

Letters to the Editor:  
Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com

Press Releases:  
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OPINION

SATURDAY

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LETTERS

Food for thought

A few days ago I reached into a plastic bag for what was left of a loaf of bread that had been bought at least a month and a half prior. What struck me as odd — no, it really didn't — the slice of bread had just a little tiny bit of green mold, just a small little pinch.

I recall a few years back watching a YouTube video in which some guy with a host of credentials said, as he proceeded to unwrap a burger from a very well known fast food establishment, "I bought this burger a year ago," and he also claimed that the burger looked as good as the day he bought it.

I suppose, we as individuals could perform the same experiment. However, the way I see it, what does all those preservatives do to the human body and our health that our government seems to be concerned about?

Now I can understand shelf life — the longer a product sits on the shelf without going bad is a plus for the manufacture — but why with food that is suppose to be consumed almost immediately need all those preservatives?

We have been told that X parts per million won't hurt us. I think it does matter how many parts per million will or won't hurt us. After 20, 30, 40 years, what about those X parts per million, what then is the effect on our health? I think, we know with the higher rates of every disease and every ailment known to man.

And yes, I consume those well-preserved burgers.

Vernon James  
Florence

License pedestrians

I agree with Portlander Bob Huckaby; walking should require training, certification, licensing and taxing. Oh, he is only targeting bicyclists? Why stop there?

Training: Our educational system uses the model that citizens must be taught, told and advised by public agencies down to the smallest aspect of their lives. Compliance requires indoctrination in approved ways. Since the young must be accompanied, high schools and colleges could provide.

Certification: Pedestrians continue to cross roads where it's not as safe. They should not be allowed to share space with those authorized unless certified and retested every few years as laws change.

License: Our enforcers need to know who is in compliance. The license would be worn around the neck or pinned on the chest. It would be of a size, color and shape easily recognized.

Tax: Sidewalks cost money to build and maintain, a cost pedestrians should bear. There is also training, administration, enforcement and imprisonment. Our public bureaucracies typically consume 80 percent of the revenue, leaving 20 percent for the sidewalks. And government can claim job creation.

Rather than become a criminal, those not given permission could use alternative authorized forms like bicycles, motorcycles, cars or buses. (Maybe allow an exception to go directly to and from a bus stop to reach work.) These alternatives also create more jobs dealing in pollution, medicine, resource acquisition, retailing, bureaucracies and infrastructure.

We have all been taught, told and advised that more taxes, licensing and regulations means better quality of life and superior societies.

Keith Stanton  
Florence

Going the extra mile

On Jan. 13, our small community was without water. We have a well and storage tank and a distribution system that includes 10 lots, of which five are occupied. As the system manager, I checked all that I could but knew I needed professional help.

Until the recession, we had a company in town that serviced our well, but he is now long gone. I started calling plumbers first thing Thursday morning but all were already out on calls. I explained the situation to each office person and they promised to pass the info on to the plumbers.

When I called Scott Ryland, I spoke to the man himself. He admitted that this was a bit outside the normal plumbing area but also knew there was likely no one else in town more qualified than himself. He promised to get out to take a look as soon as possible.

He and his crew arrived about noon, and after checking the system, determined that the distribution pump had failed. He called about a dozen places in Eugene trying to find a comparable pump, but all were much smaller.

We were about to give up when he called someone in Coos Bay. They had the exact pump we needed.

It was now 2 p.m. and he said he would personally drive down there and pick up the pump and try to get it installed later that evening. At 6:30 p.m. I got a call from Scott to check my water. Sure enough it was back on. Needless to say my neighbors were pleased and so was I.

So Scott went not just the extra "mile," but an extra 100 miles to get us water. And the price he charged? Way below what I thought it would be considering the number of hours invested. Thanks Scott, from all of us on Lakeview Drive.

Brad Hanscom  
Florence

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME  
The History Channel

- On Feb. 10, 1763, The Seven Years' War, known as the French and Indian War, ends with the signing of the Treaty of Paris by France, Great Britain and Spain. France lost all claims to Canada and gave Louisiana to Spain, while Britain received Spanish Florida, Upper Canada and various French holdings overseas.
- On Feb. 11, 1805, Sacagawea, the Shoshone Indian interpreter and guide to the Lewis and Clark expedition, gives birth to her first child, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, two months before the trek begins. The baby, nicknamed Pompey, went on the expedition, carried on his mother's back. Clark paid for Pompey's education when the boy grew up.
- On Feb. 14, 1842, fans of Charles Dickens organize the Boz Ball, an elite party for the celebrated English writer during his first trip to America. (Dickens' earliest works had been published under the pseudonym Boz.) Only members of New York's aristocracy were invited.
- On Feb. 15, 1903, toy-store owner and inventor Morris Michtom places two stuffed bears in his shop window in Brooklyn, advertising them as Teddy bears. Michtom had earlier petitioned President Theodore Roosevelt for permission to use his nickname, Teddy. The president agreed.
- On Feb. 12, 1938, best-selling author Judy Blume, known for her children's books and young-adult novels, including "Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing" and "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret," is born in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Blume's books have been beloved by several generations of readers.

- On Feb. 9, 1960, Adolph Coors disappears while driving to work from his Morrison, Colorado, home. The grandson of the Coors' founder and chairman of the Golden, Colorado, brewery was kidnapped and held for ransom before being shot to death.
- On Feb. 13, 1991, Sotheby's announces the discovery of a long-lost manuscript of "Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain. The manuscript was the first half of Twain's original version, heavily corrected in his handwriting, which had been missing for more than a century.

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Editor  
@TheSiuslawNews.com

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John Bartlett  
Jenna Bartlett  
Ryan Cronk  
Susan Gutierrez  
Cathy Dietz  
Ron Annis  
Jeremy Gentry

Publisher, ext. 327  
General Manager, ext. 318  
Editor, ext. 313  
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WHERE TO WRITE

Pres. Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
Comments: 202-456-1111  
Switchboard: 202-456-1414  
FAX: 202-456-2461  
TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213  
www.whitehouse.gov

Gov. John Kitzhaber  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court St.  
Salem, OR 97301-4047  
Governor's Citizens' Rep.  
Message Line 503-378-4582  
www.oregon.gov/gov

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510

202-224-5244  
541-431-0229  
www.wyden.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley  
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-3753/FAX: 202-228-3997  
541-465-6750

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (4th Dist.)  
2134 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-6416/ 800-944-9603  
541-269-2609/ 541-465-6732  
www.defazio.house.gov

State Sen. Arnie Roblan (Dist. 5)  
900 Court St. NE - S-417  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1705

FAX: 503-986-1080  
Email:  
Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us

State Rep. Caddy McKeown  
(Dist. 9)  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1409  
Email:  
rep.caddymckeown@state.or.us

West Lane County Commissioner  
Jay Bozievich  
125 E. Eighth St.  
Eugene, OR 97401  
541-682-4203  
FAX: 541-682-4616  
Email:  
Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us