

Hood River News

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HB 2039

A helpful connection

Checking the Hood River Bridge lift cables for strength and alignment is a timely metaphor for a political process, about to begin, that spans the Columbia River. Rep. John Huffman (R-The Dalles), has recently introduced a bill he hopes will boost both the act's and the commission's profiles with his colleagues in the State Legislature and help support the commission as it struggles to obtain enough funding to adequately carry out its federally-mandated duties (story, page A1). Huffman's proposal, HB 2039, appears to be an astute response to the funding and scope of work challenges that have long plagued the Columbia Gorge Commission and its efforts to make the National Scenic Act function as designed.

But the wheels and cables that reel and unreel in Olympia and Salem are out of whack, and the efficacy of the Gorge Commission is at stake. Just as the Hood River Bridge connects both sides of the rivers. The Scenic Act binds all residents from Washougal to Arlington.

Huffman has presented the solid idea of a bi-state, bi-partisan, bi-cameral taskforce comprised of Gorge legislators and Governors' representatives that would meet with the Gorge Commission to address funding issues, the "various effects" of the National Scenic Act, and determine any needed changes to the act that "could enhance the relationship between the (Gorge) Commission and Oregon and Washington."

The ports in the Gorge, particularly Cascade Locks and Hood River — who held a joint meeting last week — are operating under the premise that agencies and jurisdictions need to work together. Huffman's bill expands on that, and could set up communities on both sides of the river for a range of cooperative efforts. Included in that should be a discussion on political as well as practical responses to the increase of coal and oil trains through the Gorge.

Missed the point

I note that Cliff Mansfield's letter of Jan. 17, 2015 completely missed the point of where President Obama stands on the Constitutional question of Freedom of Religion for our country and also of his willingness to stand up to International Terrorism.

I stand with the President in believing in the Constitutional words: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." These words are at the same level of rights in our country as the freedoms of speech, press, assembly and petition of grievance. To that effect, I believe this weeks' Time Magazine article by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar states that religious stance correctly and clearly in the title: "Paris was not about religion. Thugs, not Moslems, commit violence in the name of Allah."

I and most Christians would no more stand with the Ku Klux Klan and their brand of terrorism, as if the KKK were reflecting true Christianity, than would most Moslems stand with Al Qaida or Boko Harraam, as if those terrorists reflect true Islam. With this in mind, I have no doubt that Presi-

dent Obama, who ordered the removal of Osama Ben Laden, stands with us on the front lines of anti-terrorism.

We should all heed the reminder to remove the planks from our own eyes before we try to eradicate the planks from the eyes of the other guy.

Richard McBee
Hood River

great goals by thoughtfully evaluating each Bill that comes their way... and how the president presides over this satin-smooth scene. My title would be "Malice in Blunderland."

Bill Davis
Hood River

Real State of Union

What should have happened Tuesday night at the State of the Union address was Obama, Congress, the Cabinet and everyone else in the House Chamber should have stood up, faced the camera and American people and given us all the finger. That's the real State of the Union.

Jerry Giarraputo
Hood River

Children's story

Although I'm not an author, I somehow feel compelled to compose a realistic children's story that would reflect the ways, nature and mannerisms of our political figures in the nation's capital. How the congress and senate achieve

ABOUT LETTERS

Hood River News reminds letter to the editor writers that shorter is better. Concise letters are not only better-read, they are more likely to be published because limited space is available.

Almost any point can be made in 350 words or fewer, so this is set as an upper level for length.

Thank-you letters are no longer accepted, neither are unsigned letters, letters signed with fictitious signatures and copies of letters sent to public officials.

We limit letters on a subject when we feel it has been thoroughly aired, to the point of letters becoming repetitive.

Also rejected are letters that are libelous, in bad taste or personal attacks on individuals or private businesses. Writers must include addresses and telephone numbers. These are for identification purposes only, and will not be published.



garyvarvel.com

ANOTHER VOICE

Leos: 700,000 containers and counting



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

LEOS and other volunteers gather containers at the January event. Leos will be back at Rosauers Feb. 7 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

By **BOB DANKO**

Two years ago, in this space, I was happy to report on the Leos first Saturday collection of deposit bottles and cans in the Rosauers' parking lot. At that time, the project had collected 400,000 containers since its beginning in 2009. Now, two years later, I am happy to report that the Leos are still collecting beverage containers and those nickel deposits continue to add up. This month, the Leos surpassed 700,000 containers. That's \$35,000 worth of nickels — every dollar going back to local groups and activities in our community.

The Hood River Leos is a youth community service group affiliated with our local Lion's Club. You'll see members volunteering at various events throughout the community. Hood River is blessed to have many of our youths doing so many worthwhile activities.

The Leos now have much needed help during the first Saturday collection. When you drop off your bags or boxes of empty containers, you will likely see a mix of Leos, adult volunteers from the Lions Club and representatives from another local non-profit group. The Leos passes the money from its deposit container collection to local groups or activities, so the group receiving the money that month

will have volunteers helping as well.

Recent recipients of funds from the monthly collections include the Fish Food Bank, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Relay for Life, the Warming Shelter Project, the Cat Rescue, Hood River Valley Wrestling team, Hood River Valley Swim Team, Wy'east Middle School Outdoor School, Mt. Hood Town Hall, the March of Dimes and Adopt-a-Dog. This month, the Health Media Clubs from the high school and middle schools turned out many volunteers. What a pleasure to see so many youths volunteering on a Saturday morning.

The monthly deposit container collection program began six years ago when some Leos concluded many deposit containers (and their nickel deposits) were being thrown away and those nickels could be put to a good use. The youths concluded most people don't like to use the machines to return their deposit containers, but many may be happy to donate them to a good cause if it were easy to do so. And, even if the containers were being recycled curbside or at a drop box, the nickel deposits that go along with these containers were still being lost to the community.

The monthly collection project

increases beverage container recycling, keeps more of the nickel deposits in the community, and raises much needed funds for local groups and activities. That is a winning combination.

The monthly collection of deposit containers is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the first Saturday of each month in the Rosauers' parking lot. The Leos collect aluminum, plastic and glass beverage containers that have a five cent deposit. These include beer, pop and water bottles, and beer and pop cans. Only deposit containers are accepted, so please do not bring Snapple, Gatorade, tea or juice containers, or wine bottles. It is also helpful to ensure the containers are empty and to separate the containers by material type.

Thanks to community and business support, the Leos deposit container collection has been huge success. If your group wants to be involved with a Leos collection and receive the associated funds, please contact Kristin Reese at 541 806 0278 or kristinr@hrecn.net. And we hope to see a bunch of new faces bringing containers on Saturday, Feb. 7.

Bob Danko, of Parkdale, has been assisting the Leos collection since the project began in 2009.



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