

Article 1, Section 8 of the original Constitution describes the subject of the Second Amendment: "Congress shall have power ... to provide for organizing, arming and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the states respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress." The right to bear arms, individually, has not only been taken out of context, it has no context with the original Constitution.

Manufacturing companies, in their pursuit to maximize profits, have acquired, controlled, and protected markets; consumer choices are handed down corporately and controlled politically. Even though the Second Amendment is more fat than pork, it has enabled manufacturing companies to thrive, but thriving in a sick culture that has perforated the nation with fear is the bane of free market enterprise.

*Jon Meadow
Eugene*

WHITEWATER PARK

Per the letter "We Can Do More" by Eliot Treichel [11/29]: Yes, Yes, yes. Our Willamette River has changed from an industrial sewer into potentially Lane County's largest recreational resource. Now much cleaner with restored habitats, it should be a top priority in developing environmental awareness and recreation. Kayaking and rafting are clean participatory sports that encourage stewardship and care for the river, but also could generate millions in income with a whitewater park, events, classes and tourism.

We have a major opportunity perhaps by replacing the hazardous low head dam remnants upstream of the new I-5 bridge with a safe, fun whitewater park. With bridge construction already on site, replacing a public danger with a skill-building water safety facility now would make sense.

*Mark Murphy
Creswell*

SOCIETY'S DIRTY WORK

I agree with Curtis Taylor, Ken Barnhart and others who have pointed out to EW readers that euthanasia is unfortunately a tragic necessity. It's simple math: There are too many companion animals and not enough good adoptive homes. Many people breed animals intentionally or fail to prevent them from bringing unplanned litters into a world that is bursting at the seams with unwanted animals!

The result? Between six and eight million unwanted dogs and cats are dumped at animal shelters in the U.S. each year, and between three and four million must be put to death. Even worse are the fates of animals who suffer on the streets or are trapped at the end of a chain in a lonely backyard.

As long as animals are still purposely bred and people aren't spaying and neutering their companions, open-admission animal shelters and organizations like PETA must do society's dirty work.

Please, if you care about animals, help prevent more of them from being born only to end up chained and left to waste away

in people's backyards, suffering on mean streets where people kick at them or shoo them away like garbage, tortured at the hands of animal abusers, or, alas, euthanized in animal shelters for lack of a good home. If you want to save lives, always have your animals spayed or neutered.

*Abby McDonald
Springfield*

JUST TALKING POINTS

As Rae LaMarche notes in a recent letter [11/29], the whole truth is often missing in the discussion of the Palestinians. Unfortunately, her letter commits the same error, for it is simply a compilation of common talking points from members of the Israeli government. She writes that more than 800 rockets have been fired from Gaza this year; but fails to point out that until the recent fracas the last killing in this manner was in October 2011.

There can be no doubt that such events frighten Israelis living in Sderot, that they are outrageous and constitute a war crime as designated by the 1949 Geneva Convention. (I can't help but note that, fortunately, such things were not war crimes when the Greatest Generation was killing Japanese and Germans by the millions.) But I would ask what would you expect the residents of Gaza to do, besieged as they are in a giant lager (see the Anglo-Boer war)? He is upset that an IDF jeep was destroyed in November; but Israel often defends its military actions as acts of war, and surely this attack can be so described.

She is upset that Hamas does not provide bomb shelters, but fails to note that Gaza has a population of 1.7 million, is an economic basket case, and Israel sharply limits shipments of concrete. They have a good reason for this, for they are concerned that it would be used to build bunkers to shelter military units; but it is surely unseemly when an Israeli government official raises this very criticism.

And finally she is upset that military units hide in civilian areas. Good point. Surely what they should do is put military units in areas distant from civilians, and then the Israeli Air Force could easily destroy them in a single afternoon. An ironic variation on the famous Masada suicide in around 73 CE.

*John Buckmaster
Eugene*

A BALANCED GOVERNMENT

Why should the middle class have to suffer from the pledges the Republicans made to Grover Norquist, a man with less influence than the president?

I am a senior and my total income a month is \$200 over the poverty level. I have worked for 45 years. If the Republicans in Congress would drop their pledges and raise taxes on the super wealthy, the middle tax cuts could go into effect.

I would feel more secure as an individual living in a balanced government knowing my Medicare and Social Security was paid for and I could enjoy retirement with a government that honored and respected the work I put into the system.

*Sherry M. Joiner
Portland*

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- 3.10 B. B. King (Hult)
- 4.12 Molly Ringwald
- 4.24 Taj Mahal-Shemekia Copeland (Hult)
- 4.25 John Pizzarelli Quartet

