

FUR SLASHERS

I volunteer at a local charity thrift store. The main mission of the organization that runs the store is to purchase school clothes for needy children, about 1,700 kids per year. Since no one working in the store is paid, around 90 percent of the proceeds of the organization go to its mission and are spent locally. Each year, we hold special events with our holiday merchandise and this year, through some generous donors, we had the gift of several vintage fur coats. Some had lovingly handed over the coats, saying, "This was my mother's. I have wonderful memories of her in it." We put good prices on the coats, knowing that the sale of one coat could clothe a child for a year. I've been proud to be associated with this organization.

When the coats were on the floor, an unknown person or persons came in with a sharp instrument and slashed our coats, ruining them. We do not know the reason as the perpetrator did not have the courage to open a dialogue with us regarding the sale of the coats.

I am not a fan of wearing furs, but I do believe vintage coats fall into a separate category. No current fur breeder received a new order because our coats were on the floor. Buying new coats is what keeps animal breeders in business. Everything in our store is recycled. How does one recycle fur coats? Dump them into the landfill?

Open dialogue and compromise would have been so much more honest. To self-righteously destroy an item which represented clothing for a needy child is cowardly and dishonest. If one is so opposed, buy the coats and take them off the market. Show your commitment to animal welfare by putting your own resources to that end rather than stealing those resources from children in need of good school clothing.

I find my support for animal rights activists (I assume that the motives of our criminals were those) has waned. Hurting people to save animals is not a responsible moral position in my opinion. Needy children can't speak for themselves any more than animals. It was some bad karma produced that day for someone.

Patricia John
Pleasant Hill

LAWSUIT'S IMPACT

Although the intentions of the McKenzie Flyfishers are good, they may be misguided. The suit filed against ODFW may do more harm than good. The argument will cost the state agency quite a bit to fight in court, taking away precious dollars from positive programs for sportsmen. The hatchery fish they claim that are interbreeding with wild fish were

not created in a science lab. They come from wild stocks. Although there is much to be done to improve our hatcheries and the fish they produce, this is not the best way to bring about that positive change.

This suit, if successful, will negatively affect the economy along the rivers I so love. With less opportunity for fishing comes less tourism and enjoyment for many in this area, costing some jobs. Is this what we need?

Saving wild salmon needs to focus on habitat restoration, dam upgrades allowing for easier fish passage and less clearcutting on tributaries. Hatcheries are not the problem. Lawsuits like this could eventually lead to the end of fishing as we know it.

Chad Wiest
Eugene

CROSS MEMORIES

One of my earliest memories while growing up here in Eugene is of the cross on Skinner Butte. Every year in December the cross would be lit up. Even now when I go downtown with my kids to see the Christmas displays I always expect to look north and see the cross. I have vivid memories of waking up in the car after a long trip to see the cross in the distance and knowing we would be home soon. At that age I didn't associate any political or religious significance to the cross. It was merely an illuminated design that glowed through the trees like a lantern underwater. It signified home for me.

My grandparents lived on Baker Street across from U.S. Rep. Charles O. Porter. The Porter family was close with our family. My dad was best friends with Chris Porter and Sam Porter so our families spent a decent amount of time together, especially in the summer. The Porters were very kind people, generous and loving, essentially a third set of grandparents to my sister and me.

In 1992 at a Halloween costume party in the Whiteaker I had a conversation with a sculptor wearing a wasp mask made of pancake mix. From the backyard of the party we could see the cross on the Butte. We started talking about the cross and its history, its connection with the KKK of Lane County. Prior to the concrete cross were wooden crosses. The KKK's Klavern 3 of Lane County burned those wooden crosses atop Skinner Butte and on the knoll where Mulkey Cemetery lies. It's no secret that Eugene has a significantly racist past; there is a plaque on Skinners Butte below the flag pole that acknowledges those wooden crosses.

In 1964 Eugene Sand & Gravel illegally erected a 51-foot concrete cross atop Skinner Butte cloaked as a "War Memorial." After illuminating 33 Christmases, the 9th Circuit

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