



# Opinion



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## Lack of courage behind failure to do the right thing to save the Snake River salmon

By JEFF CURTIS  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Hidden deep in the news stories on the federal government's decision to put in place environment and technological fixes, in an effort to save the wild Snake River salmon instead of removing four dams on the lower Snake River was a quote that should be lost. When asked about those risky and uncertain fixes, George Frampton, the White House expert, said that the dam removal was in fact "the single most beneficial thing we could do" to save fish.

The draft biological statement that accompanied the federal government's decision supported Frampton's statement. In it was a passage that said that under this scheme of so-called tech- and environmental fixes, the dams would continue to be allowed to kill up to 88 percent of juvenile fall Chinook that attempt to navigate these manmade masses of concrete and earth.

If the four lower Snake dams do kill nearly 90 percent of the young fall Chinook salmon and if the federal government's expert on saving salmon truly believes that dam removal is the surest way to save the fish, then why are these dams being allowed to stand?

In these same news stories Frampton was quick to also point out that the dam removal was an impossibility at this time because of a lack of support among the region's members of congress.

That lack of support, combined with the Clinton Administration's lack of courage in overriding the opposition to dam removal by regional political leaders like Washington state Senator Slade Gorton does not bode well for the salmon or the citizens of the Pacific

Northwest.

The cruel irony of this decision is that when these politicians and federal policy makers finally come to the realization that, in order to save the salmon the dams must be removed, it will likely be too late. A trout Unlimited-sponsored completed by a well-respected biologist last year found that if conditions don't change, wild Snake River spring and summer Chinook could be functionally extinct by 2017. Simple math skills tell us that five to ten years the federal government has said they will keep the tech-fixes in place, coupled with 7 to 9 years it will take to dismantle the lower Snake dams, brings the salmon right on edge of extinction or, in worst case scenario, actual extinction.

But it is not just the salmon that will suffer from this cruel play of politics, it also the citizens and taxpayers of the Pacific Northwest. We have been forced to deal with the decades-long controversy surrounding efforts to save the salmon and now will continue to have to do so as this debate shifts to the courtrooms. We, like other Americans, will see our tax bills increase to pay for risky and uncertain salmon saving efforts like fish barging and continued modifications to the four dams.

It has been said that in this day and age political courage is in short supply.

Nowhere is that more evident in the decision of the federal government and the members of congress not to support the decision of the one fix they know will save the salmon—removal of the four lower Snake River dams. Unfortunately, once again it will be the salmon and the public—not the politicians—who will be forced to bear the costs of this lack of political courage.

## Advancing the cause of tolerance

By HUGH B. PRICE, PRESIDENT  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

I thought we—that is, American Society—had settled the issue of a presidential candidate's religion forty years ago in the 1960 Presidential Election that put John F. Kennedy in the White House.

I thought American society had decided that a presidential candidate's faith is not an issue. That's what has been so comfortably—and perhaps, smugly—said since the Kennedy years.

But now we know that the issue of a presidential, or vice-presidential, candidate's religion had not been as settled as we thought.

We know by the reaction—both the positive reaction and the negative reaction—that has welled up to Vice President Gore's selection of Connecticut Senator Joseph I. Lieberman as his running mate for the Democratic Party ticket.

The pundits have declared that Gore's move in drafting a Jewish American to run with him at the top of the national ticket—a first—is a bold stroke politically.

Well, I say it's an inspired choice socially.

By that I mean, it's a great decision for the social well being of the American people by taking on who votes for whom.

By taking on the unspoken conventional wisdom that a Jew shouldn't be tapped for the top electoral spots of the major parties for the ultimate positions of leadership.

In doing so, the action has advanced the cause of tolerance for all Americans; for progress can never be made on that front unless the intolerance is directly confronted. That was one of the lessons of JFK's choosing to directly answer the

(Please see "Tolerance" page 6)

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

There is currently a lot of talk in the US media regarding the candidature of Joseph Lieberman, the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate. They make it sound as if it's a big deal to have a non-Christian at this high post. They also talk about Lieberman being the only non-Protestant senior-level candidate after Kennedy. They talk about whether Americans will accept a Jew as the VP. Such talk comes after 2 centuries of democracy!

In this light, it is interesting to look at India. Just like USA, it is a secular democracy with no State religion. Independent and democratic for about 53 years. 3% Christians, 18% Muslims, the rest Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists etc. Still, India has had 2 Muslim Presidents and numerous Muslim and Christian Ministers and Chief Ministers. Current President and Naval Chief are Christians. Heck, even the true original Roman Catholic Sonia Gandhi - a European born to boot - is the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament! This is not to say that India is better than USA, or that USA needs to learn from India. It is simply a presentation of reality. Those who claim that minorities are systematically discriminated against in India should take a look at this picture. Automatic vilification of Hindus for attacks against Christians is all the more deplorable because of the recent findings that the Church blasts were caused by a Pakistan-inspired Islamic cult.

Let us pick up good from everywhere while refraining from unjust, false accusations.

Sincerely,  
Mac Kher

## A surgeon's story about the gun war and children

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Dr. Edward Cornell III is an accomplished surgeon and the Trauma Chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He sees many of the most devastating injuries that come through the hospital's emergency room door. Far too often, this means treating young people who are victims of gun violence. In 1999 Johns Hopkins Hospital treated 390 gunshot wounds, more than one a day, and almost two-thirds of them were patients between 15 and 20 years old. Much of the city's gun violence is linked to the widespread drug trade. A federal study released this summer found Baltimore leads the nation in heroin use and also has one of the worst crack cocaine epidemics in the county. Dr. Cornell uses experience as a trauma surgeon to go into classrooms and youth centers and teach workshops in violence prevention. At a workshop he presented at the Samuel Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy ministry at Haley farm, CDF's center for spiritual renewal and leadership development, he began by apologizing to the audience because his stories about his work need to be rated "R" for excessive violence, but he explained, "That my world. For as a trauma surgeon, when it comes to seeing the results of children without love, without positive role models, without activities and without instruction, I'm at the end of the food chain. The only one behind me in line is the medical examiner that does the autopsies."

He shared the story of typical patients he had treated just three weeks earlier: a sixteen year-old boy brought to the emergency room at 2:00 on a Saturday morning with a gunshot wound. The wound itself was just a tiny hole less than an inch wide on his buttocks. But the internal damage was devastating, and Dr. Cornell described the long procedure over twenty doctors, nurses, and paramedics had to go through to try to save him: pumping on his chest, cutting it open to reach in and massage his heart, inserting a breathing tube, emptying his stomach to administer anesthesia, giving him drugs to try to increase his blood pressure, inserting an IV to give him extra blood. He then

described the scene after the boy finally died and he was left to break the awful news to the boy's mother, girlfriend and young child, brother, and the other family members anxiously gathered in the hospital's waiting room.

Dr. Cornell says those moments with families are the one part of his job he hates—and no matter what the circumstances, the horror, shock, and pain are the same every time. He also says he hears over and over again that the young victims of gun violence he treats were "good kids who fell in with the wrong crowd's out there somewhere, but they never get to my hospital. Everyone is someone's good kid."

Why is this true? It may be because so many of these young victims really were just "good kids," and some adults simply cannot understand what happened when a child they love goes in just a few short years for being a "good" 8- or 9-Year-old to a teenagers who is a victim of drug abuse or violence. This is what Dr. Cornell sees his position in the trauma ward as the end of a very long chain of events in these young people's lives. It is also what in addition to being a surgeon he makes a point of finding ways to see that fewer children ever reach his link in the chain.

Before coming to Baltimore, Dr. Cornell was part of a team of Los Angeles trauma surgeons who participated in the Youth Impact Program, a violence offenders ages 12-17. The surgeons show the youths operating room photographs of gun violence injuries and them to intensive care units to meet young people who survived shootings but were paralyzed or otherwise injured. In Baltimore, on top of his 80-hour workweeks as Trauma Chief, Dr. Cornell is a board member of Baltimore's Police Athletic League. He continues the same kind of violence prevention outreach he did in the Youth Impact Program, and also holds a monthly all-male "Rap With Doc" session at an East Baltimore center, plays basketball with the youths who attend his sessions, and otherwise serves as a mentors.

I am so proud all of Dr. Cornell's important work. I am grateful for the extraordinary gift he has been given as a surgeon, and for the way his work has led him to a commitment to prevention and to sharing his experiences with the young people he does not want to see grow up to be his future patients.

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