

Recent undercover investigations show male baby chicks suffocated in plastic garbage bags or ground to death; laying hens crowded into small wire cages; injured pigs killed by slamming their heads against the concrete floor; and cows skinned and dismembered while still conscious. As theologians debate whether there is life after death, I wondered whether these animals have a life before death and why I should subsidize these barbaric practices.

I wonder no more, as I have now embraced a plant-based diet — green and yellow veggies, legumes, fruits, nuts and some grains. Occasionally, I indulge in nut-based cheese or ice cream. Although I was motivated by compassion for animals, I have since learned that my diet is also great for my health and for the health of our planet.

*Edward Newland
Eugene*

REPORTING ON ALEPPO

Local media understandably rely on others for coverage of Syria. Recent coverage focuses on what the U.S. calls “war crimes” in the battle for Aleppo. But most Western media never get any closer to Aleppo than Beirut, which is not even in Syria.

These media often rely on the U.S. government or groups like the White Helmets, who get funding from the U.S. and others attempting to overthrow the Syrian government. It’s the U.S. that is acting un-

lawfully in Syria, as attempting to overthrow a sovereign government violates international law. Syrian president Bashar Assad was re-elected in 2014 and is supported by most Syrians.

More than 1.5 million civilians live in government-held western Aleppo, including 600,000 who fled eastern Aleppo. About 200,000 live in terrorist-occupied eastern Aleppo, including 50,000 so-called rebels and their families, according to the Aleppo Medical Association.

Government forces could have flattened eastern Aleppo long ago, but held back out of concern for civilians. Assad recently offered readjustment help to civilians leaving eastern Aleppo, and even to Syrian fighters who lay down their arms. But the insurgents have continued pounding western Aleppo daily with weapons including “hell cannons,” firing gas canisters packed with explosives, glass, shrapnel, nails and even chemicals.

The disinformation from our government and media cannot be detailed here.

*Robert Roth
Eugene*

POWELL’S DISAPPOINTMENT

Open letter to Emily Powell of Powell’s Books in Portland:

As a reader and elementary school teacher, I was extraordinarily disappointed to find that you publicly oppose Ballot Measure 97, which aims to tax large corpo-

rations in order to fund schools, healthcare and other senior services. Oregonians who know and love your store should be aware that your negative position on the measure puts you in the company of Comcast, Wells Fargo and Monsanto.

Your position in the Sept. 8, 2016 edition of *The New York Times* argues that we cannot trust our government to spend tax money appropriately. This defeatist attitude doesn’t capture the innovative spirit of Oregon. Surely we can trust that the embarrassingly low high school graduation rate (the fourth worst in the country) will persist if we choose never to fund education adequately. Oregon’s class sizes will not shrink without effort. Our school day and year will remain one of the shortest in the country.

In short, who will read the books at Powell’s if Oregon remains one of the least educated states in the nation?

Perhaps you should ask yourself: “WWBD — What Would Beverly Cleary Do?”

*Rachel Gillis
Eugene*

START CARING

I am writing to encourage the city and community of Eugene to take action in providing aid to our homeless population. The amount of people on the streets seems to grow every year, and I believe that Eugene can do more.

Although downtown Eugene keeps getting upgrades, such as the colorful lights and fancy new stores, one thing seems to be downgrading: the homeless and their state of health. It seems that a good percentage of the growing homeless population have poor mental health that puts them in an even more challenging situation than they’re already in. Downtown should be a family-friendly environment, but instead has been taken over as a refuge for those without homes, and they are not to blame. There are not enough resources to aid all of those who need help in Eugene, and they are forced to live on the streets.

Citizens of Eugene need to start caring about all of the population, not just those with housing. The homeless are not invisible people. We need to provide more homeless shelters, food and cloth drives, free health clinics and outreach programs, such as Opportunity Village Eugene, that provide small, affordable housing. Although tent camps and temporary housing options are beneficial, we also need to create long-term programs that work to get out of poverty forever.

*Zoë Pringle
Eugene*

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