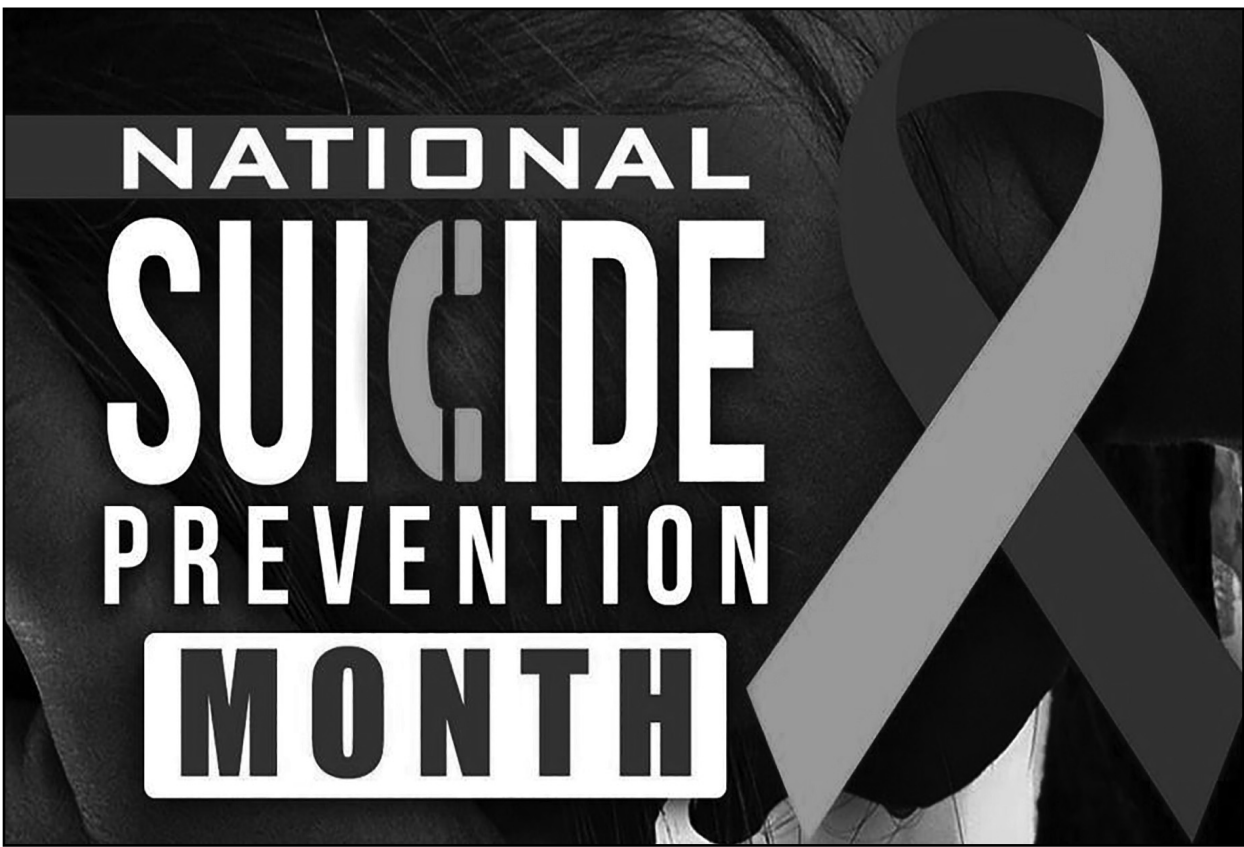


Cottage Grove Sentinel
116 N. Sixth St.
Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

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)



First step in preventing suicide? Ending the silence

that we rarely talk about it. While as a society we champion and openly support those battling life-threatening dis- occurring within a public place. Until recently, the thought has been that reporting on suicides can create a “contagion

respect and sensitivity as possible. Some agree with our decisions and others do not.

While both arguments have their merits, ultimately there is no “right” or “wrong” answer.

Perhaps more important is the question of *why*?

Experts say the best way to prevent suicide is by being aware of the warning signs and encouraging someone we suspect might be contemplating suicide to talk about it.

And the only way that conversation can take place is by turning the perpetual silence of suicide within our communities into the sound of hopeful and helpful dialogue.

Suicide awareness week began Sept. 6 and continues through this Saturday.

If you or someone you know might be contemplating suicide, here is the link to Lane County Public Health, which offers multiple resources available to residents in Lane County: prevention-lane.org/suicide-resources-family-youth.

From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

eases whose physical impacts are apparent to the eye, we struggle to discuss the less apparent yet equally life-threatening battle that many face each day living in the shadow of depression, despair, personal loss, bullying, drug addiction and psychosis.

That's because talking about feelings of suicide is taboo. It's associated with being weak, overly dramatic or is simply not taken seriously. It's often not acceptable to discuss it openly and, as a result, people often suffer with thoughts of suicide silently — planning death without anyone ever knowing until it's too late.

Over the years, the media has played its own role in perpetuating those notions by not reporting on suicides except in rare circumstances, such as when involving a public official or suicide

effect,” as well as cause additional trauma to surviving family members.

Good reasons to be sure, except that current research indicates that thoughtful reporting of suicide can actually help prevent suicides by creating an atmosphere supportive of the kind of dialogue needed to end suicide's deafening silence.

For decades, the unwritten rule was to not acknowledge these types of tragic deaths in reporting. As a result, we have enabled a silence that has only made matters worse by sending the message to those who are suffering to remain silent as well.

Often until it is too late.

We have not taken lightly our decision to acknowledge the circumstances of death by suicide in our reporting and will continue to do so with as much

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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

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPS

Oregon state representatives

• **Sen. Floyd Prozanski**
District 4 State Senator
PO Box 11511
Eugene, Ore. 97440
Phone: 541-342-2447
Email: sen.floydprozanski@state.or.us

• **Rep. Cedric Hayden**
Republican District 7 State Representative
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Ore. 97301
Phone: 503-986-1407
Website: www.leg.state.or.us/hayden
Email: rep.cedrichayden@state.or.us

Oregon federal representatives

• **Rep. Peter DeFazio**
(House of Representatives)
405 East 8th Ave.
#2030
Eugene, Ore. 97401
Email: defazio.house.gov/contact/email-peter
Phone: 541-465-6732

• **Sen. Ron Wyden**
405 East 8th Ave., Suite 2020
Eugene, Ore. 97401
Email: wyden.senate.gov
Phone: (541) 431-0229

• **Sen. Jeff Merkley**
Email: merkley.senate.gov
Phone: 541-465-6750

Cottage Grove
Sentinel

541-942-3325

Administration

Jenna Bartlett, Group Publisher

Gary Manly, General Manager... Ext. 1207
gmanly@cgsentinel.com

Gerald Santana, Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1216
gsantana@cgsentinel.com
Carla Skeel, Inside Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1203
csummers@cgsentinel.com

Editorial

Ned Hickson, Managing Editor... 541-902-3520
nhickson@cgsentinel.com

Damien Sherwood, Lead Reporter... Ext. 1212
dsherwood@cgsentinel.com

Nick Snyder, Sports/Community News Reporter... Ext. 1204
nsnyder@cgsentinel.com

Customer Service

Meg Fringer, Office Manager, Legals, Classifieds... Ext. 1200
mfringer@cgsentinel.com

Production

Ron Annis, Production Supervisor... Ext.1215
graphics@cgsentinel.com

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