

DO NOTHING?

Accusing someone of insensitivity by “having a political agenda” when they ask for better gun laws is an easy way out of contributing to real solutions, and is actually a case of having one’s own political agenda. Asking for better laws is a huge sign of being nothing but sensitive to the victims.

Some try to distract the issue by saying “it’s too soon.” It’s with deep respect to victims that I wish for better laws. What are we supposed to do? Wait and give more troubled souls with assault weapons *more* time to kill more people? Again, action is not disrespect. It’s respect.

People asking for better gun laws are not looking to gain anything personally (except safety). They’re not attempting to take anything away from those wanting to legally obtain a gun and own it for legal reasons. Sadly, many of the lobbyists/politicians fighting so fervently to stop new gun laws *do* have political agendas (having more to do with profit rather than freedom or liberty).

If better common sense gun laws are enacted and actually enforced, those law abiding/mentally healthy gun owners would lose *nothing*, especially not their freedom nor their liberty.

Doing nothing solves nothing, every time, without fail. If not the laws, the culture must change *now*.

A heartfelt R.I.P. to the victims involved. Love and warmth to their families and friends, as well as to those we all know and love. Hug your loved ones tightly and infinitely.

Joe De Rieux
Creswell

OUR VIOLENT SOCIETY

Tragedies like the Roseburg massacre will continue to occur, and there is nothing we can do about it. We are a violent, gun-crazy society and no amount of gun laws, current or future, and no amount of “thoughts and prayers” will alter that fact. The distinction between criminals and “law-abiding citizens” is ridiculous — most mass shooters are law-abiding citizens until they choose not to be. We have met the enemy, and the enemy is us.

Spud Smith
Oakridge

WEAPON MONGERS

The UCC shooter had 14 guns. Who in this world needs 14 freakin’ guns? The situation practically screams “sociopath!” Prosecute the seller(s) as accessories to murder. In Oregon, if someone serves alcohol to a visibly intoxicated person who then goes out and does damage to others — such as a highway massacre of innocents — then the server can be held liable for that harm (ORS 471.565).

Media reports have stated that the UCC shooter obtained his guns “legally.” This means that the seller or sellers can be identified. The tragedy was perhaps preventable, if some greedy weapons monger had only exercised a bit of socially conscious overview and restraint.

If we can’t seem to rein in the mass murderers, we can at least make it hard for the pre-event profiteers.

Vip B. Short
Eugene

ADDING TO THE INSANITY

How insane is it that the only solutions being offered to protect our kids from being killed by gunshot in school are more guns for the teachers and body armor and bullet-proof backpacks for the children? See wkly.ws/22w. To paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld as he sent our troops into Iraq with canvas-sided Humvees, “You send your kids into battle with the clothes you have.”

Michael T. Hinojosa
Drain

THE REAL CULPRIT

As per usual, Bonny Bettman McCornack is “spot on” regarding seeking funding replacement for library services [presentation at City Club of Eugene 10/2].

She, as in times past, understands the shenanigans the city of Eugene uses

to deflect attention from the *real* reason there is a lack of money for library services and a whole host of other funding shortfalls. Time and time again, the city provides property tax waivers of the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program (MUPTE) to developers at the expense of funding *our* services!

Yes, the average working taxpayer picks up the tab for all these tax breaks. I am sorry for the lack of funding that is available, and the “sluggish property tax revenue” that occurs due to these property tax waivers, but the answer lies in eliminating these programs!

The taxpayers would not need to be asked to pass a levy if the city would be transparent with one big reason there is a funding shortfall. The library levy is a “city service fee redux”! It’s just the same shenanigan again, removing an essential service from the general fund, and seeks to establish a separate and additional funding scheme.

Shame on Rep. Val Hoyle for even voicing support for this, instead of going after the real culprit in all this funding shell game, the MUPTE!

Terry Steiner
Eugene

HOSTEL TERRITORY

I own and operate the Eugene Whiteaker International Hostel. It’s come

VIEWPOINT BY AMY SCHNEIDER

A Terrifying Reality

REFLECTIONS ON THE UCC SHOOTING

Before Oct. 1, I was in the habit of introducing my hometown with a bit of apologetic nonchalance. “I’m from Roseburg. It’s an hour and a half south of Eugene. Pretty small. You’ve probably passed through on I-5.”

I now envision a future where I introduce my hometown, and a bell of recognition dings in people’s minds — Roseburg, a place where one mass shooting among far too many shootings has devastated a community.

I grew up in and around Umpqua Community College. As a young girl, I learned how to swim and jump off the diving board at UCC’s swimming pool. My dad attended nursing school at UCC in the ’90s.

My high school graduation took place at Jacoby Auditorium on UCC’s campus. I spent my first year of college saving money and working a cashier job while taking calculus and chemistry at UCC.

It’s surreal to see my little hometown campus bombarded with unspeakable violence and then descended upon by the entire nation.

I hate to admit this, especially now, but I’ve harbored embarrassment of my hometown. I know it’s a sentiment many former Roseburg residents share. It still feels like a betrayal to say it.

I moved away in 2009, fleeing what I perceived

to be an overly religious, painfully conservative town with an anti-environmental undertone and a lack of “things to do.” I was 19. The world seemed so big, and Roseburg seemed so small.

On Oct. 1, I found myself murmuring over and over, aware of how cliché it sounded, “This kind of thing couldn’t happen in Roseburg.” My eyes roamed my computer screen in disbelief. My throat caught and my mind immediately went to unfathomable places, terrified at the remote possibility that any of my Roseburg loved ones could be on campus.

I called my dad. He answered. “I’m not anywhere near UCC,” he said before anything else. I started crying.

I ache for those who won’t ever again get to hear their loved one’s voice on the other end of the line.

The thing is, despite my initial reaction, Roseburg is the kind of place where tragedy like this can happen. We live in a time when a school shooting can happen anywhere and at any moment. This is the terrifying reality.

In the days following the shooting, I heard stories of Oregon schools evacuated because of bomb threats, rude behavior in classrooms scrutinized for any hint of violence, students hesitant to go to school because school doesn’t feel safe.

I hate that we feel this fear. I hate the thought that I

should come up with a plan for the next shooting, just in case it happens here. I hate that this loss is only one in a vast sea of losses to armed gunmen on a rampage.

We have a gun problem. We have an anger and entitlement problem. We have a mental health problem.

But most of all, we have a passivity problem in which we sit idly by, just waiting for the next shooting to happen.

I know my community, and I know a lot of people in Roseburg won’t agree with me when I ask and advocate for better gun laws as we move forward. I realize it won’t change many minds. I disagree with you, Roseburg, but I love you. I hope you can still love me, too.

I am amazed by my community and how it has come together since Oct. 1, united to memorialize the people we’ve lost and celebrate what we still have. The outpouring of love, everything from donated coffee and pizza to songs, fundraisers and poems, is deeply inspiring.

My mind roams over treasured memories of home — the gorgeous view of the Umpqua Valley from my dad’s house, rolling hills enshrouding a cozy community; the Umpqua Valley Arts Center in fall, bright colors with a backdrop of soccer fields; the grassy hill of Stewart Park with the Umpqua River and its clear water flowing on.

Today I can say that I’m incredibly proud to be from Roseburg. I stand Roseburg strong with UCC and the wonderful people of Douglas County. We will get through this. ■

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