

## Make it clear

Thank you for the article and editorial concerning the difficulty in making use here of Oregon's Death with Dignity Act ("Death with dignity," "Death with dignity harder in rural areas," Nov. 17, *The Daily Astorian*).

Columbia Memorial Hospital is among the most important and commendable institutions in our community, but it is also in some respects among the most opaque about policy decisions. The hospital needs to make clear to those it serves the nature of its affiliation with the Lutheran Church. Does the church (local or national?) decide what services the hospital can or should provide, even when those services have been endorsed by a substantial majority of Oregon voters?

On a not unrelated matter, I hope the directors of the hospital will explain their apparent decision to continue to build within the tsunami inundation zone. One remembers that a significant number of patients in New Orleans hospitals were abandoned to die during the hurricane and flood there. And that the chair of the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission has stated (*The New Yorker*, July 20) that when faced with a tsunami, "you don't go back to save anybody. You run for your life."

ROBERT ADAMS  
Astoria

## Thanks for articles

All the friends of "Professor" Peter Lindsey thank Nancy McCarthy for her impressions in *The Daily Astorian* and articles in *Coast Weekend* and the *Cannon Beach Gazette* which drew attention to the

fundraiser for "Professor" Lindsey at the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce on Nov. 10.

This fundraiser drew a packed house, where donations towards the republication of Peter's storyteller's history of Cannon Beach, "Comin' in Over the Rock," raised enough money to print more copies of the book than had been anticipated.

Much credit goes to Nancy McCarthy for her articles about Peter, which showed what an extraordinary person he is and how much he is loved by citizens of our area. Therefore, all of Peter Lindsey's friends applaud Nancy McCarthy for reminding the public that we are blessed with not only a fine storyteller, but with a man who fully inhabits the stories he tells. She, in turn, told his story well.

REX AMOS  
Cannon Beach

## A heck of a guy

I don't know the reasons for his termination, nor do I understand the way his termination happened. But what I do know is that Mike Balzer is one heck of a guy. I've known Mike and his family for more than 20 years, 19 of those I've been a fellow firefighter.

I've fought fire with Mike, trained with him, and taught firefighting classes with him. Mike is one of the most knowledgeable, highly trained emergency services providers in our county. Thirty years of dedication to his community does mean something.

Mike and his family made huge sacrifices for their community. Cannon Beach, and the rural fire protection district are better because of them. Hold your heads up, be proud

of what you've given to this community. May this issue be resolved, and you find yourselves in a better place.

Thank you for your service, Chief Balzer. And to his family, thank you for supporting Mike for the last 30-plus years. I tip my helmet to you.

CHAD SWEET  
Warrenton

## Little Free Library

I was delighted to see the Nov. 17 piece about Little Free Libraries, and am delighted Libraries Reading Outreach of Clatsop County is encouraging them ("Tale a book, leave a book," *The Daily Astorian*). The article contains one small and one major error.

There are four (not three) registered Little Free Libraries in Clatsop County, two in Knappa and two in Gearhart. I'm steward for No. 18979 in Knappa.

The larger error is the statement by Esther Moberg, "The concept is sharing with your community. You're supposed to take one and leave one (book) of equal value." And the reporter's comment, "That means if a person takes a literary classic, they should try not to replace it with a cookbook or Harlequin romance novel."

The first statement is absolutely true — Little Free Libraries are all about sharing, in all ways, but are never about money or value of books. The concept, as explained on the Little Free Library website, is to share books: Take a book and pass it along in any way one wants (for example, to a friend, to another Little Free Library) and drop off books that you think others might like.

It is never required that a reader donate a book in order to take a book

to enjoy. And if someone wants to donate a cookbook or romance novel after enjoying a classic, that's dandy. Each steward can manage their library however they want, but Little Free Libraries are about sharing all kinds of books, and encouraging everyone to read whatever they want.

I hope the new Little Free Library stewards install, register and stock their libraries with all kinds of books, so readers can find them wherever they are.

TERESA DELORENZO  
Astoria

## Time to give thanks

Since we are into the holiday season, we at PennyWise Thrift Store would like to extend our thanks to all our loyal customers who continue coming back to support the store and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of North Oregon and South Washington Coast.

Additionally, we would like to thank all those who have donated their new and slightly used items for us to recycle, plus the many monetary donations that have been made.

PETER and PATRICIA  
FESSLER  
Astoria

## Ban the Okies

Shocked by the attack on Paris, I've become increasingly alarmed regarding our own security. In reflection, I reconsidered Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the Oklahoma Federal Building. How that event concentrated my thoughts.

Now, with laser focus, I keep an eye out for vehicles with Oklahoma plates, and any driver who might

carelessly tip his hand with a careless sign-of-the-cross. It's imperative we deny Christian Oklahomans from settling in Oregon.

Wednesday, such a driver pulled into Fred Meyers; on the dash sat a plastic Jesus. Memorizing the license plates, I drove over to Starbucks in search of law enforcement. Approaching a uniformed officer, I reported my concern. He stared at me, taking in the depth of my thought. Then, in no uncertain terms, he told me,

"Move on."

Climbing back into my Corolla, it occurred to me: He must be one of them. How many have already infiltrated our community? How many?

DALE FLOWERS  
Warrenton

## Whit of difference?

If the billionaire K Street lobbyists and Wall Street financiers conclude that they can maximize their return on investment by building a liquefied natural gas facility in Warrenton, do you think petitions and phone calls from local people will make one whit of difference?

After all the deals have been cut in Washington and Salem, do you expect LNG to significantly fatten the local tax receipts? When all the petroleum and chemical engineers and industrial control programmers have been hired, do you think LNG will provide more local jobs than a new supermarket or fast-food outlet?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you really need to talk with me about acquiring my equity position in the Astoria Bridge.

MICHAEL FALLERT  
Warrenton

# The Syrian debate has been derailed into a cul-de-sac

By CHARLES  
KRAUTHAMMER  
*Washington Post Writers Group*

WASHINGTON — The Syrian refugee debate has become a national embarrassment.

It begins with a president, desperate to deflect attention from the collapse of his foreign policy, retreating to his one safe zone — ad hominem attacks on critics, this time for lack of compassion toward Syrian widows and orphans.

This, without a glimmer of acknowledgment of his own responsibility for these unfortunate souls becoming widowed and orphaned, displaced and homeless, in the first place. A quarter-million deaths ago, when Bashar al-Assad began making war on his own people, he unleashed his air force and helicopters. They dropped high explosives, nail-filled barrel bombs and even chemical weapons on helpless civilians. President Obama lifted not a finger.

In the earliest days, we could have stopped the slaughter: cratered Assad's airfields, taken out his planes, grounded his helicopters and created a nationwide no-fly zone. (We successfully maintained one over Kurdistan for 12 years between 1991 and 2003.)

At the time, Assad was teetering. His national security headquarters had been penetrated and bombed. High-level aides were defecting. Military officers were forming a Free Syrian Army.

Against the advice of his top civilian and military aides, Obama refused to intervene. The widows and orphans he now so ostentatiously champions are the product of his cold-hearted refusal to do anything that might sully his peacemaking image.

Obama has also charged the Republicans with cowardice, afraid to grant admittance to "3-year-old orphans." He gave zero credit to the very real concern of governors and other officials that terrorists could be embedded amid the refugees. This is no theoretical proposition. At least one of the Paris attackers came to France by way of Greece.

Obama's own officials have admitted that the absence of thorough data makes it nearly impossible to properly vet Syrian refugees. In response, many Republicans (and some Democrats) called for a pause in admitting Syrians until alternate vetting procedures are developed. In my view, it would have been better to differentiate among the refugees: Admit women, children and the elderly under the current procedures, while subjecting young men of fighting age to a new regime of far stricter scrutiny.

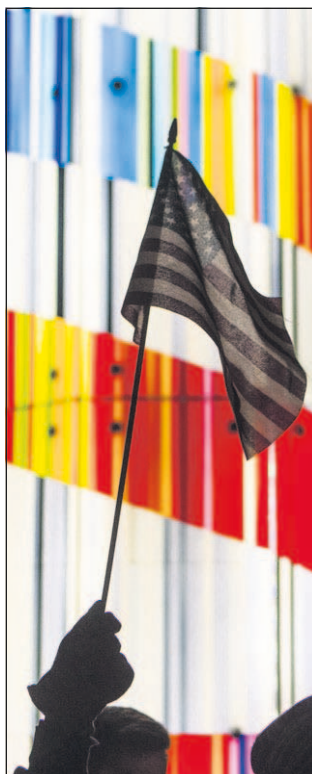
The concerns of GOP officials were quite reasonable. But there was no need for the Republican candidates to allow the Syria debate to be derailed into a cul-de-sac on immigration — as if the essence of the Middle East issue is a relatively small number of potential refugees rather than the abject failure of Obama's policies.

Terror is rising around the world — Sinai, Beirut, Mali, Paris. Brussels was shut down by fear itself. The president, in denial about the collapse of his Syria policy, denounced those demanding a change in course. His secretary of state actually acknowledged a rationale (if not legitimacy) for the machine-gunning of a room full of Charlie Hebdo cartoonists for offending Muslim sensibilities with a drawing.

Beyond that is the strategic surrender of the Middle East, for 40 years dominated by the United States, to Russia and Iran, who now dictate the terms. Which is why, for example, we dare not impose a protective no-fly zone. It's too dangerous. Russia has filled the Obama vacuum.

Facing a massive failure of seven years of Democratic foreign policy stewardship, the GOP candidates have instead tried to outbid each other in being tough on Syrian refugees. This descent into xenophobia was led, as usual, by Donald Trump. Amid bushels of word salad, he concurred with registering American Muslims, raised alarms about Arab-American treachery ("thousands and thousands" on TV cheering the World Trade Center collapse) and promised not only to deny entry to Syrian refugees, but to send back the ones already here.

Can you see it? Packing them onto his 757, the one with gold-plated seatbelts, then dumping them — orphans, widows, the lot — into a war zone to await the next



Amber Baesler/*The Journal-Star*  
An American flag waves above the crowd of people attending the candlelight vigil at Tower Square in Lincoln, Neb., Monday. The vigil was held for Syrian refugees in downtown Lincoln a week after Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts joined other Republican governors expressing concern over federal screening of Syrian refugees who want to enter the United States.

**Some have advocated shutting out all the refugees or taking Christians only.**

regime barrel bomb.

Other GOP candidates have issued Trumpian echoes. The Muslim registry had no takers. But some have advocated shutting out all the refugees or taking Christians only. They are chasing the polls showing strong anti-refugee sentiment.

How deeply shortsighted. It may work in the GOP primaries. But Trump-like anti-immigrant, anti-foreigner, now anti-Muslim, anti-Arab rhetoric — and don't forget those cunning Chinese stealing our jobs and ruthless Mexicans raping our women — will not play well in a general election.

Politically, it will be fatal. John Kasich has forcefully denounced this slide into the swamp. Where are the others?



Syrian refugee child, Mohammed, center, sits on his uncle's shoulder while lining at the port of Mitylene on the northeast Greek island of Lesbos, waiting their turn to get on board a ferry traveling to Athens, Wednesday.

Muhammed Muheisen  
AP Photo

COMING IN FEBRUARY!

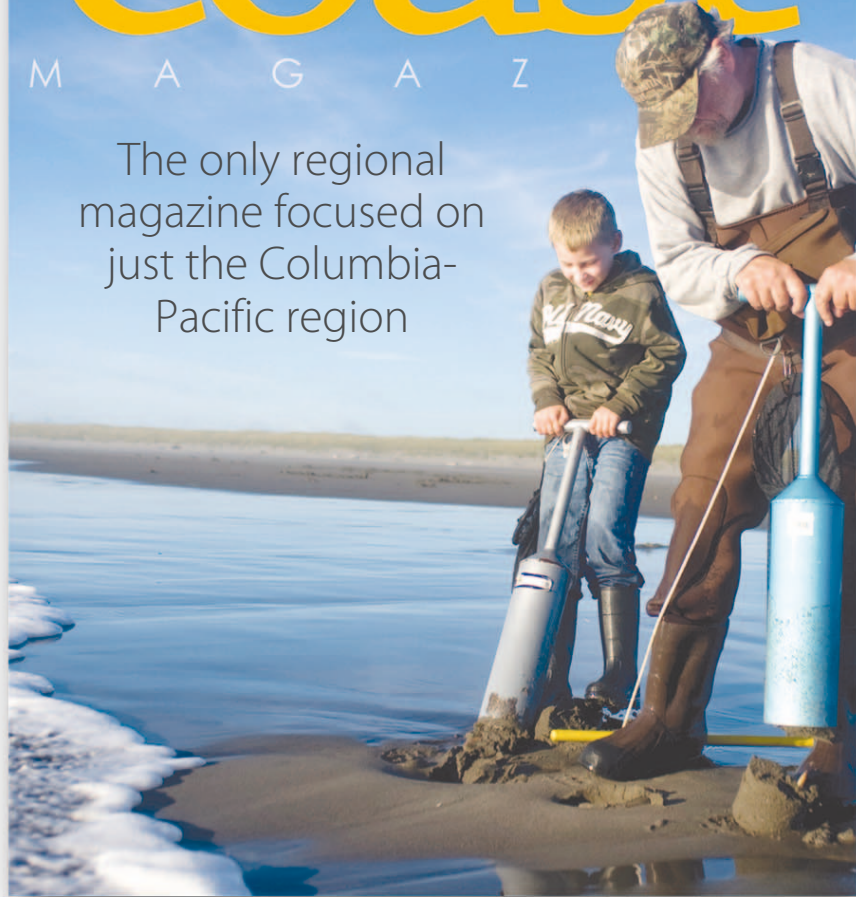
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