the brand name.

States were coerced into adopting the Common Core by requirements attached to the federal Race to the Top grants and, later, the No Child Left Behind waivers.

For an eye-opening and historical review of how and why the Common Core was created and adopted, including a thorough look at the implications for our children, read "The Problems with the Common Core" by Stan Karp, found on rethinkingschools.org. This article is one of many that sheds light on the politics behind the top down, market-driven engine driving the Common Core, including details on who created it, the billionaire-financed marketing campaign in support of it, its long-term funding credibility and much more.

After a decade of testing showing that millions of students could not meet the NCLB standards, the

roes' stories and sacrifice will never be forgotten. My plea is this: If anyone is related, a friend or a classmate to any of the young men on the list I would very much appreciate hearing from you. Even if you don't have a photo but know which school any of these young men attended, it would be so helpful. We need to obtain a photo of every single soldier whose names are etched on The Wall, all 58,300 of them. To date we have over 38,000 photos.

I am also looking for an individual that would like to volunteer to do some footwork in your community if we do not find all the photos. Please submit any photos or information to neverforgotten2014@gmail.com

For more information about the Education Center or make a donation to help build the Center go to: www.vvmf.org/thewall

Mahalo,

Janna Hoehn



Submitted photo

VIETNAM WALL photo curator Janna Hoehn with a portion of her photo display.

Every single soldier: looking for photos to help honor Vietnam fallen

My name is Janna Hoehn. I am a 25 year resident of Maui, Hawaii. Six years ago, my husband and I made our first trip to Washington, D.C. Because Vietnam was the war that was going on while I was in high school, the first memorial on my list was the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

Even though I never knew anyone killed in Vietnam, I wanted an rubbing of one of the names. I approached the Wall and choose a name ... Gregory John Crossman ... an MIA. When I returned home, I decided to research Gregory and try to find his family, in the event they were never able to go to the Wall, I would send them the etching, hoping they would share a photo with me of Gregory. Off and on for six months I researched every way possible and never found any family. I was quite disappointed, but I had one more possibility: my cousin, our family historian. Six weeks later, she found a college photo of Gregory. Two years later I saw a story on our local news about the "Faces Never Forgotten" for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. The goal, to put a face with every name that is etched on the Wall. I immediately sent in the photo I had of Gregory Crossman. Five days later I received an email from Jan Scruggs, the Founder and President of the Vietnam Wall. He thanked me for sending the photo. It was the first for this Soldier. He asked me if I could help him find the photos for the 42 Maui County Soldiers that were killed in Vietnam. I told him it would be an honor. I have always hoped I could do something for the Vietnam Veterans as the way they were treated when

they returned. Here was my chance.

What I thought would be a very easy project, with Maui being so small, was anything but easy. I started by combing the phone books, calling every like name of each soldier, and I found about 10 of them this way. Then off to archived yearbooks for every high school on Maui, I found a few more; to the library to look for obituaries, where I found 3 more; and to the Maui News. They printed a beautiful front page article about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the Education Center. I started receiving calls from all over the United States sending me photos. I was unaware how many people read the Maui News online. The Maui News ran an article about every six weeks printing the list

PHOTOS NEEDED

Janna Hoehn seeks photos of the following local men:
Keith Perkins, 1942-1967, Hood River
Rudy L. Baldon, 1946-1969, Hood River
Charles W. Bauman, 1936-1966, Maupin

of names of photos I still needed.

Every time they ran a story, I would receive another photo or two. After six months of searching, I had a photo of every Solider from Maui County. Once I had all the photos I decided I did not want to keep this to myself. I needed to share it with Maui County. I had a display made with all 42 photos, and I take it all over

Maui giving presentations to high schools, libraries and civic groups. It has been very well received.

Once I finished finding all the Maui County photos, I moved on to my hometown in California and found the six soldiers from my childhood home, Hemet and San Jacinto, Calif.

I have been very involved in trying to locate photos of the Native American soldiers, which brought me to start searching for ALL soldiers in California. Over 60 newspapers have run the story throughout California. The response has been amazing, I have collected over 1100 photos since May 2013. With your help it will be more.

All of these photos will be submitted to the "Wall of Faces" online memorial with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, as well as in the future Education Center that will be adjacent to the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C. Putting a face with a name changes the whole dynamic of the Wall. It keeps these soldiers alive and will honor them, our he-