

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

persuader than shame.

Informing their neighbors, their employers, their employees, the people they do business with, the people they want to do business with, the people they socialize with, etc.: All this really does is to force these people to actually live with the decisions they make and prevent them from hiding behind a corporation, a statute or anything else.

*Frank Skipton
Springfield*

GUN PLAY

Last weekend my partner and I were getting ready for my mother's birthday lunch while the children were playing in the other room. At one point we heard the doorbell and waited to see my parents walk in the house. When they didn't, we asked who had rang the bell. The boys told us the mailman had because he wanted to know if they were OK. Apparently, he had peered into our window and was concerned about the 5- and 9-year-olds who were playing guns. We are aware of the sensitivities around this type of play and don't want to make anyone uncomfortable. We hadn't considered the feelings of possible peeping-tom mailmen.

Shortly after this, the police arrived, with weapons drawn on the kids, instructing them to open the door and show their hands. Seems our mailman called 911 and told them the 9-year-old had a gun and he was afraid for his life. What? So frightened he took time to put his face

against our window and stand at the door to ring the bell? After the police realized what was going on, they admitted this is the type of overreaction a person might have to worry about if they were out in the community — *not* in their home.

If it's standard protocol to act this way when police are responding to a "gun call," then what is standard protocol? What if my 9-year-old freaked out and did something that made it look like he was pointing the gun in their direction? Would they shoot him? Over a plastic toy he was playing with in his own home?

People working out in the community need to be able to rationalize how their actions may affect their community members. They shouldn't peep into windows that aren't theirs, and if there is a concern regarding children, they should ask to speak to a parent/adult.

Maybe, if police officers are incapable of discretion, they should go through very specific training that enables them to deal with situations involving children. A vulnerable 9-year-old boy should never have to have a gun pulled on him. The police are now one big group of community servers my son will not turn to if he needs help. I don't blame him.

*Amanda Black
Eugene*

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 200 words, keep submissions to once a month, and include your address and phone number for our files. E-mail to letters@eugeneweekly.com fax to 484-4044, or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.

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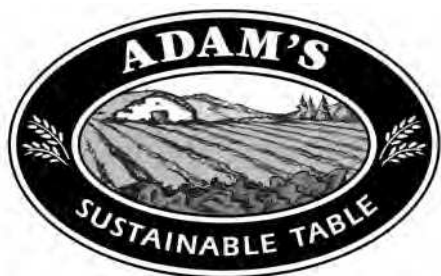
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