

Hood River News

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



NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
ASSOCIATION

OREGON NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Printed on recycled paper.

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

Tide Out

Kitzhaber's shell game must stop

By now, the wave building toward the Salem beach has probably crashed. In the biggest political crisis involving a seated servant in Oregon's history, the resignation of Gov. John Kitzhaber seems imminent. If he hasn't done so before the weekend, it at least spares the Friday the 13th bad luck association. But all signs point to Kitzhaber stepping down soon, and the factors involve not only the governor's own actions but also public perception and the breakdown of faith. The riptide of mistrust has pulled this once-respected public servant into ever deep water.

If Kitzhaber has not resigned by the weekend, he should do soon. The tide has gone out for the governor. It's tempting to lay all kinds of blame at the feet of his fiancé, Cylvia Hayes. Her maneuverings within Kitzhaber's household and office, and the disturbingly blurred lines that created, were one thing. Then the well-documented lack of income reporting along with lobbying efforts that, by appearance at least, point to Hayes' capitalization on her insider status. Further, the rather sticky association it attached to the governor with regards to hiring and contracts going to people connected in some way to either Hayes or Kitzhaber.

Those matters contributed to the start of Kitzhaber's slide, but other troublesome aspects of this are Kitzhaber's inept communication in the heat of the controversy, his hasty and ill-timed request for an Attorney General investigation he had to have known was already underway, and his mysterious and urgent "come to Salem, quick" call to Secretary of State Kate Brown. All of this happened when it was dawning on the public that Kitzhaber would face ethical and possibly criminal investigations.

The most troubling development, however, was Kitzhaber's request to review his emails, apparently to determine which amount to public business and which are private, as reported Wednesday by OregonLive.

Such a move indicates Kitzhaber either had something to hide or believed it might appear that way. Either that, or his request suggests he was trying to remember what he'd written in order to get his story straight.

The timing of his request is remarkably bad for a politician as experienced and savvy as John Kitzhaber, and it exhibits intolerably bad judgment at the very least.

If he does not resign, Kitzhaber's future as governor would amount to beachcombing at low tide, and finding only the shell of leadership.

WHERE TO WRITE

President — Barack Obama, White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington D.C., 20500
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Senators — Jeff Merkley, SDB-40B, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington D.C., 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753; E-mail: oregon@merkley.senate.gov; Ron Wyden, 717 Hart Office Building, Washington D.C., 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244.
Web address: www.senate.gov/member/or/wyden/general/

2nd Congressional District Representative — Greg Walden, 14 N. Central Ave., Suite 112, Medford, OR 97504. Phone: 541-776-4646;
E-mail: www.walden.house.gov/contactgreg

Governor — John Kitzhaber, 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111;
E-mail: www.governor.state.or.us/email.htm

District 26 State Senator — Chuck Thomsen, 900 Court St. N.E., S-307, State Capitol, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1726; E-mail: sen.chuckthomsen@state.or.us

District 52 State Representative — Mark Johnson, 900 Court St. N.E., Bldg. H-385, State Capitol, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1452; E-mail: rep.markjohnson@state.or.us

Hood River County Board of Commissioners — Chair Ron Rivers, Vice Chair Maui Meyer, members Les Perkins, Bob Benton and Karen Joplin, Hood River County Courthouse, Hood River, OR, 97031. Phone: 541-386-3970.

Oil train concerns

Mile-long trains are passing along our side of the river, carrying heavy crude oil from the Alberta tar sands region. This fact was reported February 9 by Oregon Public Broadcasting: www.opb.org/news/article/tar-sands-crude-oil-moves-through-northwest-in-mile-long-trains-as-spill-planning-lags

Sometimes people have asked us, "How do you know these crude oil shipments are happening?" It's an excellent question. We know from bits and pieces of information collected from diverse sources. As the article states, the railroad and the shippers are not informing state or local officials about these shipments. I've learned that the Union Pacific Railroad refuses to tell Senator Wyden's office anything. If one of these trains dumps this asphalt-like material into the Columbia, it's over for river life as we know it: the stuff cannot be cleaned up in anything less than many years, if ever. This potential catastrophe cannot be allowed to happen. Our elected officials and the people whose job is to protect us cannot do their jobs without being informed by people whose only concern is for profit.

David Hupp
Hood River

Appreciation for 'Props'

Mr. Ihle, your Feb. 11 letter "Pulpit Props" was very much appreci-

ated in light of what followed a few columns over. Sometimes, however, hyperbole helps to illustrate a point or reveal the silliness of an idea or paradigm.

Apparently there is a lot of "eroding of foundations," "crookedness," and "flouting" going on at the highest level of government, 100 percent of which is entirely due to POTUS. I will be grateful when the Republican-led House can solve every problem they complained about for the past several years now that obstructionist Democrats are in the minority.

Take note Democrats and POTUS. There are some well thought out and humane ways to resolve our immigration issue quickly and decisively:

Either build a huge wall and provide a lot of heavily armed guards at short intervals, or just give a decree to "Get out now. You cannot be here!" (Insert heavily armed guards here to ensure compliance.) Those are the only two ideas I have ever heard mentioned by the Republicans in Congress.

I am not an orchardist, but can tell you with certainty that some need more workers at harvest time, not less. So maybe more mature, non-partisan dialogue is needed to find some middle ground.

Steve Kaplan
Hood River

Bumper sticker humor

The other day as I drove around town searching for overly offensive bumper stickers to assault and insult my senses. Much to my dislike, disgust and distain, I discovered

one right in front of me. Reacting with rage and writhing in wrath, I suddenly recalled a Johnny Carson thought-provoking retort I could use on that person behind the wheel: "May 2,000 sand fleas infest your shorts!" So I decided to tell this meandering motorist those exact words if the driver would ever stop and park that thing. We traveled here, there ... everywhere, but by the time we drew close to Timberline Lodge, I had run out of gas. The bumper sticker message, you ask? "I'm battery powered and you're not!"

Bill Davis
Hood River

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.



HOW TO HELP

Helping Hands Against Violence

Helping Hands operates two facilities that offer shelter and safety to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Contact the office at 541-386-4808 prior to dropping off shelter items or to arrange a pick up. You also may donate online at: www.helpinghandsoregon.com.

Needed goods include, for the shelter: toilet paper, sponges, paper towels, garbage bags, laundry detergent, dish soap, laundry soap, towels and washcloths, sheets and blankets (single double, queen), pots and pans silverware, and toys for the kids' playroom; for the office, copy paper, envelopes, letter size file folders, stamps, post-its, bottled water, tissues, and disinfectant wipes.

For those in need of Helping Hands services, here is the hotline number: 541-386-6603.

HR Care Center

The Family Council at the Hood

River Care Center is seeking donations for wild birdseed, to be used in filing the residents' birdfeeders. This is an activity which is enjoyed all year round. Donations may be dropped off at the Hood River Care Center, 729 Henderson Road. For delivery or pick-up, call Debbie Medina, 541-490-1575 or Carol Daniel, chairman, 541-490-6136 or hrcfcc551@gmail.com.

WANT IN?

If your non-profit is looking for volunteers or has other needs, send brief information to hnews@hoodrivernews.com.

Warming Shelter

Visit hoodrivercares.org for details on how to assist Hood River Warming Shelter, now located in the former Expo Center at the waterfront, through the end of the season March 8.

From 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. nightly, homeless people can find a warm place to sleep, bedding, meals, and connection to community resources, all at no charge.

Veterans Office

Volunteer drivers from the Mid-Columbia area are needed to take veterans to the Portland VA Medical Center. Oregon drivers must have a valid driver's license and a good driving record. CDL is not needed.

For more information, contact the DAV Coordinator at 1-800-949-1004, ext. 57804 or ext. 56957.

FISH

The food bank program in Hood River County can always use monetary donations to help stock shelves at sites in Hood River, Parkdale, Odell and Cascade Locks. Donations may be sent to 1767 12th St., Box 147, Hood River, OR 97031.



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