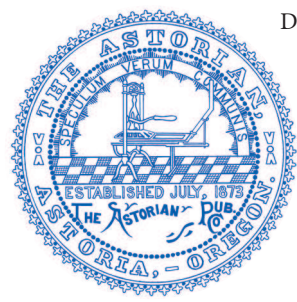


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OUR VIEW

Warrenton makes right decision on Walmart permit

Not everybody wants a Walmart in Warrenton or any other regional city. It's a divisive issue and one some Warrenton residents share with people in other communities across the country who oppose the big-box behemoth for a variety of reasons.

In fact, even a quick glance at the internet brings up a host of websites that are dedicated to nothing other than keeping Walmart out of those communities.

But despite opposition by the Clatsop Residents Against Walmart group and others who spoke against the mega-retailer at this past week's City Commission meeting, Warrenton commissioners made the right decision in renewing Walmart's site design permit for another year. The approval marked the third time the permit has been extended.

The decision of whether Walmart could build in Warrenton was originally made in 2013 when the commission first granted the retailer's land use permit. That 2013 decision later drew a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that claimed the agency failed to protect wetlands in its review and approval of a wetland fill permit application by Peaksview LLC. Peaksview owns land that Walmart plans to build on at Ensign Lane and U.S. Highway 101 in the North Coast Retail Center. The suit stalled Walmart's plans until two weeks ago when a federal judge dismissed the case. The delay, however, forced Walmart to ask for the third extension of its permit.

While in past votes commissioners had been unanimous in their approval, this time it wasn't a slam dunk. Commissioners voted 3-1 in favor with one commissioner absent from the meeting. The "no" vote is a bit puzzling and came from Commissioner Rick Newton, who said after the meeting that he opposed the extension because "I don't think it will make life better in Warrenton." Newton had previously voted "yes" last year on the extension issue.

Despite the flip-flop, the extension approval this past week was right for several reasons.

Whether Warrenton should have a Walmart or not was really decided when the city first began allowing big-box stores. That policy was reaffirmed with the original approval of Walmart's land use permit and then reinforced by the two additional extensions prior to last week's action.

And, importantly, Walmart thus far has met each legal requirement to build and open in Warrenton, barring a successful appeal of the judge's dismissal of the lawsuit. Doing an about-face on the issue now, despite its divisiveness, is a form of discrimination and protectionism that government has no business in practicing.

Governments make overall policy, and consumers, through freedom of choice, ultimately determine a business's success by making decisions with their feet on where they shop.

Signature events showcase the coast

From sailing and parades to concerts and clowns, this past weekend was filled with crowd-pleasing events. Add in a bridge rededication and the world's largest beach volleyball event, according to organizers, and it made for a signature showcase of the North Coast.

Organizers and sponsors of the 122nd Astoria Regatta festival, the Astoria Bridge rededication and the 35th annual Seaside Chamber Beach Volleyball event, and all the volunteers who helped at each, deserve a hearty congratulations and a job well done from us all.

Regatta had something for everyone, and was even more inclusive with Warrenton's participation for the first time with festivities there as well as those in Astoria. The well-attended events included sailboat races, the coronation of Aubrey McMahan as Regatta queen, the annual Grand Land Parade, the Highwater Boat Parade, the planting of roses at Lighthouse Park and a free country music concert in Warrenton, a free concert in Astoria by the Columbia River Symphony, fireworks and, of course, clowns and all their hijinks.

The weekend also marked the 50th anniversary and a rededication of the Astoria Bridge with officials from both sides of the river participating along with dignitary guests from Astoria's sister city of Walldorf, Germany.

In Seaside, at the chamber's four-day beach volleyball tournament, more than 3,000 players on about 1,450 teams battled for championships in a host of different divisions. They were cheered on by large crowds of family members, friends and other spectators. The event has been recognized since 2011 by the World Records Academy as the country's largest amateur beach volleyball tournament.

Each of the trio of events was well-run and well-supported as evidenced by the smiles from those who attended, and each of the events was successful and showcased the spirit and volunteerism of the coast at its best.



Germany's Kira Walkenhorst, right, tries to spike a ball past Egypt's Doaa Elghobashy, left, during a women's beach volleyball match at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Aug. 7.

Olympians in hijab and bikini

By ROGER COHEN

New York Times News Service

Since I saw a photograph of an Egyptian and a German beach volleyball player confronting each other at the net in Rio, I have been unable to get the image out of my head. Doaa Elghobashy, 19, wears a hijab, long sleeves and black leggings to her ankles. Kira Walkenhorst, 25, is in a dark blue bikini. The outstretched hands of the Olympian women almost meet, the ball between them.

The photo, by Lucy Nicholson of Reuters, juxtaposes two women, two beliefs and two dress codes, brought together by sport. The world confronts less a clash of civilizations than a clash of identities, concertinaed in time and space by technology. The West's image of Islam and the Muslim image of Western societies are often mutually incommunicable; the incomprehension incubates violence.

No area is as sensitive as that of the treatment of women, women's roles, women's sexuality, dress and ambitions. The story is often presented as one of Western emancipation versus Islamic subjugation. That, however, is an inadequate characterization.

What follows are accounts by two women, an Egyptian and an American, of their experiences with the hijab. Chadiedja Buijs is a graduate student in Cairo. Norma Moore is a former actress living in Boulder, Colorado, who recently visited Iran, where the rules obliged her to adopt Islamic dress codes.

CHADIEDJA BUIJS

My parents — Egyptian mother, Dutch father — separated when I was 4, and I grew up in the Netherlands. My mom doesn't wear a headscarf, and when I began to at the age of 19, five years ago, she said, "What the hell are you doing? I left my country so that you could be free, and this is what freedom did?"

I had a lot of issues with myself, with my spiritual needs and my state of being. I was very hardworking, very controlling. I began to feel that as a religious person I needed to realize that some things are bigger than me. I started with prayer. I stopped drinking. I began fasting. I'd been so obsessed with material things. After a while I became convinced that it would be good if I could wear the headscarf out of devotion and humility, as a sign of giving up some of my control. It worked.

Our Prophet says faith is like the ocean. Sometimes the waves are high, sometimes low. Sometimes I

am shaky in my faith, sometimes very strong.

The hijab is a matter of representation. I know the person I am and the ideas I have. But the person in front of me sees only the exterior. With the tension in Europe, things are worse. In a Dutch village, in a cafe full of rich white people, a man tore my veil off. It was shocking but not as frustrating as some of the looks and comments, the job rejections ("You do not fit the image of our store").

After the attacks in France, my mother said, "Please take your veil off." It is my choice to wear it. I will die with it on. That is my right. Nobody will take it away.

But balance is important. There is this life and the afterlife. Sometimes you need to think about your spirituality. Sometimes you need to adapt. In the West, now, I may wear tighter jeans, or have my neck showing, or use short sleeves. Here in Egypt I may wear maxi-skirts, long and wide. They do not look great. They make me fat. But, hey, that's the point! My family here is quite conservative.

Who is to say which of the women is more conservative, more of a feminist or more liberated? We do not know.

There is very little religious literacy in secular Western countries. And there is a crisis within Islam, over what it means to be a Muslim. As Muslims we have to acknowledge the problem. The Islamic State group controls what Islam looks like in Iraq and Syria — religious symbolism, flags, statements and verses. This is real. We cannot deny it. But we create extremism by talking about Islam only through this prism. The headscarf becomes a fetish.

Elghobashy is wearing leggings in the photo. I think she represents people like me. International-minded, young, modern Muslims who want to go out and study and work and play. We need different images of Islam.

I got different responses from men when I chose to wear a headscarf rather than a short skirt. It created a kind of distance. But I still have my sexuality in my own hands. I can be very flirtatious, go out and meet a

man — but I decide in what mode I want to be. I can be focused on my spirituality, prayers and study without distraction, or I can have a period when I choose to be sexy even in a headscarf through how I act or speak. I feel I have more power and independence vis-à-vis men now.

NORMA MOORE

I am a deeply religious person. I don't have a label to attach to my faith, but it is there nonetheless at the core of my being. I believe that God created me and created me with love as I am — just as God creates every other person. When I put on the hijab in Iran and the shapeless tunics I experience an attempt to deny how I have been made — an attempt to neutralize me.

It has made me afraid. I started this trip almost completely covered by my hijab. Before coming I practiced with the help of an internet video so that no trace of hair or neck or calf would show and make me vulnerable to stares or the humiliation of being chastised. I had come here voluntarily and accepted the terms of admission, so I began the trip in a willing state of submission.

But then the weather got hot — very hot. I got overheated and all I could think about was tearing this hijab off. I felt suffocated. I thought how I wouldn't let an animal suffocate like this. If my animal were covered like this and suffering I would tear the fabric off out of simple decency.

My hair, the curves in my body, were given to me by God. To cover my head and wear shapeless clothes feels like I am pretending not to be a woman and that somehow I am responsible for keeping men's sexuality within social bounds.

I just can't wrap my head around God making me responsible for men's sexuality.

The Olympics volleyball photograph is tantalizing. The few inches between the women's hands may as well be a chasm. More than once I have heard Iranian imams, with preposterous certainty, equate flimsy women's attire in the West with decadence and prostitution. To Western sensibilities, the covered Muslim woman must de facto be the disempowered woman awaiting liberation.

Reality is many-shaded. Elghobashy wears an anklet of colored beads. The only colors on Walkenhorst are those of the German flag. Who is to say which of the women is more conservative, more of a feminist or more liberated? We do not know. What we do know is that we need more events that provoke us to ask such questions and discard tired certainties that may be no more than dangerous caricatures.