

Hood River News

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Earth Day 2015

Our readers write

Green acts count

This is Earth Day, though plenty has happened last weekend and will happen this weekend as the greater Gorge community rallies around the need to conserve, reduce, and help the earth recover.

As Earth Day Network notes, April 22 marks the anniversary of what many consider the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.

“The height of hippie and flower-child culture in the United States, 1970 brought the death of Jimi Hendrix, the last Beatles album, and Simon & Garfunkel’s ‘Bridge Over Troubled Water.’ Protest was the order of the day, but saving the planet was not the cause. War raged in Vietnam, and students nationwide increasingly opposed it.

“At the time, Americans were slurping leaded gas through massive V8 sedans. Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of legal consequences or bad press. Air pollution was commonly accepted as the smell of prosperity. ‘Environment’ was a word that appeared more often in spelling bees than on the evening news. Although mainstream America remained oblivious to environmental concerns, the stage had been set for change by the publication of Rachel Carson’s New York Times best-seller ‘Silent Spring’ in 1962. The book represented a watershed moment for the modern environmental movement, selling more than 500,000 copies in 24 countries and, up until that moment, more than any other person, Carson raised public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment and public health.

“Earth Day 1970 capitalized on the emerging consciousness, channeling the energy of the anti-war protest movement and putting environmental concerns front and center.”

More terms unknown in 1970 were global warming, climate change, carbon footprint, and oil and coal trains. Carbon was something put to use in a sheet of copy paper placed in a typewriter. People don’t use typewriters anymore, but computers and their email and research functions are a new tool for individuals to respond to environmental challenges, even when businesses or industries might not.

The Earth Day Network (earthday.org) sponsors a variety of global programs including “1.5 billion acts of green,” with the goal of reaching that number by Earth Day. As of Tuesday morning that was 1,123,953,624.

Events this week in Hood River County give opportunities to each of us as individuals to add to the green count. Creating a species tribute for Saturday’s Procession is one. Helping with Saturday’s waterfront cleanup is another. Investing in a composting bin via Tri-County Hazardous Waste and Recycling is another. (Go to tricityrecycle.com for details on plenty of green practices.)

Every time you walk instead of drive, or hang up the laundry instead of running the dryer, you do something green. Specific to fruit-laden Hood River valley, very time you invest in backyard trees that do not attract fruit-damaging codling moth you support local orchardists’ efforts to keep pesticides off the trees. If you are thinking of planting trees this spring and you live anywhere near an orchard, it’s a good thing to think about. Call Master Gardeners at OSU Extension Service to learn more about healthy horticultural options.

After all, what is more of a “green act” than planting a tree?

Happy Earth Day.

ON THE AGENDA

City of Hood River’s buildable lands and affordable housing committee meets at 3:30 p.m. on April 28, to review a consultant’s report which indicates, among other findings, that 190 vacation rentals and 140 second homes exist inside city limits.

These are the regular meeting times of governing bodies for these agencies:

Cascade Locks

Cascade Locks City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 140 W. WaNaPa St., second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Cascade Locks Planning Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 140 W. WaNaPa St., second Thursday of the month.

Cascade Locks Port Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 140 W. WaNaPa St., first and third Thursdays of the month.

Hood River

City of Hood River Planning Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., Hood River City Hall Council Chambers, 211 Second St., generally the first and third Mondays of the month. Place and dates subject to change.

Hood River Port Commission, 5 p.m., 100 E. Port Marina Drive, board room, first and third Tuesdays of the month.

Hood River City Council, 6 p.m., Hood River City Hall Council Chambers, 211 Second St., second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors meeting, 4 p.m., OSU Extension Service Building, 2990 Experiment Station Road, first Thursday of the month.

Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District, 6 p.m., Aquatic Center, 1601 May St., third Wednesday of the month. Place subject to change.

Hood River County

Hood River County Board of Commissioners regular session, 6 p.m., 601 State St., first floor conference room, third Monday of the month. Time subject to change.

Library District Board meeting, 7 p.m., 502 State St., conference room, third Tuesday of the month.

Hood River County Planning Commission meeting, 7 p.m., 601 State St., first floor, generally second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Water concerns

I am deeply concerned about Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s decision to approve the water rights swap in Cascade Locks (Hood River News, April 15). This illustrates a total disregard for the public’s concern and opposition. It is unacceptable to throw out public interest and review.

When did state agencies start taking a role in making public water available for corporate profit? This swap does not benefit ODFW or the public, which makes it a completely irresponsible decision. It is a time of drought, with over five Oregon Counties labeled “drought emergencies.” Right now Nestlé continues to pump massive amounts of water out of Sacramento and other parts of California during one of California’s worst droughts in history.

Governor Brown needs to take the lead here (since the state agency won’t) and protect Oregon’s water today and for future generations.

Pamela Larsen
Hood River

For Reitz

Reitz is right for Position One. As an active parent volunteer in the Hood River Valley School District for 14 years, I am very appreciative of the hard work that the school board does to help manage the district on a volunteer basis. Thank you very much, Liz Whitmore, for your eight years of important service as you step down from your position on the board this spring. Filling your shoes will be difficult, but I strongly encourage the community to vote for Chris Reitz in Position One in the Westside area. She has given many hours over the years in several voluntary roles as a Westside Elementary PTO and site council member and as a board member for two child-related services in the community. From being a co-founder of the Gorge Kids Triathlon to working at the Hood River Warming Shelter, she has a range of experiences that will help her objectively assist the school board with their many difficult decisions and challenges that they face in considering what is best for each child in our school district. I believe she works hard in an objective way to gather information and talk to people before giving an opinion and would be a real asset to the Hood River School Board both as a parent and a community member. Please join me in voting for Chris Reitz this May.

Theo Parkinson
Hood River

For Wilhelm

My kids are grown, but as a grandparent and lifetime resident of Hood River, I am concerned about our schools. That’s why I am supporting a different kind of candidate for HRCSD Board, Kris Wilhelm, running for Position 1, Westside Hood River and Cascade Locks.

You can bet Kris will vote first and foremost with what’s best for the kids, not the interest of state and federal government.

As a taxpayer, I know Kris will also represent me, and make wise use of

the limited funds that is given to the schools.

Kris will listen, weigh all facts, and will boldly vote for what’s right. She cannot be swayed on principal. She is willing to come to the table with an open mind, and again, vote for what’s best for kids, teachers and taxpayers.

Please join me in marking your ballot for Kris Wilhelm for school board in the May 19 election.

Linda Hutson
Hood River

‘IRS’ scam

I would like to remind readers to be on the alert for scam calls and emails, falsely claiming to be from the IRS, urging the home owner to respond immediately in order to avoid the IRS “taking action” against them. I received two such calls today — April 15 — and no doubt I am not the only one. Such communications can be very distressing, particularly to the elderly who are the frequent targets of such scams.

Please be vigilant, and don’t let yourself or your loved ones fall victim to these predators.

Faith Keolker
Hood River

Re-elect Watson

Re CGCC Board of Directors Election in May:

I want to express my thanks to Stu Watson who, as the only member of the Columbia Gorge Community College Board of Directors had the courage to ask President Toda to resign due to his demonstrated incompetence, as the President of the institution.

President Toda has approached the severe financial budget shortfall as a “Pollyanna,” hoping that funding will appear out of thin air. Not taking corrective action long before the crisis developed was beyond his abilities.

Think about the knee jerk reaction that President Toda made, when “out of the blue” he announced the Hood River Campus would be closed this summer.

He has ignored all of the impending signs of a large budget deficit and the vote of no confidence by more than 40 members of the faculty staff in a signed letter to President Toda in the summer of 2013 speaks volumes.

I urge all eligible voters in Hood River County to cast their vote and re-elect Stu Watson as a responsible member of the BOD. Stu has been the only voice on the CGCC BOD who has raised the budget shortfall alarm long before it became a crisis.

Stu has earned my vote. I urge you to vote for Stu Watson too.

Dale Nicol
Hood River

Blast zone march

On Thursday, April 23, from noon to 1 p.m., there will be a march near the BNSF RR tracks in Bingen, Wash., to protest having to share the Columbia Gorge with potentially exploding oil trains. Nineteen oil unit trains per week travel on the BSNF RR putting

the entire Columbia Gorge at risk for a catastrophic oil train fire or an oil spill into the river. On the Oregon side Union Pacific RR is shipping seven to ten trains monthly of Canadian tar sands oil through the Gorge which has recently been found to be as explosive as the Bakken crude. A tar sands oil spill into the Columbia River would be next to impossible to clean up because it sinks instead of floating like Bakken oil.

To participate in the march, meet at Daubenspeck Park in Bingen around noon. Make our own sign if you care to. There will be some pizza available or bring a sack lunch. The march will be less than a mile and start at 12:20 and conclude by 12:45 p.m. Please show your concern over this issue by joining us on Thursday.

Peter Cornelison
Friends of the
Columbia Gorge
Hood River

Protect water

If Oregon had a state-owned bank like North Dakota has, instead of outsourcing our revenues to the big banks, our state bank could put up the capital for a water bottling plant that would be publicly owned and controlled. After meeting all of Cascade Locks needs for improved infrastructure, instead of outsourcing the profits from Oregonian’s water to a multinational corporation, Oregonians could receive a dividend like Alaskans do from their oil revenue.

Oregon protects farm and forest land; its waters should be protected as well.

I am not in favor of bottling water in plastic and shipping it all over. I am opposed to digging up the last dregs of fossil fuels and burning them as fast as possible. We should be very, very carefully proceeding with the resources that are left, with great respect for our only home and all future generations.

Karen Harding
Mt. Hood

Natural disconnect

A man once told me about his village in New Mexico, where his people continue to collect water from the nearby river each day for their needs. He explained that it wasn’t their lack of appreciation for technologies that would have brought running water from pipes and faucets into their homes that motivated them. Rather it was their intention to remember daily their direct connection to their water source. They have found that with this remembrance in place they are better stewards and protectors of that source.

Nestlé’s desire to bottle Oxbow Spring water in Cascade Locks is an excellent example of our disconnection from a precious natural, publicly owned resource. The Swiss multinational corporation’s recent move to convince Oregon to trade some of its legal rights to the spring thereby bypassing processes evaluating any negative impact on the public only serves the interests of corporate profit, not

Please see LETTERS, Page A5

Victim’s name release was a mistake not to be repeated

Last week the Hood River News did something that should not have happened: we published the name of a victim of a felony abuse crime.

Publication of the name was our mistake and we apologize for that mistake.

It is the policy of the Hood River News NOT to publish names of victims of rape and abuse crimes. Though the article was based on an open court proceeding, the name should never have been printed, and the Hood River News will en-

sure that it does not happen again.

We recognize how deeply this affects the victim and family, as well as the agencies involved in victim representation, enforcement, investigation and prosecution.

The primary concern is for the safety and emotional and physical welfare of the victim. In addition, the Hood River News would never intentionally do anything to impede the proper administration of justice. The staff of the Hood

River News has reviewed the situation and how its own policy was violated, and will use this process to prevent any repeat.

The reporting of crimes and committed participation by victims is critical to efforts to prosecute those responsible for rape and abuse crimes. Despite the recent error, we assure community members that the essential privacy between victim and those responding will be respected in the future.

— Joe Petshow, Publisher