

LETTERS

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To the Editor:

The "Bunkhouse Chronicle" of June 29 ("The big identity party") is confusing. For example, the author claims that our constitution is "the principle aggravation" of militant Islamists who are attacking it because it is our "military center of gravity" (???). I have read a lot of propaganda in Arabic and English from the likes of ISIS and have found no mention of our constitution. I suspect that few of its followers have heard of it.

In addition, when discussing the constitution and its relationship to militant Islamists, the author seems to equate the separation of church and state with secularism. But they are not the same thing. The likes of ISIS are against the separation of church and state but not against secularism in the sense of non-religious law. Islamic law, or the Sharia, chiefly concerns family law (marriage, divorce, inheritance) and religious ritual (prayer, pilgrimage, the fast of Ramadan). Vast areas of law (administrative, civil, etc.), which we might call secular, lie outside it.

More importantly, if the author wishes to criticize Islamic law, which version troubles him? There is no standard corpus of Islamic law. Indeed "Islamic law" and the "Sharia" are generic terms for interpretations of what is religiously permissible and forbidden based primarily on the Quran and the alleged words and deeds of Muhammad. These sources have been interpreted and reinterpreted for centuries. Thus the Sharia is qualified by wide variations of opinion. Today the Sunnis have four major interpretations, from liberal to conservative. The Shiites have their own. So does ISIS.

Furthermore, most Christians would be

comfortable with many, perhaps most, provisions of Islamic law. For instance, it prohibits female infanticide, prohibits usury, prohibits gambling, prohibits alcoholic beverages, prohibits adultery, prohibits pimping, requires women to dress modestly (no mention of the veil) and requires giving 2.5 percent of one's income to the poor. So, if one wishes to criticize Islamic law, one must be specific. Which version, which part? If not, it makes no more sense to criticize Islamic law as a whole than, say, American civil law.

Gary Leiser



To the Editor:

I moved to Sisters in 1958, and believe me there was peace and quiet. There were sirens when there was a fire, but none from an ambulance, because we did not have one. There was no traffic except for hunting season, and when it was over there was almost no traffic all winter. There was no noise from airplanes unless the Barclays went somewhere or the jets flew over.

You could say I have seen many changes in the last 58 years. I, however, am not annoyed with any of the sounds, be it sirens every day or airplanes going over. It means that we welcomed all you newcomers even as it changed our lives. Maybe it was easier for us because it was a gradual transformation. However for people to move here and then say I don't like the noise so you need to stop flying airplanes is ludicrous.

I think we just need to take a deep breath and realize that it is still the best place in the world to live — noise or no noise.

Diana Pepperling



To the Editor:

I am a Washington state resident writing about Sisters and areas nearby.

You have something special yet increasingly rare in this hectic and noisy world.

You have astounding beauty and relative quiet. Such a precious reality should not be taken lightly. To be shortsighted and lose this for the profits of a few is a travesty.

I understand the benefit and necessity of airplane flights related to emergency services. However, constant commercial noise pollution will keep visitors away, cause relocation of residents and change one of the best things your area has to offer.

I urge you to work together on the airport/helicopter issues and come up with some real solutions.

Katherine Moulton
Whidbey Island, Washington



To the Editor:

For those creating a ruckus about the noise at the airport, I have just a few things to remind you of:

1. You chose to live near an airport.
2. As with the rest of Sisters Country, things evolve and change; accept that change is the only constant in life.
3. If you just make yourself part of the problem by doing nothing but complaining, then you are the problem. Our world is a mess just for this reason — "everyone wants to tell their neighbors how to live, but no one wants to listen to how they feel."

The right answer in any situation is the one that serves everyone involved.

Just because you have an issue with this doesn't mean you are right.

Michael Valoppi



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