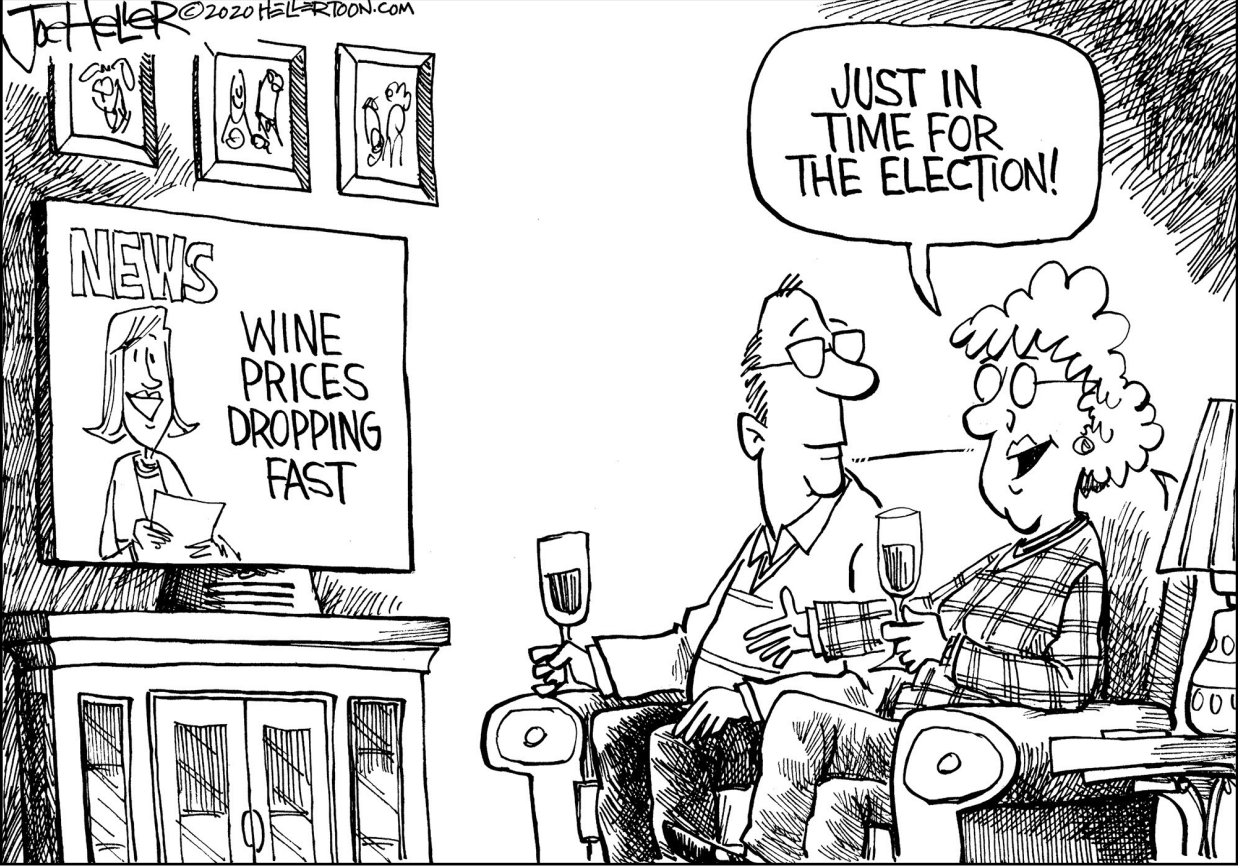


**Cottage Grove Sentinel**  
 116 N. Sixth St.  
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

# 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anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.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](mailto:nhickson@cgsentinel.com)

**LETTER**

**NAMING PET 'AGENT ORANGE' IS INSENSITIVE**

After reading the "Pet Tips 'n' Tales" column titled "The Chicken Charmer" (Jan. 30) in the *Cottage Grove Sentinel*, I was shocked, dismayed and devastated.

Local resident Chris Perkins named an orange colored cat "Agent Orange."

Agent Orange was a chemical defoliant sprayed extensively in Vietnam from 1962-1975. During

my U.S. Army BOG (Boots on Ground) time of 1970-1971, I was witness to the devastation of Agent Orange, which causes birth defects, diabetes, chloracne, liver and kidney failure.

Veterans Administration current data lists 27 A.O.-related health issues.

I have A.O. exposure damage.

There are many Vietnam veterans in Cottage Grove and Lane county with their personal stories

of struggle with A.O.

No joke for me.

A.O. is truly bad stuff.

Please respect and honor all veterans for their service.

In my judgement and that of my fellow local veterans, Mr. Perkins' name choice for his cat was insensitive and ignorant.

— David Kopachik, Larry

Simelius, Mike Flint, Bob Currier

and Earle Quinlan

Local veterans

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**Understanding what homelessness isn't**

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 (HUD), more than half of Oregon's homeless families (60.5 percent) are without shelter, either living on the street, in cars or in

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 faces we often avoid. The fact is, more often they are those whose faces we recognize each day but who never say a

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

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 school-aged or

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

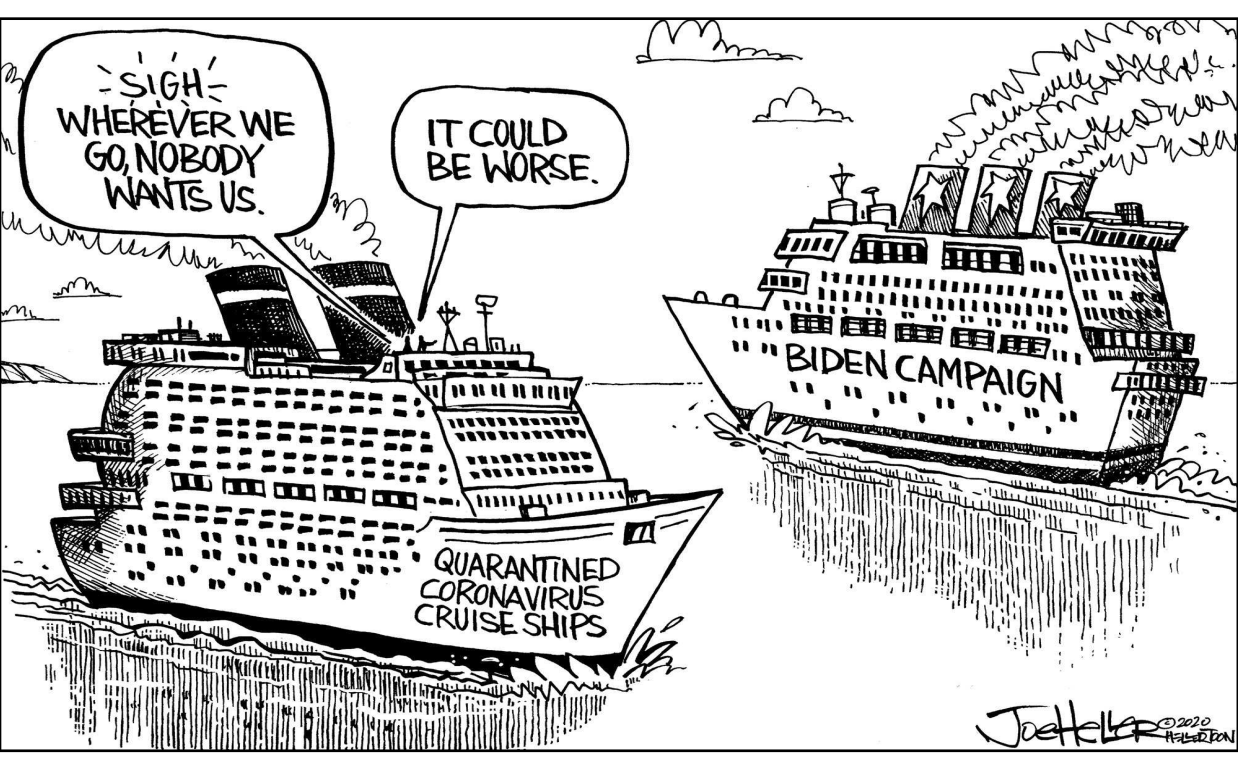


There are a lot of things we're proud of as Oregonians:

The scenic beauty we are constantly surrounded by; Our generally progressive thinking on important issues; Being outside of California.

Yet, amid all the things about Oregon that make us proud, there's one thing I find it hard to admit about my beloved state. While homelessness has declined around the nation, Oregon continues to have the highest percentage of homeless families with children.

Between 2017 and 2018, the number of homeless families decreased in 41 states across America while, in Oregon, we experienced



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