

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Students should stand up, walk out

Students across the nation will walk out of their classrooms Wednesday morning, in memory of the 17 people killed last month at a high school in Florida.

And despite entreaties from some school administrators not to take part, we argue that local high school students should join the movement.

The planned walkout is just 17 minutes, and students can learn plenty from that short break in the school day should they decide to own it and use their time wisely. They will get a different kind of education — a lesson about their ability to disrupt the status quo and the consequences for doing so, about the power of demonstration and what people can accomplish when they work together.

We're pleased that some school districts — such as Pendleton — have offered alternatives within the school environment that keep students in classrooms, while still grappling with the problem of school safety and gun violence. We also like Hermiston's plan that allows students to walk out and be heard, but remain under supervision while on school property.

A walkout is not without risk.

There are downsides to events like this, and surely some students will use this movement as a cover to blow off class or blow off steam in an

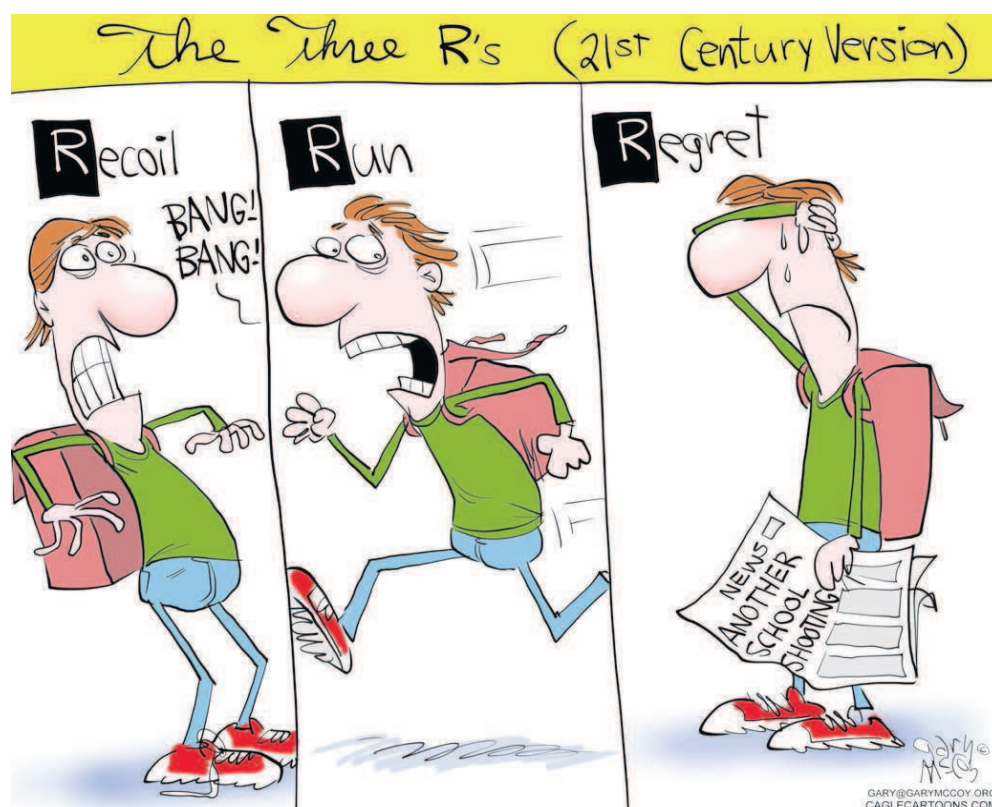
unproductive way. That's unfortunate, but itself not without a learning opportunity. Students are bound to learn that protests are judged by many on the foolish actions of a few.

But we hope the majority of students use the time wisely, to consider their safety and their fellow students across the nation. We hope they return to class invigorated and engaged, and to take the responsibility to make up whatever they missed.

Standing up for yourself and your future is a rite of passage every teenager must navigate. It's never easy. Often, the journey is filled with awkwardness — a lack of self-confidence combined with a deep need to buck authority and become the singular person you want to be. A walkout is one opportunity to take non-violent action that helps define who you are and your future.

It doesn't have to be partisan and political. You don't have to be in favor of gun control, or in favor of armed teachers. Students can walk out solely in memory of the lives lost, and to give themselves the ability to think for a few minutes about their own safety and what they want — and demand — in the way of protection. Certainly everyone who walks out will have a different solution in mind.

Not everyone will feel that way, and students may face reprisals. Perhaps



they will be suspended from school, perhaps they will be saddled with an additional essay to explain their reasoning. We'd argue that's all in a day's work of trying to accomplish something outside the ordinary. There is always a standby outrage from those who disagree, and there is always a heaping helping of additional responsibility on those who try anything.

Still, the reprisals may all be temporary, and the benefits may be lasting. Many colleges — from Yale to UCLA — have told prospective students that unexcused absences or other consequences resulting from the walkout won't affect admission. In fact, one could imagine many scholarship-winning essays penned about standing

up for their beliefs.

Pendleton, which has been an active place for protesters over the last two years, will host a separate march on Saturday, March 24. That march also dovetails with a national event, and you can bet hundreds of people will take part locally while millions march nationally. Students should be at the front of that march, learning how to lead and how to inspire their community.

But those students must first be able to find their voices. Wednesday offers an opportunity for them to do so, to try on the persona of being changers and shapers of the world, instead of just watchers and complainers and victims. Who knows — they may find that they like it.

OTHER VIEWS

Big sugar versus your body

The sugar industry and its various offshoots, like the soda industry, have spent years trying to trick you.

Big Sugar has paid researchers to conduct misleading — if not false — studies about the health effects of added sweeteners. It has come up with a dizzying array of euphemistic names for those sweeteners. And it has managed to get sugars into a remarkable three-quarters of all packaged foods in American supermarkets.

Most of us, as a result, eat a lot of sugar. We are surrounded by it, and it's delicious. Unfortunately, sugar also encourages overeating and causes health problems. As confusing as the research on diet can often seem, it consistently points to the harms of sugar, including obesity, diabetes and other diseases.

Virtually the only way to eat a healthy amount of sugar is to make a conscious effort. You can think of it as a political act: resisting the sugar industry's attempts to profit off your body. Or you can simply think of it as taking care of yourself.

I'm one of those people with a raging sweet tooth. I consider ice cream to be a gift from the gods, and I stash small chocolates in too many drawers. A couple years ago, I realized that I needed to cut back. If the ice cream and chocolates were going to stay, other sweeteners had to go.

So my wife and I went cold turkey for one month: no added sweeteners. No sugar, no honey, no corn syrup, no stevia. It wasn't easy, but it worked.

We discovered which sugars we missed and would go back to eating — and which had needlessly snuck into our diets. Along the way, we also ate fewer processed foods and more vegetables, fruit, eggs, nuts, meat and fish.

In a column last year, I described this "month without sugar," and I'm still hearing from readers who have done it themselves or are considering it. I highly recommend it. But I have also heard from readers who want to consume less sugar without first going cold turkey.

Fair enough. The sugarless month is just a means to an end, and there are other means.

Working with experts and colleagues, I've now put together an online guide to cutting back on sugar without spending more money or losing the pleasure of eating. That last part is important. Done right, a less sweet diet can be more enjoyable than a sugar-packed one.

Our overarching suggestion is to choose a couple of simple rules. Don't agonize over the sugar content of every single thing you

eat. You'll make yourself miserable and you will probably give up before too long. Instead, decide on two or three systemic changes, and stick to them. You can add changes later.

Your rules should revolve around added sweeteners, rather than the natural ones in fruits, vegetables and dairy. It's not that the added ones are so much worse (despite what you may have heard about high-fructose corn syrup). Many researchers

believe that sugar is sugar. But people don't generally overeat natural sugars. Have you ever inhaled five apples in one sitting?

The online guide has many more details, but here are a few rules to consider:

Fix your breakfast. It's the most sugar-packed meal, and it doesn't need to be. Eggs, fruit, nuts, plain yogurt, plain oatmeal and traditional pita bread are delicious — and free of added sugars. If you're pressed for time, boil a dozen eggs, refrigerate them and grab one or two in the morning. A sign of a good breakfast plate: It has an array of natural colors.

Redo your pantry. Steer clear of staples — like sauces, crackers and breads — with unnecessary sugars. There are plenty of unsweetened alternatives, like Victoria's pasta sauces, French's Yellow Mustard, Maille Dijon mustard, Saltines, Triscuits and some Trader Joe's tortillas. Once you spend a little time reading ingredient lists, the unsweetened staples can become your defaults. Trader Joe's is an especially good place to shop, but supermarkets work, too.

Eliminate soda. Just get rid of it. Soda and sports drinks are essentially liquid sugar, and are the largest source of added sweeteners in the American diet. Switch to flavored seltzer or, if you must, diet soda. The health effects of diet soda still are not clear, but it seems considerably less bad.

Whip portion inflation. Restaurant desserts are often family-size servings marketed as individual portions. The marble-loaf cake at Starbucks, for example, has more sugar than most adults should eat in an entire day. Your grandparents didn't eat desserts like this. When you eat out, think of every dessert as a serving for two. It's better to put some in the garbage than on your waistline.

The best news about sugar is that Americans are finally catching on. Sales of regular soda are plunging. Some food brands are starting to brag about not adding sweeteners. For a long time, we didn't even realize what Big Sugar was trying to do us. Now we do — and we can fight back.

David Leonhardt is an op-ed columnist for The New York Times.



OTHER VIEWS

Morrow County will engage in the event of active shooter

By JOHN A. BOWLES

Morrow County Sheriff Kenneth Matlack has directed the sheriff's office to engage in continuous training on many different law enforcement scenarios, and this includes training with other law enforcement agencies. The idea is to be on the same page and be trained on the same procedures — when one agency responds to assist another, we are one cohesive unit.

By working together as a team we are able to provide better service to the public. Our number one goal is to preserve life and provide public safety and security. It is important to have the personnel and resources to properly and safely provide the services required. Having deputies patrolling the county 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and having school resource officers in our schools is required to maintain public safety and security. Our school resource officers are in the

schools working with the students and staff daily. We want the students, staff and parents to be comfortable with contacting law enforcement with issues or concerns, and we accomplish this by building relationships.

Active shooter incidents are a major concern and can occur anywhere, from large cities to small communities. During an active shooter incident the key is to stop the threat. We won't wait for a SWAT team or 10 deputies to respond before deciding what to do. We will rely on our training and respond appropriately.

If we hear shots, we react. We go to the shots and neutralize the threat, period. There is no excuse for not reacting. If we don't react, people are hurt or killed. That is not acceptable. Our duty is to preserve life and provide public safety and security. We plan and train for the worst and hope for the best.

John A. Bowles is Morrow County undersheriff.

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