

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anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.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

dsherwood@cgsentinel.com



BMD 2021 in Review

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

BMD 2021 was different this year.

Producing Bohemia Mining Days in a normal year takes a tremendous effort by a small group of hard-working individuals, who are passionate about delivering an event that creates smiles and happy memories for our community.

Planning BMD 2021 was exceptionally challenging for our very small production team, both financially and operationally.

We are grateful to our Main Stage performers who donated their time and talent, to our sponsors who gave us the means to make the event happen, to the downtown businesses and residents who were inconvenienced for the greater good, to the volunteers who gave their all to make it happen, and to the City of Cottage Grove for its operational support.

The backstory of BMD's new Mine Ore Cart races began in January 2019, in a dinner conversation Bill and Cathy Simmons and Ralph and Cindy Weeldreyer had with Wayne and Evie White. The Whites own Wild West Events and rent us the cool Old West walls that give Bohemia City its specialness.

Wayne produces lots of community events and suggested BMD needed a fun "signature event" for its 60th Anniversary. Cindy did some research and found the Outhouse Races in Virginia City, Nevada. She liked the idea of a competition rooted in a local historical event. (Residents of the Nevada Gold Rush mining town were so angry over proposed city taxes to install sanitary sewers they literally rolled their outhouses down to city hall to protest.)

It was planned to be introduced as a new tradition in 2019. However, we had so many other activities from the past planned and not enough volunteers so the idea was shelved.

After the cancellation of BMD 2020, we needed something to be the focus of a downsized event. Don reached out to the organizers of the Outhouse Races in

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Don Williams & Cindy Weeldreyer
BMD President & Vice-president

Virginia City and they happily helped us launch our own similar tradition.

We are delighted the new Feud competition was so well received. We are grateful to members of the Bohemia Gold Mining Museum, the Bohemia Mine Owners Association, E Clampus Vitus, Dana Merryday and Jake Boone for their valuable planning contributions to introduce this fun new event.

We knew Bohemia Mining Days would be different this year in many ways. Yet we were totally unprepared the week before the event for the distraction of a community controversy surrounding our Grand Miners Parade.

It essentially robbed us of the second most critical week in our annual planning process. Some very important tasks, such as outreach to downtown residents to learn more of their parking needs, simply didn't happen. It nearly pushed our politically divided board of volunteers to the breaking point of cancelling the event.

In the end, it made us realize the politically charged culture around us today requires our small nonprofit volunteer organization to develop new policies and procedures to navigate these situations in the future. We will begin that task next month after we've had the opportunity to rest and recover.

It truly is a Herculean effort to raise the money, set everything

up, work long hours to make sure things go well, tear everything down and clean up the venue. It was especially exhausting this year to do all that work for only a day-and-a-half instead of a three-day event.

The BMD Production Team annually makes appeals for volunteers to help create this beloved summer tradition that brings happiness to thousands. When that help doesn't come, we simply do the best we can. Seeing thousands of people, young and old, having such a good time makes all our planning efforts rewarding.

The last time BMD was downtown was in 1999 for its 40th anniversary. COVID-19 restrictions forced us back to the historic district this year to allow for social distancing if it was necessary.

After 16 months of surviving a global pandemic, we designed BMD 2021 to bring us together again in fun ways, to financially help our downtown businesses that struggled to survive the lengthy closures and — most importantly — to celebrate the return of some normalcy to our lives.

From a logistical point of view, it was convenient to have our office in the Cottage Grove Hotel on the east end of the venue and our storage unit in the Odd Fellows Building on the west end be only a short golf cart ride away. Yet this year's hot location spread out over six blocks just wasn't "home".

Our real home is the transformation of Coiner Park into "Bohemia City" on the third weekend of July. It's cooler under the trees, all the attractions are closer together and the Old West walls create a vibe that cannot be duplicated downtown.

So Slabtowners and Lematians, start planning your ore carts now for a bigger showdown next year on July 14-16.

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Subscription Mail Rates in Lane and Portions of Douglas Counties:

10 Weeks	\$11.50
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Rates in all other areas of United States: 10 weeks, \$16; 1 year, \$56.50; e-Edition \$35. In foreign countries, postage extra.

No subscription for less than 10 weeks. Subscription rates are subject to change upon 30 days' notice. All subscriptions must be paid prior to beginning the subscription and are non-refundable.

Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Local Mail Service:

If you don't receive your Cottage Grove Sentinel on the THURSDAY of publication, please let us know.
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