

Cottage Grove Sentinel
 116 N. Sixth St.
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

Opinion

The First Amendment
 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



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Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must: 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

nhickson@cg sentinel.com

LETTER

EXCLUSION FROM EMERGENCY PREP CONTEST

I am only one of many vested, longtime residents of Cottage Grove who happens to reside outside the city limits.

I always support local businesses and in fact volunteer my time regularly to CG causes. I accept that my taxes are lower but also accept that I am not able to vote my feelings regarding any city issues.

I do pay for those choices/de-

isions of city residents regarding school issues, etc., and my children attend the same school district.

I am also just one of the many who suffer longer power outages and greater loss during severe weather issues.

I learned so much with this past February snowstorm and endured over two weeks of inside home temperatures less than 35 degrees. My family survived and have spent much hard

work and financial burden to better prepare for future emergencies.

Because of this, I am greatly disappointed by the exclusion of my family and all of my hard-working, persevering neighbors in the Cottage Grove disaster prep contest who can't participate.

—Joy Straubrn
 Cottage Grove

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Cultural threads of domestic violence must be unraveled



It wasn't until becoming a father that I realized how a childhood of witnessing verbal and physical abuse by the men in my family — specifically, my father and brothers — had impacted me and left wounds which had never truly healed.

I know this because I occasionally saw reflections of my father and brothers in myself as I fought to avoid making the same mistakes with my own children.

As much as we want to tell ourselves we can choose not to take any baggage with us on our journey through life, there is no getting rid of it completely — only a conscious decision to leave it circling on the carousel.

Ultimately, it is always somewhere. Circling. Waiting to be claimed.

This is especially true for young men in their teens and early 20s, when they are defining themselves and establishing their place in what is still a male-dominated culture — all while simultaneously trying to understand the intricacies

of communicating with those they love.

Even as a teenager some 35 years ago, I can tell you that appearing tough and “manly” among your peers while still holding on to the part of you that is thoughtful and caring

From the Managing Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

feels contradictory to what we're taught about being a man.

The stereotypical definition of manhood was in movies, advertising and music: Being a man means being in control.

In charge. In command — of life and our relationships.

Seeking true equilibrium is even more difficult today because, unlike 35 years ago, the unhealthy stereotypes that define “manhood” are relentlessly perpetuated through social media and the near-constant presence of advertising that sells body wash, music, movie tickets, clothes and video games by depicting what it looks like, sounds like and feels like to “be a man.”

It is baggage our culture has been carrying for generations, repack-

aged and presented in more ways than ever before.

The fact is, being a real man does mean being in control.

But not of others; it means being in control of yourself enough to understand, acknowl-

edge and accept your strengths as well as your weaknesses.

It means never using your strength — physically or verbally — to harm the women in our lives, whether it be your wife, girlfriend, co-worker, mother, daughter or neighbor.

A real man provides protection, safety and acceptance; a weak man dishes out pain, insecurity and denial.

In either case, they are reflections of our inner self. The question is: What kind of reflection do you want to see when you look in the mirror each day?

As wonderful as our communities in Cottage Grove and surrounding areas are, they aren't immune to domestic violence against women, children and men.

There's no denying that the cultural threads of domestic violence are woven into the fabric of our society. Though we have made strides in some areas by recognizing and discussing matters of physical and verbal abuse, that baggage is still out there circling on the carousel.

Next Tuesday, Oct. 1, is the beginning of Domestic Violence Awareness month. Whether you are a survivor of domestic abuse or want to show your support for those who are, I hope you will participate — either in area marches, community meetings, by supporting legislation or volunteering to help victims of abuse.

As a culture, each of us must make a commitment to avoid claiming the baggage that perpetuates violence on our families and each other; as a community, we must make a commitment to each other to support — and when necessary speak up for — our friends, family members and neighbors who we suspect may be victims.

Most importantly, to end the cycle of domestic violence, we must be willing to carry on with that commitment well beyond the last, crisp evening of this October.

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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