

## Hood River News

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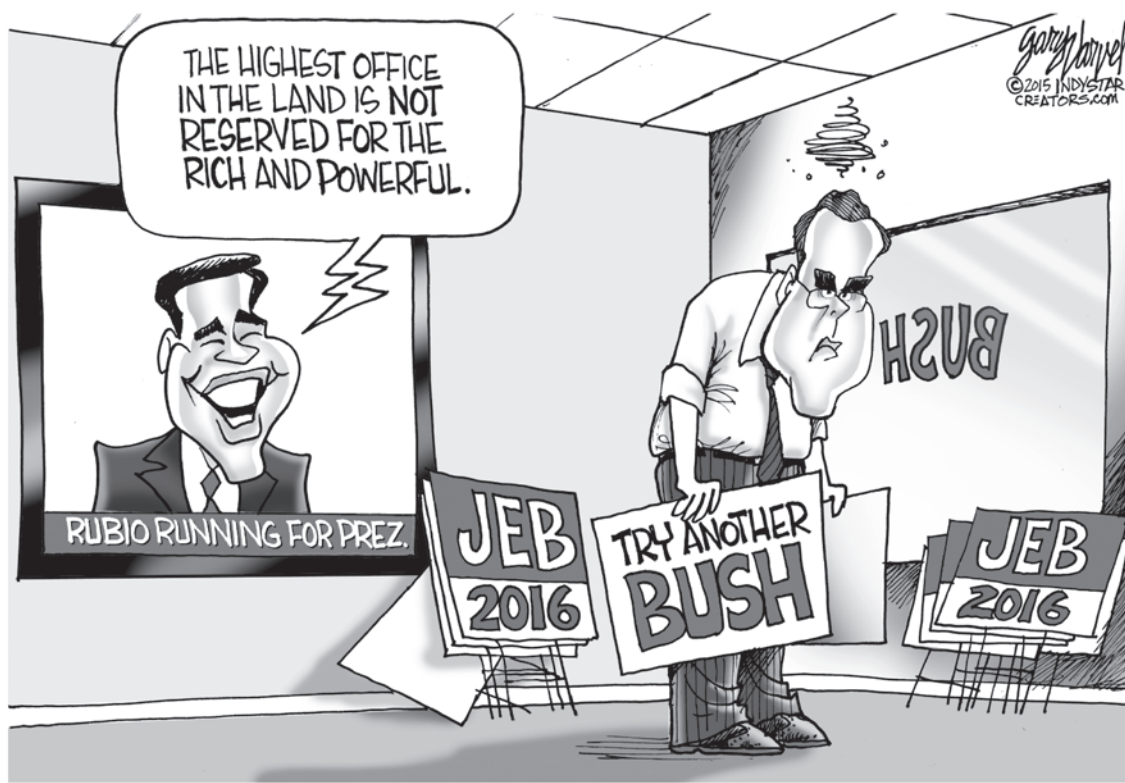
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## Our readers write

### CGCC is a 'sinking ship'

These are dreary, dismal times at Columbia Gorge Community College. With a \$2.4 million budget shortfall created by the college's current leadership, there is a pervasive sense of mistrust and low morale among much of the faculty/staff of CGCC. This has led to the voluntary departure of numerous staff over recent months which, along with rolling layoffs and a hiring freeze, has resulted in a critical staff shortage, with crucial tasks now falling by the wayside. Remaining staff members are being stretched to fill voids for which they may have little training or expertise. Sadly, it is the students themselves who stand to suffer most from this tragedy, with reduced course offerings and diminished services available to them.

It's frustrating that CGCC's Board of Education has repeatedly chosen to ignore the many complaints lodged by students, staff and faculty over recent years, despite continued mismanagement attributed to current college leadership. I have attended several board meetings, and with the exception of Stu Watson, it often seems that the other members are totally disengaged, indifferent — SOME EVEN SLEEPING — as they just blithely rubber-stamp leadership proposals. It is just such passivity to CGCC's reality that has led to the college's current abysmal financial situation. This ineptness on the part of the Board is devastating to CGCC's

future and is an egregious injustice to CGCC's students.

After 11 years working at the front counter of the Hood River Campus, I am one of five CGCC employees this month choosing to voluntarily leave this sinking ship, because the college's future appears murky, the leadership's intentions are questionable, and the board itself remains dispassionate about employee concerns. Mine wasn't a decision made lightly, as CGCC's faculty are top-notch, my co-workers are like family, and CGCC's students repeatedly inspired me with their tenacity, perseverance and friendship. It is for the students especially that I submit this letter, in hopes that CGCC might be navigated upon a more cogent course, with fresh leadership, a tenable vision, and bolder, more vibrant board members.

**Lynne Davidson**  
Hood River

### Testimony flawed

This letter addresses a story from staff writer Patrick Mulvihill (March 18) regarding Dr. Bonnie New's proposed firearms control and a commentary from Kevin Herman (March 25). Kudos to Herman for his clarification of the facts.

New's solution for violent crime does not address the fact that many of the homicides in Oregon were gang-related. Would gun registration solve that situation? Of course not! And how many of those were committed

under the influence of drugs? While that does not legitimize the mortality, it puts a good part of the blame where it belongs. Those who try to advance gun control by presenting lies and twisted impressions must assume people are dumb enough to believe their misconceptions.

It's sad that some journalists perpetuate this garbage.

Dr. New, as a physician, ought to know that compared to guns many more deaths occur each year in the U.S. as a direct result of preventable medical mistakes. As published by respected medical reports, nearly 400,000 medical mistake deaths occur each year. In addition, there are 10,000 serious complication cases resulting from medical errors each day! The medical mistake deaths is the third highest mortality rate after heart disease and cancer, far greater than traffic accidents and homicides (including suicides) combined. Dr. New ought to consider putting the medical house in order before attempting to put in place unrealistic restrictions that do nothing to reduce violent crime.

I have stated publicly before that a gun is an inanimate object completely incapable of any action until the human element is introduced. It's like blaming vehicles for highway mortality.

Society's concern should be with the people committing the atrocities.

We need to address the revolving door judicial system that puts the mentally disturbed and criminally insane right back out on to the streets.

It's not about gun control but peo-

ple control.

Where would America, the freest nation on earth, be today if the people had no means of defense and offense?

Come on, America, wake up and smell the poison!

**Lance Beckman**  
White Salmon

### Climate thoughts

Shifting views on climate change have a majority of Republicans wanting action to reduce greenhouse gases. Politicians, businesses and even conservative advocacy groups are slowly moving from climate denial to reluctant acceptance. As climate related costs mount, voter demands for action will increase until they reach a tipping point. The question is whether that tipping point comes before we see irreparable harm.

Republican administrations were instrumental in creating the EPA, passing the Clean Air Act and implementing emission trading to reduce acid rain. Conservatives have an important voice in forwarding market-based solutions that minimize economic disruption while making polluters responsible for their actions. They offer a needed counterpoint to climate activists.

Continuing opposition to climate action has less to do with a lack of facts than a lack of imagination and courage in proposing solutions reflecting conservative values. Instead

of operating at the behest of the fossil fuel industry, Republicans should offer a climate agenda based on their own ideas, e.g. eliminating market distorting subsidies, a revenue-neutral carbon tax and rebate system, carbon cap and trade legislation, support for nuclear power and funding for carbon sequestration and clean coal technology.

Without Republican support there is little hope for timely action. The sooner conservatives become a part of the solution the better we all will be.

**Richard Davis**  
The Dalles

### 'Strikes again'

Nestlé strikes again with the same tactics they've always used. You can't con me into thinking Governor Brown's office, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the short sighted government of Cascade Locks haven't been bought. Among other things they've been offered the time honored bait of jobs and increased tax revenues and they've jumped on it like a fish on a fly. Nestlé is just reeling them in. The hell with the public good, our children's future, our water supply and the environmental health and quality of life in the Gorge. And on top of this, parts of the state are under a drought and the rest of us are looking at possible drought and water shortages this summer.

Follow the money!

**Jerry Giarrapuo**  
Hood River

### ANOTHER VOICE

## Protecting children from abuse and neglect – an Oregon perspective

By SEN. RON WYDEN

Protecting our children from all of life's ills, and especially from abuse and neglect, is perhaps our single most important responsibility as adults. There should be no controversy in that statement, no partisanship or disagreement.

And yet, the sad truth remains that too many children in Oregon and across the country are dying from abuse and neglect despite hard work to prevent those tragedies and efforts to understand why they happen.

That reality will be in the forefront in Portland this week when a federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities meets to hear ideas from local, state and federal officials for better protecting our kids.

The Commission was created after Congress passed the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012 to bring new perspective, insight and tools for preventing abuse and neglect. That work will form the basis for a report to be submitted to the President and Congress detailing specific recommendations for strategies to better protecting children from abuse and neglect.

To achieve those goals we must identify which children are most at risk. In 2013, 10 children died in Oregon from abuse or neglect. Seven of

these children were 5 years old or younger; five were younger than one year old. No child was in child protective services (CPS) custody at the time of death, and there were no children who had a referral to CPS within the last year. Several common risk factors were identified in these fatalities, including drug use by adults.

So how do we ensure the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable children and what is the appropriate role of the child welfare "system"?

The answer lies in identifying at-risk children earlier, engaging families, and using a multidisciplinary approach. Increasingly, experts understand there is a much larger community of agencies, beyond CPS, that know about a child's risk for abuse and neglect. Law enforcement, domestic violence services, mental health professionals, primary care and emergency room physicians, the judiciary, teachers and school counselors — each can potentially signal early warnings of children at risk. Effectively preventing fatalities requires a broader, more coordinated response across the social service system. We need to build bridges across systems and create a comprehen-

sive child welfare system that is more than just CPS. The goal is to have a fully collaborative approach that provides the earliest possible warning and most effective response.

That's what we're doing in Oregon — working hard to bring a multidisciplinary approach to how we collect data on fatalities and improving our process in understanding it

so decisions are made faster and reaction is more focused and effective. Oregon's State Child Fatality Review Team includes a wide variety of partners, including CPS, public health, law enforcement, physicians, district attorneys, medical examiners, paramedics, and community health nurses, to name a few.

In addition to co-chairing the State Child Fatality Review Team twice per year, the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Health Authority also work together to implement prevention strategies throughout the year. In 2014, this heightened partnership fostered the implementation of an

existing federal child fatality electronic data system that improves child fatalities data collection with the goal of improving prevention and intervention.

As part of Medicaid, the state/federal health care program for low-income people, Oregon has established a system of Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs), which integrate physical, mental and behavioral health. Oregon's CCOs are working to align services across systems in order to address the long-term health of children and families.

Another important advance is the Oregon Safety Model (OSM) used by CPS. This model requires a investigation of an incident; it requires a comprehensive assessment in every case to ensure child safety at all stages of a family's involvement with CPS. The program is driven by a belief that we all embrace — safety is a fundamental right of every child in Oregon.

That belief was the catalyst in 2008 for Karly's Law, named after a 3-year-old girl who died from abuse despite multiple investigations of abuse allegations conducted by state child welfare staff and law enforcement, and despite significant physical evidence. The law mandates that children with suspicious injuries receive medical attention from a des-

ignated child abuse medical professional within 48 hours. Since 2008, Karly's Law has helped thousands of Oregon children receive medical evaluations and care related to suspected abuse.

Parents are part of the effort too. Programs that offer advice on best practices in parenting are promoted statewide with community partners such as Circle of Security, Healthy Start-Healthy Families, Nurse-Family Partnership of Oregon and others. All of them provide curriculum and home visitation programs, relief nurseries and other services that help parents develop the skills and supports they need to adequately care for their children. These programs are showing particular promise and just last week, Oregon received \$10.8 million in federal grant funding to expand evidence-based home visiting services to women during pregnancy and to parents with young children, a program made possible by the Affordable Care Act.

All of these steps, including improved data tracking, identification of at-risk children, development of prevention strategies, implementation of trauma-informed care, replication of best practices, coordination across multiple agencies and targeted investments, can help us fulfill our most important responsibility — protecting vulnerable children from abuse and neglect.



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