

**Siuslaw News**  
 P.O. Box 10  
 Florence, OR 97439

# Opinion

## VIEW FROM UPRIVER



### Scrubbing my hands

WESLEY VOTH  
 For the Siuslaw News

And knowing the story of the coffee I drink, where and how and by whom it is grown, and the fair trade of how the green coffee beans come to me, my conscience is clear.

There is, however, another indulgence in my life that turns out to be part of something nefarious, and that is Dove's dark chocolate. I like dark chocolate, liked the taste and texture of these in particular, liked the moderation of eating two of these pieces or "promises" each night rather than dessert. So I focused on this rather than where that chocolate came from, who profited from it and who might be exploited in the process.

Thanks to contacts on social media, I have wakened up to the child slavery and human trafficking in the cocoa plantations of West Africa, where the bulk of big company and certainly my chocolate comes from.

On the back of the Dove's packaging is the statement: "We buy cocoa from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms, traceable from the farms into our factory." What kind of assurance is this supposed to give me, especially as none of their terms are defined? Dove is owned by Mars, Incorporated, a company opposed to mandatory labeling laws, a company that has paid big money to block my right to know even whether the sugar it contains comes from beets — and therefore

almost certainly GMO sugar — or cane.

It does not divulge the country or even continent of origin of the cocoa. When I go to the website they refer me to, it states "By 2020, will source 100 percent of cocoa from certified sources," which sounds a lot like the language of a new goal to have ended the worst forms of child slavery and human trafficking that they agreed in 2001 to do by 2008.

I am not opposed to children working; I did farm labor growing up. But: I was paid, the farmers were the same social class and lived in the same quality of house I did. It did not keep me from going to school. I was not transported out of my home country by non-family members and sold. That is what the big European chocolate companies, but also Hershey, Nestle, Mars and other U.S. companies agreed to have no part of by 2008. But that continues now, according to our own Department of Labor in reports to Congress in 2014. The best single site I have found in researching this, with links to a documentary film and relevant government reports, is [www.slavefrechocolate.org](http://www.slavefrechocolate.org).

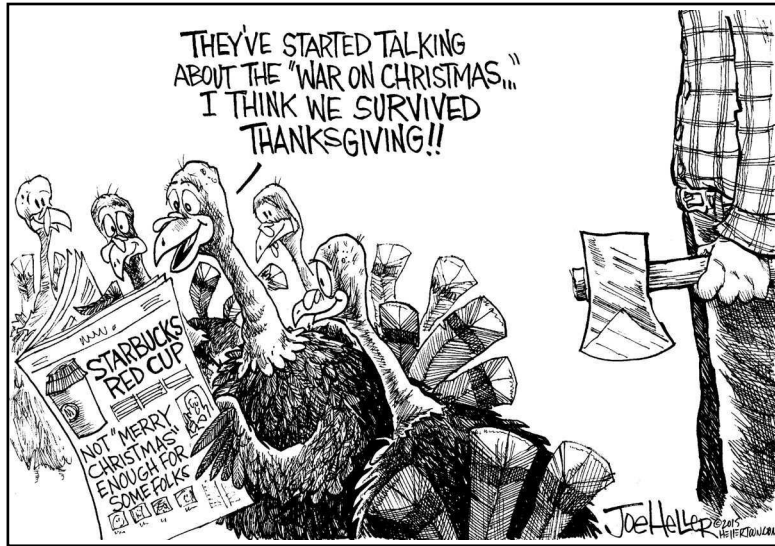
From now on I commit to buy chocolate from ethical companies; lists are available online and some such chocolate can be found locally.

Mary Oliver ends her inspiring poem like this: "All summations have a beginning, all effect has a story, all kindness begins with the sown seed. Thought buds toward radiance. The gospel of light is the crossroads of — indolence, or action. Be ignited, or be gone."

"Can one be passionate about the just, the ideal, the sublime, and the holy, and yet commit to no labor in its cause? I don't think so."  
 —Mary Oliver, from her poem "What I Have Learned So Far"

Here in my home beside the river, listening to birds and watching leaves bud, green, color and fall, some to become earth, and some to become part of the river bottom, I do not think about my life as having anything to do with something like, say: child slavery and human trafficking in West Africa.

I have a few indulgences in my life, things that give me pleasure, make me easier to live with, maybe help make me more productive. Coffee is one of those things. It is something I must consume in moderation, but I make a huge production out of it. Having lived for a time on a coffee farm in Hawaii, and knowing all the steps from the planting of the seed to the finished cup, that knowledge is part of my enjoyment.



## LETTERS

### A Veterans Day story

I was attending college in Wisconsin to become a teacher when World War II started. Because most of the teachers were men at this time, they were soon drafted and the country schools were left without teachers, especially in the rural communities.

The solution was to put the students (I was one of them) out in the county schools during the day to teach and have professors visit them and do the instructing in the evenings. It seemed to work out well and I loved having the freedom to do my own thing in the classroom.

One afternoon, one of the farmers (who was also on the school board) arrived at the school on his manure spreader. He said, "We need you and the kids to come out to the fields and help pick milkweed pods. They are needed for the war."

For several weeks we spent every afternoon out in the fields picking milkweed pods. All we knew was that inside each pod was fluff, like when a dandelion is finished blooming.

I never knew what they were used for, but at the age of 89, I was telling the story and my son-in-law went to his computer and soon announced, "I know what they were for. They used the fluff to make flotation devices to use in the storming at Normandy Beach on June 6,

1944." So, I guess we were indeed part of the war effort after all.

For 70 years I never knew that story. Maybe that's why I feel part of every Veterans Day celebration.

Ann (Braun) Koprowicz  
 Florence

### Homegrown service

The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) would like to give a special thanks to Kelsey Terry (chef and owner), Jody and Jim Terry, Jen Nelson and others of the Homegrown Pub.

Without your passion and drive, we wouldn't have had the level of success that we had this year at our annual Celebrate Salmon event. SWC brought in three times the net profit this year, and a large part of it has to do with great service, delicious food and the cost savings Homegrown was able to provide by being our caterer.

In the past, it had been a struggle to find the locally grown food that we provide for our event. Homegrown really helped with the burden this year as they talked to their personal vendors on our behalf to find us items for the buffet; much of which was donated.

The feedback this year was excellent. We heard again and again how delicious the food was and how much better everything was than

in years past. Homegrown's menu for us included lamb, salmon and a gorgeous vegetarian chickpea dish with an apple bake for dessert — all of which was provided by local farmers and vendors.

Of course there are many people that helped out with our event. However, the SWC wants to highlight and give a big thank you to Homegrown Pub. It was a delight working with you and we can't tell you how much we appreciated everything you did for us. Hope to work with you next year.

Tom Burke  
 SWC Treasurer

### Slash burning

I recently saw the despicable results of slash burning that occurred here over the last few days. These unhealthy conditions were created with no regard to the health and safety of our residents. As I understand it, more burning and resultant smoky conditions will occur in the weeks ahead.

Mayor Joe Henry is promoting the City of Florence as a great place to locate a new business or expand an existing business. Would you even consider moving here given these conditions? I don't think so.

Ron Duzy  
 Florence

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

### MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On Nov. 22, 1718, Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard, is killed off North Carolina's Outer Banks during a battle with a British navy force. Believed to be a native of England, Teach likely began his pirating career in 1713 on the Queen Anne's Revenge.

- On Nov. 20, 1923, the U.S. Patent Office grants Patent No. 1,475,074 to inventor and newspaperman Garrett Morgan for his three-position traffic signal. By having a third position besides just "Stop" and "Go," it better regulated crossing vehicles.

- On Nov. 21, 1916, the Britannic, sister ship to the Titanic, sinks in the Aegean Sea, killing 30 people. In the wake of the Titanic disaster in 1912, the White Star Line made modifications in the construction of the Britannic, but an explosion caused catastrophic damage.

- On Nov. 19, 1969, Brazilian soccer great Pele scores his 1,000th professional goal in a game in Rio de Janeiro. It was a major milestone in a legendary career that included three World Cup championships.

- On Nov. 18, 1978, Peoples Temple founder Jim Jones leads hundreds of his followers in a mass murder-suicide at their commune in a remote part of Guyana. Many of Jones' followers willingly ingested a poison-laced punch, while others were forced to do so at gunpoint. The final death toll at Jonestown that day was 909; a third of those were children.

- On Nov. 16, 1988, in Pakistan, citizens vote in their first open election in more than a decade, choosing as prime minister the populist candidate Benazir Bhutto, daughter of former Pakistani leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. She was the first woman leader of a Muslim country in modern history.

- On Nov. 17, 1998, DaimlerChrysler begins trading its shares on the New York Stock Exchange. The company had formed five days earlier, when the American Chrysler Corporation merged with the German conglomerate Daimler-Benz AG.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published.

All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to:  
**Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com**

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John Bartlett	Publisher, ext. 327
Jenna Bartlett	General Manager, ext. 318
Ryan Cronk	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 <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov">www.whitehouse.gov</a>	202-224-5244 541-431-0229 <a href="http://www.wyden.senate.gov">www.wyden.senate.gov</a>	FAX: 503-986-1080 Email: <a href="mailto:Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us">Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us</a>
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U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden 221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg Washington, DC 20510	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 <a href="http://www.defazio.house.gov">www.defazio.house.gov</a>	West Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich 125 E. Eighth St. Eugene, OR 97401 541-682-4203 FAX: 541-682-4616 Email: <a href="mailto:Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us">Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us</a>
	State Sen. Arnie Roblan (Dist. 5) 900 Court St. NE - S-417 Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1705	