

OPINION

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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OUR VIEW

Shopping small is a big deal

Consider supporting a local mom & pop shop

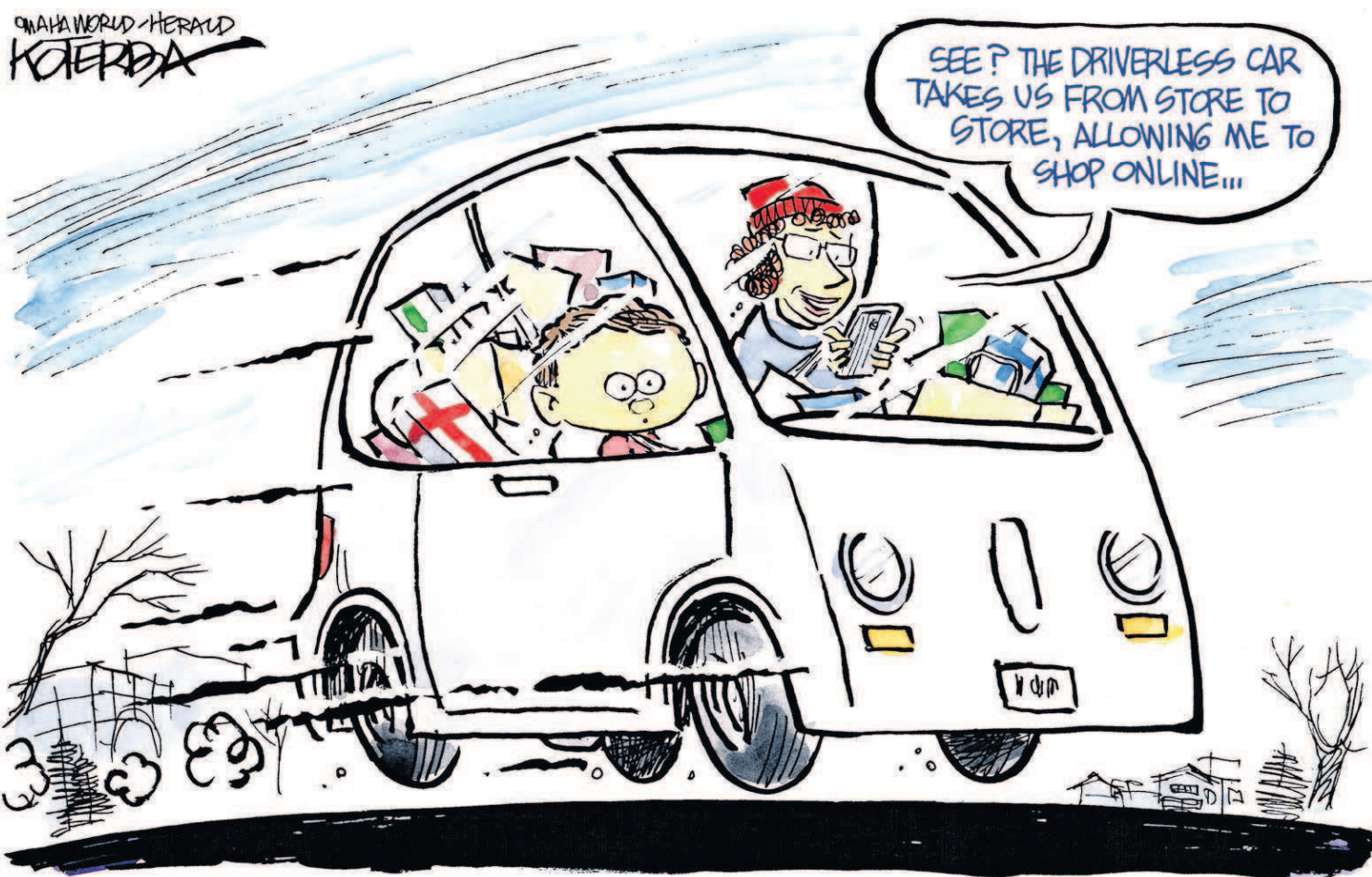
You know the drill. Before your Thanksgiving meal is even fully digested, you’ve already got a dozen sales circulars spread out on the coffee table touting unbelievable deals, doorbusters, or holiday savings!

Determined to fulfill your capitalistic duty, you make a strategic plan to leave the house before dawn in order to be in line at Big Box Store X in time for the doors to open and purchase that certain gadget or gizmo at an insanely low price before supplies run out.

Over the past few decades, “Black Friday” shopping has become just as much a part of our annual Thanksgiving ritual as the turkey and stuffing. Bricks-and-mortar retail establishments and now, online business models, largely depend on this annual eruption of consumerism to determine their financial fortunes for the year.

In fact, competition for holiday spending has become so fierce over the past decade that Black Friday often begins on Thanksgiving Day itself, if not sooner.

Now seems as good a time as any to be reminded of why we choose to live in small towns like Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart, Seaside, Cannon Beach, Ilwaco and Long Beach. We do have a few big national chain stores, and Portland is of course a short hop away. But we are surrounded here by dozens upon dozens of local “mom & pop” retail and eating establishments owned by our friends and neighbors.



AND THEN BLACK FRIDAY AND CYBER MONDAY MERGED INTO ONE LONG WEEKEND...

These stores often cater to their customers in ways the big national chains simply can’t or won’t. They know their inventory and they often know their customers by name. If good old-fashioned customer service is what you’re after, you will likely find it at the little shop or restaurant just down the street.

So, after you’ve fully recovered from the mayhem at the mall or the brouhaha at the big box retailer this Black Friday, take time to consider supporting a local mom & pop shop during Small

Business Saturday.

You’ll find the pace is slower, but the interaction genuine, and you may even find just that perfect gift item and make new friends in the process.

Remember, it’s very likely when you “Shop Small” that you’ll discover that your kids go to school with their kids, they’re in your Rotary, Lions or Kiwanis club, and they’re likely dues-paying members of the same local chamber of commerce. They’re also the ones supporting the local school cheerleading

team or marching band fundraiser.

Since Small Business Saturday started in 2010, U.S. customers have reported spending an estimated total of \$85 billion at independent retailers and restaurants. Some of that was spent right here on the North Coast and the Peninsula.

When you invest your dollars by shopping at a local establishment, you’re actually helping your town, your schools, and your community to become stronger.

OTHER VIEWS

Newspaper editorials from around Oregon
Bend Bulletin, on state psychiatric reviews

Oregon’s Psychiatric Security Review Board has failed Oregonians. Its main mission, according to its own website, is to protect the public from those criminals who are found guilty except for insanity. It does not do that, and it has failed to study the issue in any serious way.

If it had, it might have discovered that 35 percent of people it releases from supervision commit another crime within three years, according to the Malheur Enterprise newspaper and the nonprofit news organization ProPublica.

Instead, it calculates its recidivism rate only on those currently under supervision, and in that group the recidivism rate is a mere 0.46 of 1 percent.

The board manages prisoners who have been sent to the Oregon State Hospital rather than to prison after committing what can be horrific crimes.

As one example, the hospital is home to Joshua Webb, a Colton man who pleaded guilty except for insanity in the 2017 murder of his mother, whose severed head he then took to a grocery store where he stabbed someone else.

Unfortunately, the board doesn’t track what its former patients do. Had they done so, its members might not have been surprised in January 2017 when Anthony Montwheeler stabbed an ex-wife to death and killed another man in a head-on collision while fleeing police near Ontario. The board had released Montwheeler from custody the previous month after he claimed to have been faking mental illness for 20 years in its custody.

Thanks to the Enterprise, ProPublica and Oregon’s public records law, the board’s problems are now very public, indeed. While it has discussed studying its former charges’ recidivism rates and even made a stab at doing so, the work has never been completed, a fact it has worked hard to hide in recent months, suing the Enterprise to keep its records secret.

It can hide no longer. After Gov. Kate Brown ordered the board to release the records, it did so.

Now it’s up to the Oregon Legislature to take matters into its own hands. At the least, the board should be required to do a good



Happy Thanksgiving
Have a Bountiful Holiday

recidivism study and make its findings public. And, depending upon what it finds, the board should acknowledge its problems and change its practices accordingly.

Eugene Register-Guard, on thinking outside the homelessness box

Data released by the state show that the number of homeless students is down from the previous year in two out of three local school districts. This is encouraging, and may be a sign of more affordable housing or more functional homes. But numbers continue to rise in the 4J School District, meaning there remains much work to be done. We are lucky to have an innovative local network focused on just this.

If you spend time in Eugene and Springfield, chances are you’ve heard of 15th Night. That’s because it exists to communicate. Its goal is to connect runaways or newly homeless, “unaccompanied” students with the people and places they can turn to

for help. Its name is on the lips of key community members — everyone from school janitors to police officers to members of the Junior League of Eugene.

But you may not have come across the vast network that is 15th Night, because if you ask coordinator Megan Shultz, she’ll tell you that “15th Night isn’t really a thing. Not a service, not a program. All we do is coordinate. Break down barriers, help providers do their work, help students connect with them.”

What 15th Night really is ... is an agreement. A promise among willing, compassionate people that no student should ever have to choose to spend a fifteenth night on the street. After that, youth have an 80 percent higher chance of remaining homeless long-term.

15th Night’s story involves a city official, a local business owner and a social service provider coming together to, in Megan’s words, “create a value” in our community around keeping students off the street. They found this was an opportunity to stem the flow of people into chronic homelessness.

The group put together a youth action council to better understand what homeless

students face, and sent them out to survey their peers. They asked: Why do youth leave home? What do they need most after they do? What could have kept them from leaving?

The youth council shared this data with a “catalyst team” of community leaders. The data revealed a list of more than 50 resources that homeless students need access to, from the very easy (shoes) to the very hard (family remediation). Together, the council and catalyst team went to look for providers in the community, and the list became a “menu” of services accessible through 15th Night.

The next step was connecting youth with services, and that’s when 15th Night approached the tech community. At Hack for a Cause in 2016, developers competed to build a solution for this challenge, and the Rapid Access Network was born. You might have to be a developer to fully understand how it works, but it does exactly what 15th Night needs. It leverages existing relationships and programs to get students the help they need quickly and safely.

Barriers are broken down, and connections that didn’t exist before are made.