

LETTERS

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we appreciate the opportunity to join a group for dinner.

Diana and Al Lovgren

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

A big thank-you to the City and merchants for the cheery holiday lighting. How wonderful it would be to keep them up throughout the dark days of winter! So welcoming to residents and visitors alike.

Suzanne Pepin

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

Recently a reader posted a letter to the editor (December 19) regarding the book “George” by Alex Gino on the reading list for 10- and 11-year-old children here in Sisters. He suggested checking into the book and encouraging the district to NOT include this book as part of the suggested reading list.

I looked up the book and agree with this reader due to the content. The reader included email addresses to send your thoughts to in this matter. I did send an email, this is what I wrote:

To whom it may concern — In this very address to you, I ask you, who does this concern? My two boys are grown and out in this wild big world. Grandchildren to follow in the coming years, but not yet. This is my concern, the children to come. Not just mine, but everyone’s. The children in your care are your upmost concern. I do not envy your job or the challenges that are coming your way, some already here. Bigger ones to arrive.

Your job is to find the right way to teach and to lead those under you well. Here’s your challenge today; to let someone’s idea of what it is to be a male or female, and decide between the two, (or many). Really? This is a no-brainer. This would be funny in my grandparents day. It is not funny today. To even allow a person to choose their sex, their

biological identity according to their “feelings” is insane behavior. Our Creator does not, has not, EVER made a mistake with His creations. EVER.

The sex you were born with is not up for debate. It is not a choice, it is not a feeling, it is a gift and a fact. Please consider the world ahead of you and the outcome you wish to see. And pray for guidance. I do for you now. Thank you for your time in this matter.

Linda Peck

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

With the glow of Christmas barely behind us, we look forward to the new year and the customary New Year’s resolutions: reduce social media, reduce weight, and, this year, reduce animal food consumption.

One third of consumers already report reducing their consumption of animal foods. Hundreds of school, college, hospital, and corporate cafeterias have embraced Meatless Monday. Even fast-food chains Chipotle, Denny’s, Panera, Subway, Taco Bell and White Castle are rolling out plant-based options.

A dozen start-ups, led by Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods, are creating healthy, eco-friendly, compassionate, convenient, delicious plant-based meat and dairy products. Meat industry giants Tyson Foods, Cargill, and Canada’s Maple Leaf Foods have invested heavily in plant-based meat development. So have a number of Microsoft, Google, Twitter, and PayPal pioneers.

According to Plant-Based Foods Association, plant-based food sales have grown by 20 percent in the past year, 10 times the growth rate of all foods. Sales of plant-based cheeses, creamers, butter, yogurts, and ice creams are exploding at a 50 percent growth rate. Plant-based milks now account for 15 percent of the milk market.

The plant-based New Year’s resolution requires no sweat or deprivation — just some fun exploration of your favorite supermarket and food websites.

Siegfried Neufhaus

Check your old Christmas tree for pest

How you dispose of your old Christmas tree this year could make a difference in whether a newly arrived tree-killing insect pest is able to spread into Oregon forests.

According to Invasive Species Specialist William Wyatt at the Oregon Department of Forestry, throwing your old Christmas tree into the woods or leaving it in your yard may spread the elongate hemlock scale (*Fiorinia externa*). Williams said this insect arrived in Oregon this fall on Christmas trees brought in from North Carolina. The Oregon Department of Agriculture found the pest and ordered the infested trees destroyed, but not before some had been shipped to big-box stores all along the West Coast.

The fear is that when Christmas trees are left for weeks or months in a yard or dumped in a park or the woods, eggs laid on them will hatch and the pest may escape into nearby trees.

If the elongate hemlock scale does get established

here, it could be bad news for the state’s timber economy. The pest attacks not only hemlocks but several conifer species native to Oregon, such as true firs (*Abies spp.*), spruce (*Picea spp.*) and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). The scale feeds on the underside of the needles, creating a yellowish-brown waxy layer that is present year-round.

Williams advised that people inspect trees obtained at big-box stores before disposing of them. Email the Oregon Department of Forestry’s Forest Health Unit at wyatt.williams@oregon.gov if you suspect you have found the elongate hemlock scale. It may be safest to cut up such trees and place them in garbage bags for disposal in a closed container.

Next year, foresters recommend that consumers consider buying a tree grown in our local area. That reduces the risk it will harbor a pest introduced from another part of the country.

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