



OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Troubled times

Whether you're looking out your window or watching the TV you see troubling things. As I turned 67 on the 14th I am speaking as someone who has personally experienced the Cuban missile crisis, the Watergate hearings, the 9/11 and the Iraq war and the rise of the crack cocaine and opioid crisis as well as the loss of jobs overseas and hope at home, with all the accompanying sadness of the ability of individuals to set communities on fire with machine guns and trucks used as battering rams to drive the message of their nihilism home. There are almost certainly rough waters just ahead. There will be shocks and a new normal in high uncertainty. But listen to me as neighbors in my community please.

There's an old saying that rather than covering the world with leather it is better to wrap your feet in leather, and likewise for troubled times the best shoes to put on in the morning is goodwill towards all.

It is not the time to spend every cent you make or can borrow on toys or vacations. It is not the time to take on more financial obligations. It is the time to be sober and be clear about just how much you need to make it from week to week and month to month. It is good to imagine you are preparing for an earthquake here in Oregon. To have batteries to last you for a few months? Rice and beans in screwtop plastic garbage cans? You have large rubber containers that you can fill with water from the garden hose and some iodine, a few drops in each? Do you know your next-door neighbors? It's time to quietly prepare for an earthquake seriously. It is a time to set money aside with the idea in mind you might go 3 months in a row without any checks in the mail. Just as an exercise. It is a good time to realize that angry men come to blows over the most ridiculous of reasons, and remember that all human beings have the same feelings and failings.

It is a good time not to wear your heart on the sleeve and it is a good time to start watching your tongue. In troubled times the best shoes to put on are goodwill to all.

Leo Rivers
Cottage Grove

Recently retired thanks

I recently retired from Senior and Disabled Services after working for more than 36 years and for the county 42 years. I feel thankful to have been able to work all this time in the Cottage Grove Community, my home town. I especially feel honored to have worked for the Seniors in this Community. I have learned many life lessons with my work. Being invited to people's home who shared their life and needs, and in return shared their insight, experiences, and talent from their many years of living, have given me immeasurable heart-felt lessons. I have so many people to thank who I have worked with, who have supported and helped the people of Cottage Grove. Looking back in time, I would like to name some of the people that I have had the pleasure to work with. I would like to thank Ted Stevens, a past Director of S&DS who helped and supported the start of the Cottage Grove Senior Center, along with Cottage Grove citizen Vadna Saunders, Diana Satchel, a past Director for South Lane Wheels, and Ruth Linoz, current Director of South Lane Wheels. I would also like to thank Kay Metzger who was the past director of S&DS, and was at the time the office supervisor, who opened the Cottage Grove office. She put heart and soul in helping with the office design and staff that served in Cottage Grove. She was first, by the way, an Intake Caseworker who served in the Cottage Grove area. I would like to thank Mary Sherrifs and Becky Strickland for the work that they did with Adult Protective Services and what they

taught me. For 19 years I worked with Brenda Allen, Margie Vaverka as well as Marilyn Vann and Debbie Dempsey who also put heart and soul into their work. I would like to thank Tom Wheeler for his immeasurable support to our community for his work and direction with South Lane Mental Health. I feel thankful for the many programs, and churches that support the people of Cottage Grove. I am thankful for the local physicians and Social Workers. I am thankful as well to the Volunteers who drive for Medical appointments, Meals on Wheels, Elder-help Volunteers or are Senior Companions. I feel honored to have worked with my fellow Senior Connection Staff that serve all of Lane County including Rina Francisco who is the new Senior Connection Coordinator in Cottage Grove/Creswell, who will be an asset for the South Lane Community, and Senior Connection Supervisor Rachel Jacobsen who is supportive to her staff and their work in their communities.

I covered all of South Lane County as a Senior Connection Area Coordinator encompassing Disston, Culp Creek area, London area, to the Douglas County borderline, to Lorane, Creswell and surrounding area, to Pleasant Hill. It is a large area that the Cottage Grove Office served. I am thankful that Creswell has stepped up to offer an office at this time. In the past I held office hours at the Creswell Nutrition site for Seniors and their families one day a week from 10-2 p.m. Also in the past, Creswell offered a space at the Community Center for Energy Assistance appointments for Seniors during that season.

I would like to encourage those who work and have the Elected and Supportive positions in Cottage Grove to be aware of the needs of the Cottage Grove Community and area, be informed of programs and services needed to support our Community and a voice of how our tax dollars are being spent. To attend County and LCOG Meetings, gather informed information regarding the budget. Although no services are being cut with the Cottage Grove office closure, it will be a hardship for the Elderly and Disabled with physical and hearing disabilities. Transportation, and the ability to drop in for information, brochures, support, or "face to face" with someone for information and understanding will be very difficult or an inability. In a time when we are facing budget issues and programs being cut, people, families, neighbors and community will need each other. The supportive programs that are in our communities are very important and having supportive satellite offices as well.

I went and spoke at an LCOG Board Meeting after hearing of the Cottage Grove Office closure, to be a voice for my community. At that meeting I shared my feelings, speaking in support for a Cottage Grove Office and my view of the future regarding the need for the Cottage Grove office and other satellite offices, even if a smaller office with space for all that serve possibly on a rotation basis. I feel it is important for those that serve in this or any area spend time and are familiar with the community, its programs, and others that work and serve in that community. I believe it is good to know each other and network together. At the end of my speaking, Brenda Wilson, Director for LCOG, said that currently Lane County has satellite offices in Florence, Veneta, Junction City, Oakridge, and Cottage Grove. To clarify, besides the main office in Eugene, Florence and Cottage Grove are/were "full" service offices and the others are the Senior Connections Area Coordinators offices. I believe that Cottage Grove serves the largest area in Lane County. I believe that sharing together and addressing the Community we could come up with a space for the Cottage Grove area that serves the community need.

Thank you,
Suzanne Huebner-Sannes
Cottage Grove

Thanks from South Dakota

My mother, Connie Allen, was a resident of Cottage Grove for several years before her death on August 8, 2017. Her husband, Dennis, pre deceased her by two years and they both loved the community and the time they spent there. As their daughter, I was closely concerned in their lives especially during the last two years while my mom was a resident at Middlefield Oaks on Village Drive. Their careful and considerate care of her during her last two years made

her life so much better and gave me the confidence that she could remain in her community and still be safe living so far from me. The staff there was always kind and responsive to the needs of an 87 year old woman who wanted to remain as independent as possible yet needed the security of 24 hour availability for help if needed. Special care came from Wendy, Jen and Carrie. Whenever I called with a concern for her well-being they were all so very helpful. I will always be grateful to them.

The last several days of my mother's life were spent at Cottage Grove Hospital, across the street from Middlefield Oaks. The staff there on the medical unit are all exceptional people. I was called every day, not only by the doctors caring for her, but also by the nurses in charge of her care. No question was unanswered or downplayed, no attention to my mom was overlooked, from having music softly played in her room, to opening windows for fresh air, to having a harp player come into her room to ease her heart and soul. I've never seen or heard of more compassionate care.

The people of Cottage Grove are so lucky to live in a community where this level of care and kindness can be accessed for the asking. I can never say thank you enough to your wonderful community for making my mother's life and death more beautiful than we could have hoped.

Laura Cornwell
Madison, SD

House fire

A lovely quiet Sunday afternoon turned nightmarish within minutes when our friends and neighbors house burned to ashes in less than two hours. Thankfully, they are all ok and were able to save a few pictures of their children.

What was amazing was the response from multiple fire districts and organizations. Cottage Grove, Goshen, South Lane Fire and Rescue Station #3, Pleasant Hill, and the Department of Forestry, as well as a helicopter with a water bucket affiliated with one district were on-site. Our home is adjacent and was potentially vulnerable due to wind shifts and a very dry uphill forest between us.

When the house fire was somewhat under control personnel from the Goshen Fire District came to our home and assured us if need be that our property and home was defensible. Later there were eight fire fighters stationed on the dirt road between our properties watching for forest fires.

They extinguished one small brush fire on our property and stayed on-site well after the house fire was fully contained. Today they have returned and continue to monitor the grounds and forest between our properties.

All to say THANK YOU to fire fighters everywhere!! We are forever grateful.

Sincerely,
LeRoy and Bonney Cothrell
Dan and Becky Moore

Please see page A7 for weekly column, "Offbeat Oregon History." It will return to this space next week, August 30.

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