

## Hood River News

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## Youths Matter

*Keeping kids safe, and sustained,  
includes showing them support*

Keeping kids safe is the basic goal with our annual "Just Say No!/Soli Di No" special section in this edition.

The coloring book contains ample information about prevention and tips for talking with kids about drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. It's an annual partnership with Hood River Police and supporting sponsors.

Most parents are in tune with the issues and concerns about kids' exposure to unhealthy things, but this publication, along with other efforts by law enforcement and programs by the county Prevention Network, can serve as a helpful tune-up.

The publication includes a variety of insights; perhaps the most basic one is this: "Help your children establish realistic personal goals in academics, athletics and social life.

*"Encourage and help them to achieve these goals."* Italics are ours.

We can all, not just parents, encourage our youth to participate and excel in positive activities. The opportunities are extensive for attending or otherwise supporting the things kids are involved in, or projects that offer positive alternatives for youth in our communities. St. Francis House, The Next Door Inc., Start Making A Reader Today, Little League, middle school sports, and Community Education are just a few of the ongoing programs always deserving support.

In the near term, many events and programs are ready for anyone to show up and pay an admission price (if any). They include Kids Soup, scheduled Thursday at Springhouse, and the plays at Hood River Middle School and Hood River High School opening Thursday, Tongue Twister Tournament for SMART on Friday, and the Horizon Hawks' playoff game, also on Friday.

It's not too late to form a team for the March 8 Bowl for Kids' Sake for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Gorge, and mentors are always needed there.

The high school and middle school AVID program (Advancement Via Individual Determination) seeks tutors; a training is planned Feb. 28 — call 541-387-5704 for details.

Add to that the Community Work Day program by the high school, coming April 29: in it, HRVHS students spend a day working at a local business or organization, and turn their earnings over to a fund that is donated to a needy local organization to be determined.

In Hood River County, young people are always up to something good. Supporting their efforts can be entertaining or educational, or both, and has the immediate effect of bolstering what the kids happen to be doing, be it music, drama, or community service projects.

In addition, it sends a signal to other kids, be they younger or less-involved. It says, "People who know you, as well as those who don't, will make an investment of time or money to observe or help experience what you are pursuing."

Supporting these efforts shows kids they matter, and that their creative and positive pursuits are what drives them as individuals and the community as a whole.

### 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/contactggreg

**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.

**County Administrator** — Dave Meriwether, Hood River County Courthouse, Hood River, OR, 97031. Phone: 541-386-3970.

**Hood River City Council** — Mayor Paul Blackburn, members Laurent Picard, Mark Zammiller, Kate McBride, Becky Brun, Peter Cornelison and Susan Johnson Hood River City Hall, Hood River, OR, 97031. Phone: 541-386-1488. E-mail: coh@gorge.net

## Our readers write

### An interesting notion

I am 13 years old and I've noticed as I am talking to my classmates that (in my opinion) more and more are becoming ignorant of things going on in our own community. Though some people might disagree with my notion, this would be what I would say. One day I might be talking to a friend of mine and say, did you hear about what's going on tomorrow over at the WAAAM museum or such? My classmate's answer ... WHAT'S THAT? So as I am saying, why don't parents and guardians maybe contemplate about well ... let's see ... teaching your kid something about their own community. But again, just sayin'.

Jonathan Harris  
Hood River

harder for college students, poor people and minorities to vote. They are gleefully obstructing an increase in the minimum wage for everyone and pay equality for women. They have an activist majority of Republican ideologues on the Supreme Court where they plan to kill affordable health care. They managed to destabilize the Middle East with disastrous wars and failed states in Iraq and Afghanistan empowering terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al Shabaab.

Yes, there is much for these Republicans to smile about. Gifting their supporters and extracting donations with coded racist rants is hugely profitable. These are the public faces of chicanery that has no policy solutions except racial animus, world war and most important, tax cuts for the rich.

John Kramer  
White Salmon, Wash.

than \$468 million. Even more staggering is the grand total from 2000 -2015 that Texas taxpayers will have paid Pearson — nearly \$1.2 billion for developing standardized tests and related materials.

In spite of our Constitutional rights, Bill Gates and corporations have attempted to set public policy by funding and marketing CCSS to Americans and thereby circumventing voters on educational issues. The 10th Amendment leaves education to state and local control. Allowing private corporations to set public policy and to control American education is dangerous and must be stopped. The movement against standardized testing is growing and is shared across party lines. To learn more, google United Opt Out, or Opt Out Oregon and remember: Standardized Testing = Standardized Thinking.

Gregory Shepherd  
Hood River

### Shades of chicanery

I am glad you published the hilarious cartoon (Feb. 21) titled "Fifty Shades of GOP." It shows the Republican brain trust of Ben Carson, Scott Walker, Jeb Bush, Bobby Jindal, Mitt Romney and Chris Christie smiling in an adorable, cartoony and lovable way.

Your readers might wonder why these Republicans are so happy and lovable. Make sure you don't tell your readers why Secure Rural Schools has not been reauthorized by the Republican controlled Congress. Don't tell them income inequality from the Republican inspired 2007 Great Recession is at levels not seen since before the 1929 Great Depression.

What is not to love about successfully opposing any response to global warming? For these smiling men, disallowing health insurance coverage for female contraception is just a good joke. Gutting affordable health care for millions of low income Americans and diagnostic health care services for low income women gives them a happy tingle. They just changed the rule funding Social Security disability setting up a hilarious social security crisis for 2016. Happiness is holding the government hostage threatening to defund and cripple Homeland Security over their demand to deport 11 million immigrants.

These lovable Republicans refuse to allow a vote on bipartisan immigration reform in the House of Representatives where the immigration reform bill would easily pass. They oppose fixing the Voting Rights Act. They are creating Voter ID laws that make it

### Corporate takeover

I applaud Eric Cohn for his writing in Another Voice Hood River News Feb. 21 concerning standardized testing. The answer to his question, who started this and what was their intent is simple: corporate America for profit. The single biggest influence has come from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with funding documented at 250 million (but potentially as high as 2.3 billion according to Jack Hassard, Professor Emeritus at Georgia State) all in the interest of implementation and advocacy of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) The Gates Foundation has partnered with the British corporation Pearson, the giant textbook publisher, to create online curriculum for CCSS which will drive the volume of testing. The profits here are staggering.

According to surveys by the Pew Center on the States and the Brookings Institution, state spending on standardized testing rose from \$552 million in 2001 to \$1.7 billion in 2012.

As an example of individual state impact, let's look at Texas. Pearson is the exclusive testing contractor for the State of Texas. According to Pearson's year end review for 2011-2012, more than 11.5 million tests were administered to Texas public education students in grades 3 through 12 for the State of Texas Academic Readiness, or STARR. The cost was more than \$89 million! By 2015 the cost for standardized testing, is expected to cost Texans nearly \$100 million. Based on figures provided by Texas Education Agency, Pearson's five year contract with Texas from 2010-2015 will total more

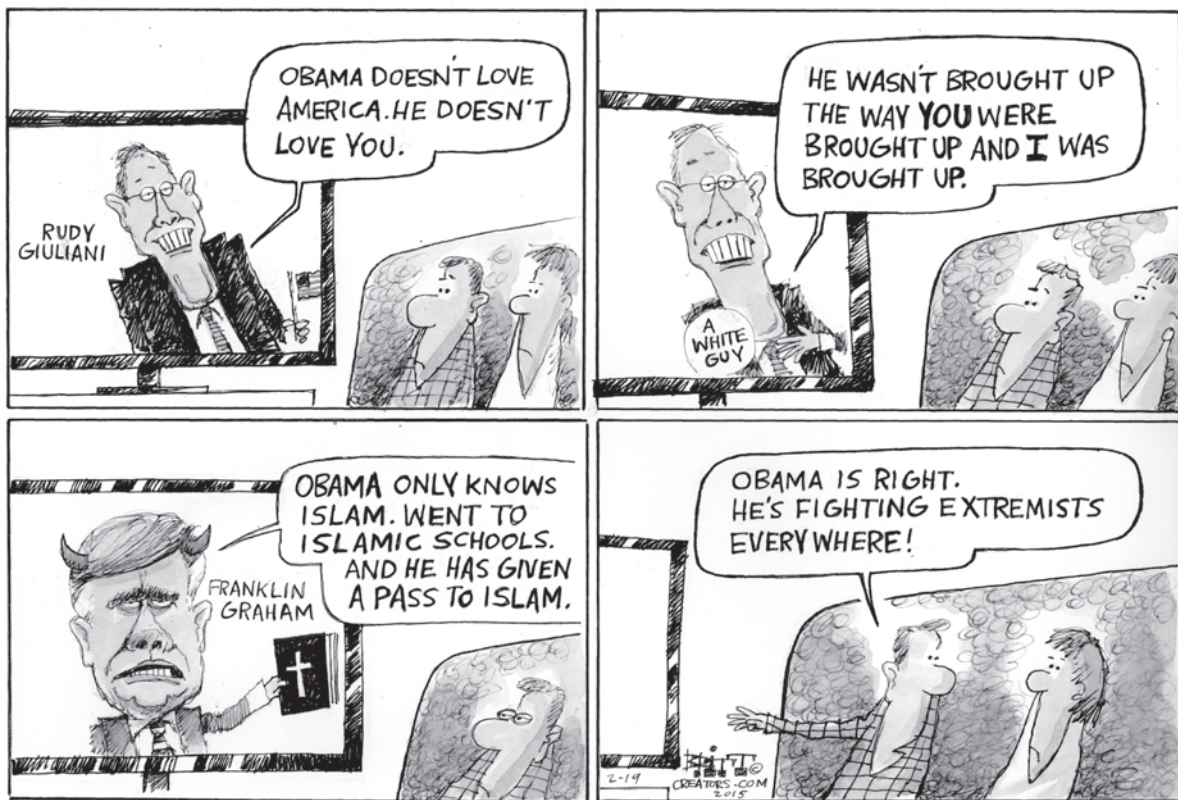
### Fairness and water

While I may lean more towards David Michalek's views towards Nestle regarding the water bottle industry in general (Viewpoint, Feb. 21) his statements on what Nestle is doing regarding "privatizing the public's water" create false perceptions around Oregon water law and the premise of western water law.

Under Oregon water law, the state and the people own all of the water in the state. It is granted for use for free for all users, mostly private. So for Mr. Michalek to attack one company for using the water legally for its intended purpose is to attack all private users of water in this state, including the farmers that grow our food, the other industries that make our products, and the breweries that brew our beer. The Oregon Water Resources Department does not discriminate over individual water users, as long as the water is being put to full and beneficial use as it was intended.

If Mr. Michalek chooses to discriminate, that is his choice, but I do not want my state to regulate and decide which private group, company or individual can have access to water. He does bring up an excellent point regarding charging for the use of water like oil. Again, you are playing a dangerous game in charging every private user (no discrimination allowed) the true value for water, which then creates significant issues for those less fortunate and poor.

Ryland Moore  
Hood River



### YOUNG VOICES

## Is the media killing our confidence?

By MADI WOFFORD  
HRVHS

From the time we are born, even before understanding what we are seeing, we are hit with a barrage of unrealistic and unattainable images. This is what is bred into our psyche in the media world we live in today.

The question is; how can a person's confidence not be killed in this generation? Everywhere you look, TV, movies, magazines, clothing ads, billboards, and even video games, are all littered with images of (mostly) women, who probably only 1 percent of us will ever look like in our lives. That leaves the other 99 percent of us feeling anything but perfect. Then, once you consider that the images we're looking at, of these perfect people, are photo shopped and retouched so they're even more perfect, it makes you realize that even the super models aren't good enough. The media is constantly retouching and photo shopping to create the image of what they see as perfect, hoping that everyone else buys into it, which we do. The more and more we buy into it, the worse we feel



Madi Wofford

about ourselves.

Considering the media is practically unavoidable these days, this is a social conflict teens and women will probably have to deal with for the rest of their lives. But who says "skin and bones" is perfect? Of course the fashion designers and magazine publishers want us to think that so we keep purchasing their products and they keep mak-

ing money. But what if we stopped buying into all this nonsense? We all know that these images are unrealistic, so why do we even bother feeling bad about it? I think it's time that we stopped feeling bad about ourselves and started feeling confident instead. I mean, ask any man; confidence is way more attractive than a ribcage sticking out of your sides. If we stop idolizing these photo shopped women and started idolizing ourselves instead, maybe society would finally see that "being perfect" isn't about the way you look on the outside, but the way you feel and act on the inside.

Madi Wofford, a junior at Hood River Valley High School, wrote this essay as part of Judy Miller's Wellness class. It was among a select number of projects Miller posts in the hallway outside her classroom. "Madi was working off of discussions we had about how our culture socializes us into gender roles and expectations. We also talked a lot about the increasing influence of both mainstream and social media in that socialization process," notes Miller, who also teaches Global Studies and Psychology.