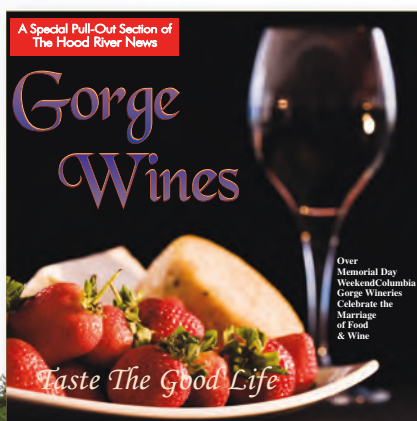


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## Memorial Day Service

11 a.m. Monday  
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WEEKEND EDITION

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# Hood River News

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## County to clarify 'awkward' land use appeal powers

By PATRICK MULVIHILL  
News staff writer

The Hood River County Board of Commissioners voted Monday to clean up and revise an ordinance which bars them from modifying land use decisions made by the planning commission.

At a public hearing before the board May 18, Hood River County Planning Director John Roberts presented language that would streamline and revise an “awkward” ordinance governing the county’s appeal process.

“LUBA (Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals) made it clear that our administrative rules were a little

awkward. They decided that your powers were similar to theirs,” Roberts told the commission.

Roberts referred to comments LUBA made during a 2012 case regarding a dispute over Barrett Park between the Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District and Hood River County, as well as local orchardists Fritz and JoAnn von Lubken. The planning commission approved the park’s permit, but the



John Roberts

county commission decided to overturn the decision; from there, the parks district took the case to LUBA on the grounds that the county had acted without compliance to state law.

LUBA ruled that the county had erred in its decision. Aside from the error, LUBA noted in a 2012 brief that the county’s review scheme was “unusual, resembling the kind of limited review conducted by LUBA rather (than) a more open-ended review.”

The state land board declared Hood River County Zoning Ordinance Article 61 constrains the county commission to several narrow choices in land use appeals —

affirming, reversing, or remanding a decision — but does not allow the body to actually modify a decision made by the planning commission.

Roberts indicated that the county’s lack of modifying power was unique. “I’m sure there are other elected bodies out there that don’t have the ability to modify (appeals), but not that I’m aware of,” said Roberts.

At the hearing Monday, the board of commissioners approved the changes proposed by planning commission staff, on condition that the planning commission make several minor alterations, including simpler and more consistent language.

Commissioners wished to clarify their own powers, as well as clean up some ambiguous phrases contained in the three-page ordinance.

“What does the term ‘modify’ give us?” asked county commissioner Karen Joplin. “What does that mean — nuts and bolts?”

Roberts explained that the power to “modify” would allow county commissioners to make minor changes to planning commission findings without needing to send the case back and forth. In “big issue” or “substantive” cases, he said, the board could remand the appeal and send it back to the com-

See PLANNING, Page A8



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

## GORGE CULTURE FEST

The challenge of the Japanese ball-cup game *kendama* was just one pleasure of the first Gorge Culture Fest, Thursday at Columbia Gorge Community College. Irma Rubelcava, of Hood River tries *kendama* along with Carla Farfan and, right Carla Gonzalez, at the sister cities’ tables provided by Hood River-Tsuruta and The Dalles-Miyoshi City, while Ann and Mike Harris watch. Culture Fest provided food, face-painting, break-dancing, origami, a display of Mexican embroidery, and Irish music. Students from Ukraine, China and Taiwan presented their cultures and participants enjoyed Mexican food and crafts. Organizer Kelly Sullivan of the CGCC access and diversity committee said the event was intended “to celebrate the different cultures we have in the community.”

## Election results

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA  
News editor

Two members of the Columbia Gorge Community College board kept their positions, based on unofficial results from the May 19 Hood River County Special Districts election.

Brad Lorang, a former mayor of Cascade Locks, will serve on the Cascade Locks Port Commission, one of two people to defeat incumbents on that board. Lorang defeated Donna Mohr and David Lipps edged Brenda Cramblett.

Charlotte Arnold, Columbia Gorge Community College Board Position 1 incumbent, defeated



Chris Reitz wins HRCSD vote

Guy Fenner by a 1,491-804 margin (65 to 35 percent). Stu Watson, Position 6, defeated Becky Kopecky,

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## Reunion concert May 23 at HRMS

Outgoing HRVHS music director Mark Steighner will lead the May 23 reunion choir concert at 7 p.m. at Hood River Middle School auditorium (a previous article contained the wrong location)

The concert is free; Hood River Education Foundation will accept donations to the Mark Steighner Teacher Grant for District Music



MARK STEIGHNER working with high school singers in 2014.

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## Spotlight

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A weekly series about a day in the life ...

## Denny Leonard honors those who served

BY TRISHA WALKER  
News staff writer

Denny Leonard will have been involved with the Hood River American Legion Post 22 for 37 years in June, and all because of a bet.

He had been laid off for the winter from the forest industry and was sitting in a Belmont tavern (where Monogans Pancake House is now) drinking coffee one morning, when Bill Wheeler, a World War II vet and log truck driver, came in and asked why he wasn’t a part of the American Legion.

“He said, ‘You’re a vet, aren’t ya? Why don’t you join the American Legion?’ and I said, ‘I don’t join anything,’” Leonard said. Wheeler had been playing with a half-dollar piece on the counter and made him a deal: He would flip the coin and if Leonard won, he’d never talk about it again, but if he won, Leonard would join.

And that’s how Leonard came to be a part of the post. “Then I got to meet a lot of really nice people — Harvey and Leila Crapper, Don Hilton ... just a whole bunch of real nice people who picked me up by the shoestrings and taught me the ropes, got me geared up to be an officer in the post

See DENNY, Page A9



Photos by Trisha Walker

DENNY LEONARD has been involved with Hood River American Legion Post 22 for 36 years — and all because of a coin toss. Leonard and Idlewilde Cemetery Sexton Bob Huskey were part of a small group Thursday readying the cemetery grounds.

## Four To Go

### Watershed Group meets May 26

Hood River Watershed Group meets May 26 at 6 p.m. at the Parkdale Community Center, 7300 Clear Creek Rd.

Middle Fork Irrigation District will host and present on the Clear Branch Substrate Augmentation project in partnership with USFS. The group is comprised of numerous stakeholders in the watershed, and anyone may attend.

### Walk With Ease canceled May 25, 27

The Walk With Ease program, which meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Columbia Gorge Community College’s Hood River campus, has been canceled for the week of May 25. It resumes Monday, June 1 and continues through Wednesday, July 15.

### ‘Dollar’ Open Swim on Monday

Hood River Aquatic Center will host a special \$1 open swim on May 25 from 1-3:30 p.m. The slide and rope swing will be open, and the party room is available for rental.

Registration is underway for summer swim lessons at the Center. There are morning and evening swim lesson offerings. Register for swim lessons online at [www.hoodriverparksandrec.org](http://www.hoodriverparksandrec.org), or the pool, 1601 May St.

### Get the 2015 Visitors Guide

Drive, hike, learn, camp, dine, drink.

Where to and go to do all these things can be found in the 2015 Columbia Gorge Visitors Guide, a special publication of the Hood River News and The Dalles Chronicle, now available at our offices, and at businesses and visitor centers throughout the Gorge.

Lists of parks, waterfalls, hikes, and bike trails are the just the beginning of what you will find in the 62-page full color guide.

