

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anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.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

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Accepting what homelessness isn't

while, in Oregon, we experienced a 2.5 percent increase — the fifth highest in the nation.

Right after California. According to a report released last November by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than

school-aged or displaced veterans.

Before we can truly address the issue of homelessness, we must be willing to understand that the majority of those who are living their lives without a home aren't those on the street whose

criminals, we insulate ourselves from the reality of homelessness, and how close we all are from a life without shelter. Truth be told, nearly half of Americans live less than two paychecks away from the kind of financial crisis that could lead to homelessness.

That's not the kind of stereotype we want to think about, but one we have to be willing to accept in order to affect the kind of change that will, in turn, change the lives of so many of our homeless in Oregon.

While the bigger solution to solving homelessness in Oregon will require more than donations of food and clothing, our willingness to acknowledge the homeless in our community by offering support is an important step toward achieving something else we can all be proud of as Oregonians.

From the Managing Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

half of Oregon's homeless families (60.5 percent) are without shelter, either in cars or in tents within that scenic beauty I mentioned earlier.

As much as we want to tell ourselves that most of the homeless are drug addicts, criminals or suffering from mental disorders, the fact is more than half of the homeless living without shelter in Oregon — more than 7,000 — are either

faces we often avoid. The fact is, more often they are those whose faces we recognize each day but who never say a word about their homelessness. They are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters. They are students, cooks, part-time employees, unemployed veterans and senior citizens faced with deciding between medication, food or shelter.

By stereotyping the homeless as addicts or

LETTERS

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE AND HISTORIC VALUE

I had the good fortune Saturday evening to attend the Mayor's Ball, a fundraising event for the continued reconstruction and update of the historic National Guard Armory in downtown Cottage Grove. The event was opened with The Jewel Tones singing the old standards from the 1930s and 1940s. They were accompanied by Blue Sky Big Band, who after the fundraising event and dinner, continued to play for the enjoyment of the many people who enjoyed dancing. The keynote speaker for the event was Maj. Mary Jennings Hegar. Maj. Hegar flew over 100 combat and rescue missions in Afghanistan as a helicopter combat pilot. In addition to her Purple Heart that she was awarded for injuries in combat, she is the only woman to be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross Air Medal, other than Amelia Earhart.

We witnessed a historic event, as the mortgage was shredded on stage. The Armory is now solely owned by the citizens of Cottage Grove!

For those of us who are rural, and the neighbors to the north and south, in Drain and Creswell, the Armory, in years to come, will offer so many venues that we can all participate and enjoy.

For instance, very shortly, roller

skating will return to the Armory.

The Armory brings back many memories to me, and I'm sure to many, young and old, in the area. For so many years, Rotary held the annual Christmas party at the Armory. In those years, Ivan Hoyer and I would photograph up to 350 young ones on Santa's lap.

The citizens of South Valley have so many wonderful things to be proud of, such as the covered bridges, the beautiful bike trails, recreational lakes, and soon to open an updated rebuilt swinging bridge, and not in the too distant future, a beautiful 1929 restored carousel.

Many of the above items have been brought about through volunteerism, fundraising events, such as the Mayor's Ball, and visions of a few people of the future, and love of historic value.

—Don Williams,
 Founder and President, Friends of the Cottage Grove Carousel

WHERE'S THE MONEY?

A news item in *The Sentinel* ("The Bonds to Finance Various City Projects," Oct. 9) indicated that the City of Cottage Grove is in the process of offering bonds for sale to the public in the amount of \$6,765,000, and that of these funds — several millions of dollars — will be spent in various upgrades to water projects.

My most recent billing from the city was for a total of \$146.61. The amount for water was \$59.88. The remaining \$86.73 was distributed among five other items.

I presumed that that \$86.73 was to be deposited in various sinking funds so that those funds would be available when the need arose in the future. In the 14 years that I have resided inside the city, I have paid several thousands of dollars to the city for such an eventuality, and I presume that so have at least several other customers of the city water department.

The sum should have amounted to much more than the value of the recent bond offerings.

My question to the City of Cottage Grove is: What has happened to those dollars?

—Herbert Dean Ball, PhD
 Cottage Grove

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Rep. Cedric Hayden is coming for a Community Meeting in Dorena on Tuesday, Oct. 22, at 6 p.m., at the Row River Christian Fellowship, 37553 Row River Rd., Dorena.

Rep. Hayden was involved with some rescue and cleanup efforts during last winter's snowstorm and will be talking about an Emergency Action Plan. I encourage community members to attend and be a part of this important discussion.