

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anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.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



Never in a hurry to 'be first' with bad information

the media industry itself in our era of instant information and access; some of it comes from pressure outside the industry due to social media's ability to spread speculation, rumor and assumption like wildfire through community

cross referencing our information to assure that we could offer a comprehensive report that had been vetted through multiple sources.

We were in no hurry to "be first" in offering incomplete or unverified information to the com-

foundation of information moving forward rather than half-truths and speculation.

Having a real conversation about the terrible nature of this incident requires a clear and accurate understanding of what happened, and how it happened, before we can begin to assure it never happens again.

In addition to providing accurate and credible reporting, we also understand that what we report can have real-life consequences for members of our community, whether it be the school district, police department, victim or the accused.

We are in no hurry to "be first" in making matters worse for our community or those within it by fueling rumor or speculation with irresponsible reporting.

Our reporting on this incident wasn't about "being first," but rather to be first in providing you with information that is factual and complete.

From the Managing Editor's Desk
 Ned Hickson

circles. Never be in a hurry to serve bad food — or in the case of good journalism, inaccurate or incomplete information.

Today's front-page story on the terrible hazing incident in the Cottage Grove High School locker room is a story we had been working on since late September, talking with people on and off the record; contacting local police as well as the district attorney's office; working to obtain official documentation, reports and verification; and

munity we serve. Understandably, some community members were frustrated with the lack of coverage in this newspaper once larger outlets such as KEZI and The Register-Guard began reporting information provided by anonymous sources.

We took some lumps on social media but were determined to approach our gathering of information — and eventual reporting — with objectivity and thoroughness so that the community had a solid and accurate

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Cottage Grove Sentinel

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