



Opinion

**BOCC meeting was a sad experience**

I went to the Clark County Board of Councilors meeting on Jan 12. What a sad experience that was. Hearing what the various Clark County elected officials had to say about the proposal to reduce the taxes was sad, very sad, to say the least. I know now that not one of them will ever get my vote. The public testimony for and against the tax reduction given was 10 for the reduction, six to repeal. While giving testimony I asked if any member of the board had kept a record of the vote. No one kept a record and not one of them cared enough to ask the results

- another example of elected people not representing the people of the county. Their vote really showed what was important in their eyes - Marc Boldt's vendetta against David Madore. Needless to say, Marc and the J & J girls again voted against everything put in by the M & M boys. Brace yourselves. This is the start of more taxes, more fees, more money for the government bureaucrats to spend. More taxes against the vote of the people. Yes, are we not lucky to live in the land of the...

Dave Alt  
Vancouver

**Green Mountain School District is small, yet unique**

I would like to encourage the citizens of the Green Mountain School District to remember to vote for the school maintenance and operations levy by Feb 9. The levy replaces an expiring levy. It is vital to maintaining the beautiful, but aging campus and giving our children the quality education they now receive. This small district is unique in its ability to give each learner the attention and help they need to meet his or her potential.

The members of the Board and administrators are good stewards of the funds we give them and with state funds becoming less while costs rise, they need our support. Please vote "Yes" for the future of our children, the decision makers of tomorrow. Our future well-being will rest in their hands someday. Let's give them the tools they need to do it well.

Sandra Ferneding  
Woodland

**The people voted to change Clark County government**

I was surprised by editor Ken Vance's Jan 13 editorial about the latest Board of Clark County Commissioners decision to remove the property tax cut that councilors David Madore and Tom Mielke made with Jeanne Stewart dissenting. Vance said "they should be voting on the merits of the issues and not politics involved" and it "smells of an agenda" - they being the new members of the council, Marc Boldt and Julie Olson. The front page of the very same paper lays out

the facts of why it was repealed, particularly from Budget Director Adriana Prata. I see no agenda here just financial prudence. The other issues, eight resolutions, were also removed. The real point is the people voted to change government because of actions of Madore in particular. That's the agenda. We the people don't like Madore's actions nor Mielke's blank approval. It's a new day now.

Bill Kelley  
Yacolt

**Ridgefield schools are impressively keeping up with growth**

I moved to Ridgefield with my the best in the state

**County planners, manager, and attorneys are venturing outside of their legally prescribed duties as fact-finders**

In a breathtaking maneuver Jan 13, county staff declared the Preferred Alternative Plan, "invalid." This brazen move is indicative of the staff's true colors. The declaration is a symptom of something much larger - their anti-growth agenda.

The die was cast over 21 years ago, and continues to influence policy-making, economic and cultural issues throughout the rural areas. The Clark County manager failed to curtail the staff's display of bias. The public is not alone in thinking the Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan update is a mass of confusion.

Whether you agree with the Preferred Alternative plan or not, the episode displayed Jan. 13 is about staff's crazy-making tactics, unreliable fact-based data, and overstepping their positions of authority. The planners, manager, and the county attorneys are venturing outside of their legally prescribed duties as fact-finders. They are directly

leading policy

The planners are moving forward, absent one major detail. Citizens of Clark County are able to empower the planners, via the legislators. That legislative authority is strictly reserved for the lawfully elected Clark County Board of Councilors. They build the policies and assumptions. The planning staff must work with a democratic society functions in this manner to ensure checks and balances.

This process advances the citizens' views. Planning staff conducts meetings on their own, behind closed doors with public contractors. The process is highly exclusive, secretive, and influential. An iron curtain is built, preventing the councilors and citizens access to the public contractors. This action is beyond the constraints of the Open Public Meetings Act. This means staff has much power. A select few manage the important business of planning, without public scrutiny. They work without oversight and accountability to the Citizens.

It is very evident there is run-

away executive staff. Who will remedy this situation? There is a true division of power between government branches for a reason. Inaction is not acceptable. According to the Supreme Court, June 2013.

"The essence of democracy is that the right to make law rests in the people and flows to the government, not the other way around. Freedom resides first in the people without need of a grant from government." A performance audit is needed under the guidance of the county and state auditor.

Clark County Citizens United will sponsor a Town Hall meeting, 7-9 p.m., Fri, Feb 12, at the Hockinson High School, 15916 NE 182nd Avenue, Brush Prairie. Those who attend will have the opportunity to become informed over the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 4, over coffee and cookies. You can ask questions, meet the new councilors and learn more about the future plans for your land.

Susan Rasmussen  
Clark County Citizens United

**Community is a critical part of the success of Ridgefield schools**

As an educator, I have the opportunity to be amazed every day. My 6th grade students are regularly asked to do work at a level I didn't see until high school or college, and they succeed.

The federal and state governments constantly change the rules and expectations, and my colleagues adapt seamlessly, finding ways to make the changes required, while still keeping the spirit and heart of our local community first and foremost. Our administrators respond to new challenges with tact, inclusiveness, and thoughtfulness, welcoming an unprecedented number of new students as our community grows. I remain convinced that not only is education working in Ridgefield, it is actually improving every day. Thanks to the prudence, care,

and thoughtfulness of our school board, our families, community, and teachers have been able to work together to create the best school system in Clark County, while amazingly, having the lowest tax rate of any district in the area. Maintaining such amazing schools on our shoestring budget requires diligence, passion, and an amount of effort that would stun a casual observer. Fortunately, our teachers and school staff, from Superintendent Nathan McCann, down to every recess supervisor, is brimming over with enthusiasm, perseverance, and optimism for the future, and create an amazing place to learn every day.

Our community is a critical part of our success, supporting our academic and athletic programs, along with our student populations, through partnerships, donations,

and, crucially, funding our school levies. Our local levy provides more than one fifth of all the revenue that flows into our schools, and makes the impossible task of running our schools, merely challenging.

Without our levy dollars, every program, classroom, teacher, and student would lose out, and fall backward from the amazing growth we have managed so far. We are asking the community not to pay more for our great schools, but merely to continue funding them at the level we have now, so that we can continue to work to make our students, our schools, and our community great. Please help our community and our students by voting "Yes" on the replacement levy this Feb 9.

Joe Thayer  
President, Ridgefield Education Association