

## Food is like art

After reading the Mouth of the Columbia's review, "Life in the Slow Lane" (*Coast Weekend*, June 2), I feel compelled to share my point of view.

Food is like art, different people like different things. Who are they to say the way it should be, what they didn't like, and what they could have done better? I have been occasionally reading these reviews for years, now, and am appalled at their seemingly mean and holier than thou tone. Tastes differ, and if you feel the need to employ a food critic, why can't they be subjective, and helpful in their reviews, instead of mean and hurtful?

I made a point to stop by and introduce myself after reading the review. The owner stated to me that she was up all night crying because of it. They have obviously put their heart and soul into a place that they thought people would enjoy. Let people decide whether they like it or not — and God forbid, if they don't, then they can go to Yelp and TripAdvisor and play food critic. They don't have to come back. Let the people decide on their own.

To include three other businesses as better alternatives in one review is simply unfair. With quotes like "attire that's oddly aristocratic for the carnival fare," and "food is an afterthought," are negative things to say about a new business trying to make it. Why doesn't this person say it wasn't to my liking?

Lastly, why does *The Daily Astorian* still feel the need to hire someone who slams new or old local businesses in these antiquated reviews, unless, of course, The Mouth likes them? Shouldn't *The Daily Astorian* want to help promote and support local businesses, especially the new ones?

ERIC JENKINS  
Astoria

## It's not too late

As I saw all the pictures and celebrations of the young people in our area graduating and moving on with their lives, I thought to myself: How many times I've said to myself (and perhaps you have, too), boy, I wish I knew then what I know now when I, like these graduates, was just getting started in life. What a difference it might have made.

Of course we can't go back, but we can realize why it's so incumbent of those of us who have accumulated wisdom in our many years of facing the ups and downs of our lives, to mentor the younger generation.

Retired, bored, bound up with your own problems? Why not find a way to get involved with the younger generation? Volunteer, teach, share your trials and triumphs with them.

Someone has said, "What I kept I lost, but what I gave I have." How many of us go to our graves with a message in our hearts that we've never shared with family or friends that would have been a lift, a blessing to them? It's not too late. Write a letter, make a call, make a visit. As you bless, you'll surely be blessed.

JIM BERNARD  
Warrenton

## Ban neonicotinoids

I appreciated the article, "Beekeepers struggle to keep ag buzzing" (*The Daily Astorian*, June 10). Bees are critical to our food system, helping to pollinate nearly one in every three bites of food that we eat, and their high rates of decline are alarming.

As the article states, numerous factors contribute to hive losses. However, neonicotinoids, which are 6,000 times more toxic than DDT, should be recognized as a key contributor. In addition, more than any other factor, neonicotinoid use is something we can control — we have the ability to make sure these toxic pesticides stay off the market.

Admirably, Oregon has been at the forefront of acknowledging this, with Eugene becoming the first city in the nation to ban neonicoti-

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noids, and Portland following suit in 2015. Of course, this should be celebrated and replicated, but with hive losses as high as 45 percent, we simply don't have time to wait for individual cities to ban neonicotinoids on their own. What we really need is a ban at the federal level.

To make this happen, we must call on the Environmental Protection Agency to move forward with their research and take action to ban neonicotinoids. Failure to ban these bee-killing pesticides will have disastrous effects — after all, no bees means no food.

CASHEN CONROY  
Environment Oregon  
Portland

## Big questions

Why in their "right" minds did Columbia Memorial Hospital consider building a wing on the adjacent fill area for their expansion in the 21st century? Eight years before, geological studies put forth a case of liquefaction during an earthquake for Scow Bay, filled in during the early 1900s, where the hospital and football field were built. The medical facility traded a stadium built near the dump for the football field next to them, possibly because the people in charge didn't see the big picture.

And so it goes with the continual promise of the Bond Street Reconstruction. For three years I've been asking the Astoria City Council, the mayor and my council representatives in community sessions: When will Bond Street's slide be fixed so we have a two-lane street for a traffic outlet?

My concern: Marine Drive is the only other major exit from the city on the west. Bond Street has a traffic light, for flow, to regulate additional vehicles to Marine Drive. How long will it be until it's repaired? I've contacted the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), Astoria Public Works (Ken Cook) and Council Representative Cindy Price. I'm hoping for progress.

P. MATTSON  
McDONALD  
Astoria

## Water wise

I am writing this letter as a shout out to all homeowners who live in the Youngs River Lewis & Clark Water District. The YRLC Water Board made a decision — not on independent engineered data, but on their need for some fast cash. The decisions the YRLC board makes today will affect us all 20 to 30 years down the road, and there will be no going back.

The board is 100 percent behind a zoning change that would allow for the construction of 168 apartments at Miles Crossing. I believe that the district's first allegiance should be to ensure that there will be adequate water supply to current users, and to those property owners who may wish to build a home in the future. There are people in our district who have been paying taxes on buildable lots for many years. Will there be water for them when they want to build, or will we have another long moratorium?

According to an article in *The Daily Astorian*, "Pacific County rivers at record lows" (June 9), Pacific County is experiencing its lowest stream flows on record in the Willapa and Naselle rivers. They have been keeping records for 86 years, and the rivers are running at 26 percent of average flow. This is scary. I want

to know that my family will have water now, and in the many years to come.

The water board refuses to budge on their position, but you can let your county commissioners know how you feel about this. It is not too late now, but it will be soon.

ELENA MILLER  
Astoria

## Thanks for paper

All I wanted to write to you is to say thank you — you, and everyone else who works at *The Daily Astorian*, does a wonderful job, and I enjoy reading a few articles every once in awhile.

You guys do a great job with selecting topics and bringing out news that I would not have heard from anywhere else. I am always able to find at least one topic in the newspaper that I can enjoy at any given time throughout my day. I hope to keep seeing new stories that can kill some time when I have nothing to do during the day.

CHRISTOPHER  
MONTANO  
Astoria

## Time for Hillary

It's time to throw in the towel, boys. Bernie, take your finger-wagging, apologetic, righteous indignation schtick back to Washington and do what senators are elected to do — shovel that pork back to Vermont.

And, D.T., it was great entertainment while it lasted, in the great tradition of American political buffoonery, much loved by the likes of Will Rogers, H.L. Mencken, Mark Twain and Groucho Marx. "Crazy Bernie" and "Pocahontas" Warren was brilliant, and upstaging Hillary's trip to the ladies' room was genius, to say nothing of your front page photo-op with the Pope.

As show business people are wont to put it, "There is no such thing as bad publicity." And, from beginning to end, you knew how to garner it. But, the party's over and its time for you to get a gig with Saturday Night Live — perhaps doing parodies of Donald Trump.

It has been dinned into our ears for decades now that men in power have been screwing up the world for millennia, and it is time for the nurturing, caring, supportive, conciliatory hand of a woman to lead us into a halcyon future. In November, we will have that opportunity. Let's just do it.

LOUIS SARGENT  
Gearhart

## Shut the Mouth

Please shut the Mouth of the Columbia. To what end is the anonymous restaurant review continued? To fill space? To possibly sell ads? To possibly sell ads for rebuttals? To enhance one business over another?

In previous generations, our small town newspaper writers were usually aware of the local residents, knew them, their history, and relationships. However, today's generation, through the ubiquitous use of the social media, with no constraints, can anonymously bully, hate, and deride anyone. At least the modern venues such as Yelp or TripAdvisor generate various opinions and votes; a single published review does not.

Further observation seems to indicate that a trend of urban replants to a small town brings with it a would-be elitist attitude allowing mockery of the provincials therein.

PAUL VAN DER VELDT  
Astoria

# Some extremists fire guns; other extremists promote guns

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF  
*New York Times News Service*

Over the past two decades, Canada has had eight mass shootings.

Just so far this month, the United States has already had 20.

Canada has a much smaller population, of course, and the criteria that researchers used for each country are slightly different, but that still says something important about public safety.

Could it be, as Donald Trump suggests, that the peril comes from admitting Muslims? On the contrary, Canadians are safe despite having been far more hospitable to Muslim refugees: Canada has admitted more than 27,000 Syrian refugees since November, some 10 times the number the United States has.

More broadly, Canada's population is 3.2 percent Muslim, while the United States is about 1 percent Muslim — yet Canada doesn't have massacres like the one we just experienced at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, or the one in December in San Bernardino, California. So perhaps the problem isn't so much Muslims out of control but guns out of control.

Look, I grew up on a farm with guns. One morning when I was 10, I awoke at dawn to hear our chickens squawking frantically and saw a fox trotting away with one of our hens in its mouth. My dad grabbed his .308 rifle, opened the window and fired twice. The fox was unhurt but dropped its breakfast and fled. The hen picked herself up, shook her feathers indignantly and walked back to the barn. So in the right context, guns have their uses.

The problem is that we make no serious effort to keep firearms out of the hands of violent people. A few data points:

- More Americans have died from guns, including suicides, since just 1970 than died in all the wars in U.S. history going back to the American Revolution.

- The Civil War marks by far the most savage period of warfare in U.S. history. But more Americans are now killed from guns annually, again including suicides, than were killed by guns on average each year during the Civil War (when many of the deaths were from disease, not guns).

- In the United States, more preschoolers up through age 4 are shot dead each year than police officers are.

Canada has put in place measures that make it more difficult for a dangerous person to acquire a gun, with a focus not so much on banning weapons entirely (the AR-15 is available after undergoing safety training and a screening) as on limiting who can obtain one. In the United States, we lack even universal background checks, and new Harvard research to be published soon found that 40 percent of gun transfers didn't even involve a background check.

We can't prevent every gun death any more than we can prevent every car accident, and the challenge is particularly acute with homegrown terrorists like the one in Orlando. But experts estimate that a serious effort to reduce gun violence might reduce the toll by one-third, which would be more than 10,000 lives saved a year.

The Orlando killer would have been legally barred from buying lawn darts, because they were banned as unsafe. He would have been unable to drive a car that didn't pass a safety inspection or that lacked insurance. He couldn't have purchased a black water gun without an orange tip — because that would have been too dangerous.



Nicholas Kristof

But it's not too dangerous to allow the sale of an assault rifle without even a background check?

If we're trying to prevent carnage like that of Orlando, we need to be vigilant not only about infiltration by the Islamic State, and not only

about U.S. citizens poisoned into committing acts of terrorism. We also need to be vigilant about National Rifle Association-type extremism that allows guns to be sold without background checks.

It's staggering that Congress doesn't see a problem with allowing people on terror watch lists to buy guns: In each of the past three years, more than 200 people on the terror watch list have been allowed to purchase guns. We empower the Islamic State when we permit acolytes like the Orlando killer, investigated repeatedly as a terrorist threat, to buy a Sig Sauer MCX and a Glock 17 handgun on consecutive days.

A great majority of Muslims are peaceful, and it's unfair to blame Islam for terrorist attacks like the one in Orlando. But it is important to hold accountable Gulf states like Saudi Arabia that are well-springs of religious zealotry, intolerance and fanaticism. We should also hold accountable our own political figures who exploit tragic events to sow bigotry. And, yes, that means Donald Trump.

When Trump scapegoats Muslims, that also damages our own security by bolstering the us-versus-them narrative of the Islamic State. The lesson of history is that extremists on one side invariably empower extremists on the other.

So by all means, Muslims around the world should stand up to their fanatics sowing hatred and intolerance — and we Americans should stand up to our own extremists doing just the same.



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