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## Je Suis Charlie

“What happened in Paris today is a devastating shock for France, and for the freedom of the Press.”

These words are from French journalist Catherine Mondoy, former LeMonde newspaper reporter, in Thursday’s British newspaper Independent, following Tuesday’s Paris terrorist attack on the people of the newspaper Charlie Hebdo. “Just as 9/11 was an attack on symbols of American economic might, the slaughter at the offices of Charlie Hebdo undermines the country that has long since embodied the ideal of human rights. Charlie Hebdo’s staff has been threatened over the years as a result of its famously provocative caricature of the Prophet Muhammad in 2005 ... but nobody expected that words would be translated into deeds.”

“Je Suis Charlie,” people everywhere are saying. We join in that expression of sympathy for our brother journalists in Paris. Routinely Charlie Hebdo is being tagged “the satiric newspaper,” as if the distinction is somehow relevant within the context of a brutal tragedy. Charlie Hebdo was a newspaper, and its employees paid the ultimate price for the principle of free expression.

Beyond that, we will let the community of journalists most affected, the cartoonists, say what needs to be said. Clockwise, from top: Michael Ramirez, Tom Stiglich, Gary Markstein, Natasha Markovitch of Hood River and John Dering.



## Our readers write

### Time for change

When tragedies like the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner and the recent killings of NY police officers occur, we often retreat to our ideological corners to sift facts to fit our preferred narratives.

It should come as no surprise that police and prosecutors see recent cases in Ferguson and New York differently than minority communities subject to racial profiling, aggressive policing practices and past incidents of police brutality.

Policing is a necessary and difficult task, often performed under extreme conditions. Police officers enforce policies written by others and sometimes make mistakes. Justly or not, convictions of police officers are likely to remain rare in all but the most egregious cases.

Trials in ambiguous cases like Michael Brown are unlikely to alter feelings of injustice or lead to improved relations between the minority communities and the police.

There is a desperate need for more transparency and accountability for police interactions with minority communities. Better training, more minority officers, body cameras and more community policing will help, but will do little to cure racism, reduce intergenerational poverty, improve education or increase the life expectancies of young black men.

The average white male with a college degree can expect to live 14 years longer than a black male with less than a high school education. These are problems not just of race, but of class and culture. If we truly believe that black lives matter, these are the deeper challenges we need to be talking about.

Government and business can help make needed changes, but progress will only come when individuals, communities, activists and

elected officials move beyond tired narratives that place blame on others and honestly talk about how our own actions need to change.

**Richard Davis**  
*The Dalles*

### Rescuing our food

The week before the election in November, my husband asked me how our life would change if the GMO labeling measure passed. I have been shopping and cooking intentionally for decades. And still, it was a very good question. Whether it passed or not, I knew I needed to continue in changing out our grocery cart, expanding our garden, and speaking to how our food is grown and delivered. We know now that it failed by a very small margin on a recount. I actually call that a win. When you consider the money against the measure, and that it was a first time to the ballot, it gives me hope like little has these passing years, as I watch Earth anguish.

Rick McBee was right when he wrote that if we really want GMO free food, we know how to find it. The difference is those of us looking for it are the choir. We already understand. The goal is that if GMO foods were labeled, it might help more of us become aware of how prevalent modified food is. Food designed to tolerate more pesticides, negatively affecting our environment. It might raise more voices, and change the market. Ah, yes, change the market.

So, as a mother, grandmother, neighbor, volunteer, coworker, lover of beauty, I encourage you to think about how you feed yourselves and others. It's not only good for you, it's good for our collective future.

Read labels, and buy foods that don't come in packages. Love and pray from your kitchens. When you open your wallet, think about where

your purchase dollars go, and how they are serving this world. We will, none of us, be perfect. We need only think, each day, of the direction we are going, and make the changes we can, to steer it into the world we'd like the following generations to inherit.

**Beth Hartwell**  
*Hood River*

### For shame

This past Sunday, while in downtown Hood River, I parked at a couple of different locations and it wasn't until I got home that I realized my “Army Mom” magnet from the back of my car was gone. I would have thought it had fallen off, but the fact that my other magnet that says, “Proud Parent of a United States Solider” was there, but turned completely upside down, makes me think the first going missing was deliberate as well.

Nobody believes in peace more than I, but I raised my children to make their own decisions and do what they believe they need to do. So when my first son, and now my second, joined the United States Army, I chose to support them and their choice.

At a time when people are demonstrating their right to freedom of speech in the streets of America, I'd like to think that responsible adults would be above stealing my freedom of speech and being disrespectful to those who would serve our country.

If this was done by a teenager/s, I'd like to ask them if they enjoy living in a country where they can be free to enjoy a Sunday afternoon, safe in the knowledge that soldiers such as my 19-year-old son are a part of the military force that protects them.

Whenever did this should be disappointed and ashamed of their behavior. I know I am.

**Tamara Emler Ball**  
*Parkdale*

### ANOTHER VOICE

## Keystone XL and the Sherbet Rainbow

By EVA BRYANT

Last Tuesday morning, I read the news on Google. The new crop of House Representatives would be sworn in that day. Republicans are now the majority in both houses. I read the transcript of the speech of House Speaker John Boehner. He wasted no time mentioning the imminent battle for passage of the Keystone XL pipeline. He mentioned the 94,000 jobs that would be created. An impressive number, if you ignore that these would be temporary jobs. He brought up the “job killing” oppression of Obamacare. Much of the speech was dedicated to American jobs.

Jobs are a good thing. And so is health care. And so is a healthy environment. Doesn't it seem odd to you that politicians seem to think that Americans are corporations? They seem to forget the Americans who are children, elderly or animals. These non-corporate creatures don't have a say. But they can tell us a lot, by their mere existence, and their circumstances. I haven't seen adequate analysis of the cost/benefit equation of the Keystone pipeline on arboreal, amphibian, avian, apian or aquatic Americans. Have you?

Not to mention the risks, in the event of a spill, to lands, fresh water supplies, or the impacts on the Gulf. Tar sand crude is the dirtiest oil product there is, and mining for it ruins vast tracts of countryside. I don't know how happy Canadians are with that prospect. Pumping that goo all the way to the Gulf Coast seems like a ridiculous waste of energy. This oil is not destined to be consumed by Americans, by the way, but sold overseas. How does that increase our energy independence? I won't pretend expertise on

the pumping or refining processes, but they seem expensive and risky, considering the eventual profit. What profit? You'd have to ask the Kock brothers, and the Chinese government.

Later on Tuesday, I attended my aerobics class. Toward the end of class the instructor asked if we wanted to do a little more aerobic work, or a lot of stretching. I voiced my desire for stretch, and another student wanted more aerobics. While the instructor was still deliberating, we agreed on splitting the time between both activities. Pleased that we had achieved so agreeable a result, we high-fived each other and the instructor smiled. “See how we'd get things done if women ran the world?” she said. I don't know if all women are so gifted at compromise, but it does seem easy to reach peaceful agreement when both parties are clear in their values, sincere in their motives.

Now it's Thursday, and sure enough, the House voted to approve the pipeline. President Obama promises to veto it. In my Aerobic class, as usual, the bright sherbet colors and dull industrial black and grey of our workout wear are a rainbow in motion to my aging eyes. I can't wear glasses in class; they just fog up. Aerobics is a cacophony of brilliant colors, booming music, shouted commands, and hurried feet, each of us doing our best, yet all of us doing it a little different. My country is like that: Brilliant ideas, vigorous activity, the roar of information, all smeary with sweat and haste, and every resident, even frogs, doing our best to keep up. Each one unique and precious.

*Eva Bryant lives in Hood River.*



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