

HOOD RIVER NEWS  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
January 4, 2003

### **Threat to mountain**

Now we are threatened with yet another local challenge to our intelligence and welfare. Clean water, agriculture, wilderness and quality of life are more important than a destination resort. Crystal Springs is some of the best water you will taste – anywhere! Valley agriculture is, you know, what will feed us when we need to eat. I think there's a clear case for agriculture being an important element to "homeland security." A positive element! Mountain wilderness – that place we can go for inspiration, decompressing and recharging, healing. How would a destination resort affect quality of life in this area versus other possibilities? Judged on evidence from other areas the answer would be "negatively!"

Superb water, agriculture, wilderness and quality of life, it should be an open and shut case. There should be no human-caused threats such as logging and resort development whatsoever allowed to our Crystal Springs water source. The citizens of this county should be up in arms over any threat to any of these amenities! In the early 1800s, after the Louisiana Purchase, an idea took hold in the European American imagination. It is known as Manifest Destiny. This doctrine said European Americans had a right to the North American continent. The rationale was, they believed, the Native Americans did not use the land to its maximum capability. There were fortunes to be made from exploiting those lands! And that is what happened.

Today we have a contemporary scenario of manifest destiny. Agriculture is not considered the highest and best use of land, while business that makes a huge profit (a killing) for a few is. Witness across this continent the agricultural land going under malls, subdivisions, resorts, industry, pavement. In real terms agriculture is way more important than many economic exploits.

We would be wise to develop a national respect for farmers and an ethic to honor and protect agricultural land. Hood River Valley has some terrific agricultural land and farmers who know how to bring forth food from the land.

This is holy ground we live on. Let's compel our county officials to seek out intelligent economic development. We must take a long term view and work together today to preserve the clean water and environment on which the vitality of our valley depends. We would all prosper by endeavors that are actually forward looking to solving the pressing challenges of our day, so that future generations actually inherit a better world, not a bunch of junk jobs and toxic leftovers.

**Keith Harding**  
**Mount Hood**