

Hood River News

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The '15 for 15'

This challenge helps our grads

The concept is a simple one: "The 15 for 15 Challenge" is on, thanks to the folks behind Project Graduation 2015. If you're not familiar with it, the program is also known as "graduation party," where parents and other volunteers, including some teachers, coordinate a safe party for the graduates who will get their diplomas June 5.

Hood River Elks donates the building and kids gather for games, food, music and dancing, casino, and plenty more.

But it takes organization and it takes donations, of gifts as well as prizes.

Enter "15 for 15," as in \$15 for the Class of 2015.

Organizers hope to see many residents make a donation of \$15 or more, to create the most-memorable event possible, that the Class of 2015 might celebrate in style.

It's a small amount that can help in a big way.

Where do you get that \$15? Here's some tips:

- Skip the lattes or margaritas a couple times on your summer vacation;
- Go with chicken or burgers instead of steak for those first summer barbecues;
- Buy the souvenir t-shirt (\$17) instead of the hoodie (\$32) on your beach trip;
- This summer, water your lawn in the morning or not as often — it's something we should do for conservation purposes, and you'll see your water bill go down at the same time.

Project Graduation is one of those long-standing traditions that distinguishes this community. Each year, one set of parents pulls off a great party and passes the knowledge and operations savvy to the next set of organizers. Each year from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. after the graduation ceremony (itself always a rich and poignant event), more than 200 young people have a safe place to hang out and party in a safe manner with their friends before they go their own ways.

"15 for 15" is a challenge worth accepting. Please support Project Graduation by sending your donations to 1767 12th St., No. 178, Hood River, OR 97031.

If you have ideas or wish to make in-kind gifts, contact Melissa DelCarpine of the committee at delcarpineautomotive@gmail.com.

The students more or less know what to expect, but surprises are always in store, and all it takes is one idea or unique gift to create a major memory for young people as they conclude their educational experience in Hood River County Schools.

Flags Lowered

Cpl. Ben Lee Brown

Governor Kate Brown ordered all flags at public institutions be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on May 18, 2015, in honor of an Oregon soldier killed during the Korean War whose remains were only recently identified.

The remains of Cpl. Ben Lee Brown, an Oregon soldier killed in Korea in 1951, were laid to rest on Monday at the Roseburg National Cemetery with full military honors. Cpl. Brown was killed in action just seven days after the 17-year-old Southern Oregonian was deployed, in one of the bloodiest battles of the Korean War.

Cpl. Brown's remains were returned to the United States in 1993, along with hundreds of other soldiers' remains, and since that time, scientists have been working to match DNA from the remains of thousands of service members with that of their families.

Our readers write

Vote Kopecky

Please vote for Becky Kopecky for Position 6 for the Columbia Gorge Community College Board of Directors. She will get my vote. I've known Becky in the days when I was a volunteer at the Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital for 15 years down there. Becky is a passionate person and caring person, with lots of experience and is a dedicated, smart, thoughtful person as a director of Nursing at the Providence hospital. Becky makes an ideal candidate so please vote for her.

Pam Smiley
Hood River

America in decline

I truly believe there are four things driving the United States into becoming a second class nation. Those four things are: the banking industry, Wall Street, the regressive Supreme Court majority and a Congress too bought and unwilling to do anything about the course this nation is on. Deregulation of banking brought us one catastrophic economic disaster and is determined to do it again. "Too Big to Fail" should be become "Too Big to Exist." Big banks should be broken up just as Ma Bell was years ago. Usury laws need to be reinstated. No part of the banking industry should be allowed to charge interest rates that used to put people in jail.

Wall Street is the world's biggest casino and, as with all casinos, things are rigged for the house. Too much value is given to its ups and downs by our elected officials. The average citizen has little or no investment in the trading market except when their retirement programs are trashed by stupid, greedy practices on Wall Street. Too much trust is given to the Market as a guiding factor in the lives of 95 percent of Americans.

The Supreme Court majority has abandoned our constitution of the people, by the people and for the people. They are acting as though our forefathers wrote a constitution of the corporatist, by the corporatist, for

the corporatist. Their decisions have killed the American Dream that says if you work hard and play fair, you can better your position in life. No corporation has ever registered to vote, no dollar bill has ever cast a ballot yet the conservative majority has granted humanity to both.

Too many of our elected officials are so bought and paid for by big business and big money they dare not write laws to reign in the rampant greed of their contributing employers. Self-regulation of capitalism is an oxymoron. Government regulations need to be reinstated to give an even playing field for the average U. S. citizen. If things don't change, there is no hope for the middle class and low income families are just out of luck.

Gary Fields
Hood River

Taglines

"I'm not a crook." — Richard Nixon
"Read my lips: no new taxes." — George Bush

"We still seek no wider war." — Lyndon Johnson

"I'm not a cheater." — Tom Brady
Jerry Giarraputo
Hood River

HRCSD budget clarity

For Joe O'Neill (May 16 letters) and anyone else interested in the HRCSD budget, I am providing some factual data. Note that school board budget meetings were announced more than a month in advance, included public comment opportunity, and a great place to learn all you could want to know and more.

The district also presented multiple "listening sessions" for public input.

As reported by the Open Books Project, HRCSD ranks above the Oregon average for percentage of dollars spent in teaching and student resources and below the state average for percentage of dollars spent on the "Central Office," and below for percentage spent on "Principal's Office" (HRCSD's leading performance is even more pronounced when viewed

on a district by district basis). Note that our state is in the bottom ranks of percentage spend on K-12 compared to other states, but HRCSD outpaces our State in graduation rates.

Each line item of the more than 65-page HRCSD budget has a reference number. For example, the \$3.8M for care/upkeep of buildings (required 12-months / year) is line item 2542 on summary Page C-8.

The details of that same line item 2542 are then provided in the detail section Page C-40. The budget organization along with many details were explained at the public budget meetings, but I am happy to provide this info here as well.

School board meetings are open to the public, and generally every other Wednesday evening (see HRCSD website). Joe or anyone interested should stop by, ask your questions, and it may take a few days, but you will receive factual answers. While you're there, maybe you'll be lucky enough to see a presentation from the AVID kids, or the Debate Team, or even the Battle of the Books team (just a few of the long list of HRCSD winners that include "support staff" the May 16 letter questioned).

Rich Truax
HRCSD Budget Committee
Member
Hood River

'Review every aspect'

Approval by the Water Resources Department of the proposed cross transfer of water rights between the City of Cascade Locks and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will benefit the community and enhance Oxbow hatchery fish production. Approval is an important step in our evaluation of Nestlé Waters' proposed bottling plant, but much remains to be done before any final agreement is reached. City and Port of Cascade Locks officials must carefully review every aspect of the project to ensure it will benefit the people of Cascade Locks.

Gordon Zimmerman
City Administrator
Cascade Locks



RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU NOW THINK THE IRAQ WAR WAS A GOOD IDEA



ANOTHER VOICE

Partnerships focus on ensuring youth are safe and successful

By **MATT ENGLISH**

Over the last two and a half years, I have had the distinct honor of being part of a group of dedicated community volunteers and partners focusing on one common goal, the well being of the children in our community. In that time, an incredible amount of work has been done and milestones achieved. Through funding provided Casey Family Programs and a series of grants, the Keeping Families Together (KFT) initiative has focused their attention on several areas that have the most substantial impact on the success of youth in our community. Additionally, some common sense, easily achievable practices and resources that parents can implement and access, have been identified.

A parent's involvement with their child's education will promote their success both in school and later in life. Activities such as volunteering in the classroom and participating in school events, as well as meetings, can have a markable impact. One of the keys to success and a topic that has garnered a lot of attention by KFT is attendance. Parents should set high expectations

for their students, support and communicate with staff, and ensure their child is attending school regularly.

Raising kids and parenting is tough, fortunately, through KFT and several partner agencies, there is help. Parenting classes such as the Incredible Years offered

through the Next Door, Inc., provide tools to parents to assist their children in school. The program curriculum is directly tied to the benefits of education and give parents skills to help kids achieve in school.

One of the goals of KFT is to make parent education a community norm. As a result, these classes are offered to all of the community and are available to anyone regardless of education, skill or socioeconomic status. The programs also address identified risk factors that can be detrimental to success such as, early and persistent behavior problems, family management, and family conflict.

Keeping Families Together has committed to providing access to programs in a myriad of ways to include bringing services to parents through home visiting programs such as the Home Visiting Connection. Accessed through the Hood

River County Health Department and serving families with children 0 to 21 years old, the Home Visiting Connection can start assisting parents from the time their children are born. The program offered a large array of free services such as car seat information, playgroups and parenting classes, referrals to other local services, food resources, and education services for children five and under.

A struggle we have to endure locally is the fact we don't have access to, or the volume of, local services that a larger metropolitan area has. Recently, stakeholders, including myself, participated in a survey to help identify areas of need, resources and things that are working. One of my strong beliefs that was echoed by all of those who participated was that agencies do a phenomenal job of working together and solving problems in Hood River County. There are a multitude of agencies working together to support parents and children. It is humbling to see the continued work of community partners to help guarantee the success of the young people in our community and I am proud to be a part of it.

Matt English of Hood River is Sheriff of Hood River County.

