

Hood River News

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Layers of Success

Local high schoolers set high standards in competitive endeavors

Not every success registers as a medal or trophy, and any success is best viewed as a work in progress.

Students in local high schools have demonstrated success, or are in the process of doing so, in a variety of endeavors, and a series of congratulations are in order.

Best of luck to the three Engineering program Robotics teams, including the all-freshman Transformers, who head to state this weekend.

The HRVHS boys basketball team brought excitement back to the program with its best record and first playoff appearance in more than a decade. Coach Steve Noteboom and his band of running, scrapping shooters filled the stands every week, thanks largely to their teamwork and tenacity and plenty of scoring to go with defense. Results of their Tuesday night playoff game were unavailable at presstime, but whatever the result, the 2014-15 season was a major success.

(Now, may the Horizon and HRVHS athletic directors and coaches see fit to making an Eagles v. Hawks pre-season game an annual tradition.)

HRV wrestler Jessica DeHart made school history with her fourth-straight 106-pound wrestling title. Jessica is not only an excellent athlete but one of the cadre of women wrestlers who have inspired many other females to try the sport, and excel. Congratulations also to state champions Payton Rigert (152) and Sarah Sullenger (113).

Christian Marquez (132) came up just short in his quest to repeat as men's state 5A champion, but the silver remains a real mark of merit, and Marquez deserves applause for his leadership and excellence throughout his wrestling career.

Then there are the perennially successful HRVHS ski and Hood River snowboard teams, which advance to state this weekend. Kudos to skiers Hannah Bergemann and Patrick Crompton, who took top honors in the Mt. Hood League (details on page A7).

Back on the subject of basketball: what can you say about Darrin Lingel and his Horizon Christian Hawks? Back in postseason for the sixth straight year, the team has the talent and confidence to win state for the second time (the Hawks did so in 2012). The undefeated squad glided past Triangle Lake in the play-in game on Friday but had to gut out a tight victory against South Wasco the previous week — probably the best thing that could have happened in terms of preparation for the state tournament.

In any event, congratulations go to the HCS program — the gold standard in Class 1A basketball. All the best as you head to Baker City to start your title quest tonight.

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@merkleysenate.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 Joinpl, 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 Zanniller, 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

Hood River City Manager — Steve Wheeler, Hood River City Hall, Hood River, OR, 97031. Phone: 541-387-5252.

Our readers write

Stop the spin

The New York Times newspaper just reported the latest White House spin/announcement/rule on illegal activity. They now say that illegal aliens/spouses are now called "Americans in waiting." They make it sound so hopeful. Let's go ahead and allow the law breakers to have equal footing with those I know that got their US citizenship lawfully. Keyword: Lawfully! The Times quote, "DHS estimates that in the first year, there may be nearly 180,000 spouses eligible to apply for employment authorization under this rule, with as many as 55,000 eligible annually in following years," the White House statement said.

"These women and men are Americans-in-waiting, whose families are often stuck for years in lengthy green card backlogs as a result of our broken immigration system. Allowing them to put their skills to use will reduce the strain on their families during that waiting time, and will yield significant benefits for our economy as well."

(www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/feb/25/white-house-calls-illegal-immigrants-americans-in-/.)

How specially worded. That means that the ISIS be-headers that slaughter Christians and Muslims should now be called, "Practicing Surgical Amputee Interns" and that bank robbers must now be called, "Early Principal Withdrawal Advocates." What next?

Scott Haanstad
Hood River

encourage the city of Hood River to implement cans for parking tickets for one month a year. Everyone can help end childhood hunger.

Mary Jensen
Hood River

Cans for tickets

Recently there has been a widespread campaign on childhood hunger in Oregon. Even in our community, the problem strongly exists.

According to The United States Census, 11.6 percent of our town are below the poverty level. In Hood River County, schools provided 50-70 percent of their kids to free and reduced lunch.

Recently, I saw a great idea that a town in Minnesota is doing to fight hunger. For the month of March, you pay for your parking ticket in cans of food. The town of Stillwater asks these residents to bring in 10 cans of food instead of paying the \$15 ticket. Who wouldn't want to pay for their violation in kindness?

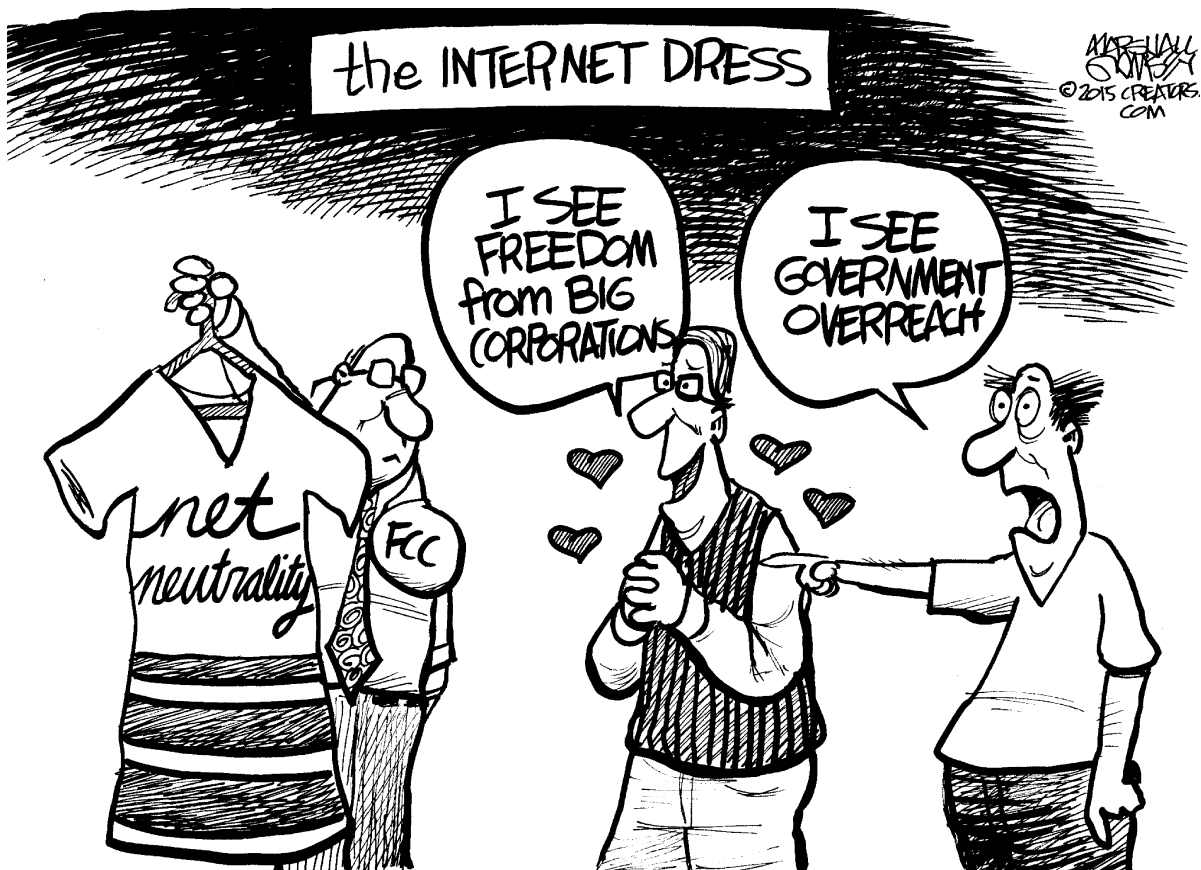
As a community, we need to help keep the food shelves stocked. Please

Offer incentives

To encourage conversation, this is an additional response to "Charge for that carbon." I agree with Don Rose, MD, that a Carbon Tax is not the solution, at least not right now. Taxes seem acceptable as a last resort. If the state and federal governments would work together to either offer tax breaks or grant incentives for companies and people, then maybe additional income could be generated to counter carbon footprints.

How about an earmark for a grant fund reserved for companies that prove they counter their carbon footprint? Or what about a small tax credit for people who can show they erase their carbon footprint? This incentive-mindedness might work in some cases. But if options of this ilk are unavailable, everything stays stuck at the conversation level.

Mike Teems Jr
Parkdale



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Tumbling 10th grader takes down teachers in true test of twisters

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
News editor

A Sunday cartoon resonated with me, following a fun event on Friday night.

Each year for five years I've organized and emceed the Tongue Twister Tournament for Start Making A Reader Today. Community members, including as of this year, students, compete to be Tongue Twister world champion. The tournament took place in the ballroom of Hood River Hotel, and though I know I am biased, it was a great deal of fun.

"It felt good to laugh that much," said my good friend, and longtime SMART supporter, Don Benton, when we talked at Dog River on Monday.

The cartoon in question depicted a man stuck in a life raft with "the world's most annoying animal," a rodent who keeps saying, "... and that's how much wood I would chuck ..." The woodchuck would classic would figure critically in the night's outcome.

Plenty of classic and new TTs, as we call them, filled the room (space donated by Hood River Hotel) and we raised nearly \$7,000 on the night, thanks mostly to sponsors. (We'll have a full rundown in an upcoming Neighbors column.) TTT is all about funny phrases and twisted tongues, but the event is underlined by a clear and serious need — helping young children develop their reading skills and a love of reading.

For the second year, a high school student won. As Noah Tauscher learned, and Bruce Ludwig can attest, no TTT defending champion has ever gotten past the first round. Ludwig served as judge this year, along with Terry Browning of the state SMART board, and the Hon. Karen Ostrye of Seventh Circuit Court — our Annual Actual Judge.

Dan Goldman won the educators' division and Morgan Graves, an HRVHS sophomore, the student division, and Morgan edged Goldman, the school superintendent in the final round. Along the way, Graves and Sierra Lavoie of Parkdale and other contestants did splits and cartwheels, and Tauscher got into the act with a handstand. Runner-

up Heather Laurance of New Vision School tumbled, and revealed a spangled red-and-black "I Love Tongue Twisters" shirt, and Jennifer Graves (Wy'east teacher and Morgan's mom) schmoozed the judges with some unabashed flattery. Student contestants Kelsey Stewart of Wy'east and Sean Cuihan — the runner-up — brought their own flavor to the event in which contestants were judged on speed, accuracy, and style.



Morgan Graves

Goldman and Morgan Graves prevailed to make it to the final round, where Goldman took first choice among three categories, and he took "Dr. Seuss."

Dan and Morgan then engaged: "You know, I have a kindergartner," Dan said.

I then pointed out that Morgan has two younger siblings.

"Raised on Dr. Seuss!" Jennifer Graves called out.

Dan gave a playful slump and put his head in his hands — but he and Morgan both proceeded to ace their Dr. Seuss twisters, both from the beloved "Fox in Socks" book. This was proving to be our closest TTT finish yet.

Picking blind from two remaining entries, he chose "WWW" No. 2 — then learned it was the wood chuck one. Long version: "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood? He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would if a woodchuck could chuck wood."

"Too easy!" the crowd murmured, and Morgan looked at me with daggers. "Seriously?" she asked.

When the little mutiny subsided, I said, "Let's hear him do it."

Dan was quick out of the gates, but — halfway through his jaws locked up on all those Ws and hard consonants; the devil is in those details. Dan let out a groan, shared by the crowd; there are no good guys or bad guys in Tongue Twister.

Morgan asked to do the same one, and spun through it flawlessly.

Her strategy probably paid off. For, though adept as she is, the other WWW entry was shorter but harder: "Who washed Washington's

white woolen underwear when Washington's washerwoman went west? Which whites are washed?"

Anyway, since the final score was the aggregate of four twisters done on the night, it was not immediately clear who the winner would be but Morgan seemed to have the edge, and that was borne out when tabulator Carolyn Van Orden revealed the final scores. Dan won a restaurant gift certificate and Morgan won a box full of games, chocolate, and gift cards.

Thanks go to the rest of the contestants, and parents, including May Street teacher T Dalbey, and Rich Polkinghorn, HRVHS principal.

In 2016 we will definitely invite students to compete again. Between skilled navigation of the twisters, the trading barbs with the superintendent, and the tumbling (three Ts!) the students represented the younger generation with grace and, well, style. (With all the gymnastics, it's tempting to rename it "Tongue Tumbling Tournament.")

All were accomplished with words: Sean as 2014 co-champion in the State Spelling Competition, Kelsey with acting experience including this year's Pinocchio at Wy'east, Sierra with her recent run as Dorothy in the Missoula Children's Theater "Wizard of Oz" production, and Tauscher with his long resume of acting and singing roles at HRVHS and his original song "Blame Game," now out on YouTube.

And, when asked if any of the students had ever done anything like Tongue Twister Tournament before, Noah raised his hand and said, "Yes, last year's tournament!"

I like to think that the TTT is part of the local cultural landscape now. We've had 56 community members invited to compete over the first five years, and it gives each a chance to share a little something about their lives and things that drive them.

It's the one time when it's okay to be tongue-tied, because it means more books, and more reading, for kids who will grow up to read, comprehend and appreciate the language for all its twists, turns, and tumbles.