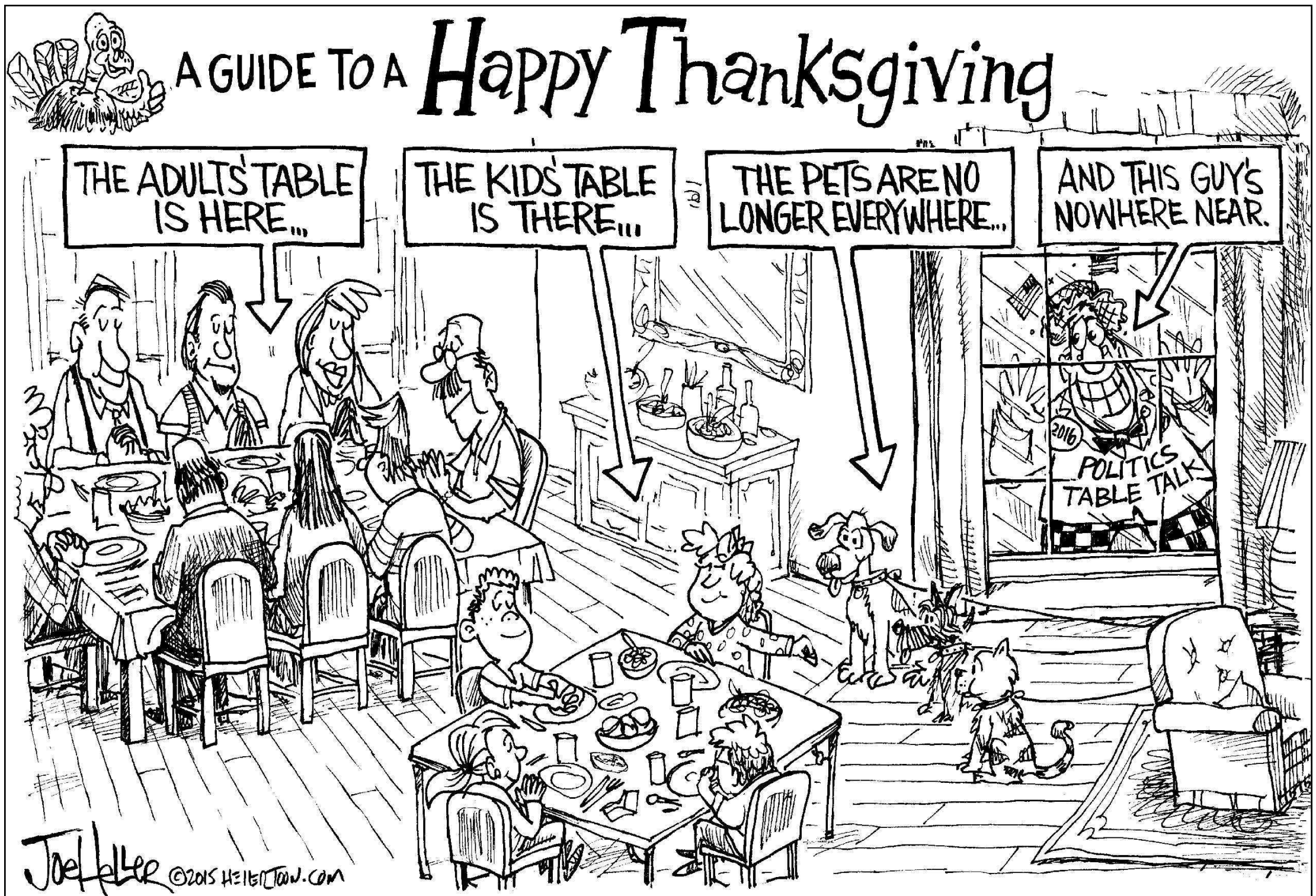


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

DEAR READERS:
Office closed

The Siuslaw News office is closed Thursday in observance of the holiday. Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving. —Editor



LETTERS

Political theater

I recently watched part of the Benghazi hearings. What was it — the eighth, 10th or 15th hearing? Apparently there have been more hearings on Benghazi than there were after Pearl Harbor, 9/11 or after the financial collapse of 2007-2008.

I'm not arguing that what happened in 2012 at the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi wasn't tragic. However, remind me how many congressional hearings were held after Columbine, the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School or the recent domestic terrorist attack at Umpqua Community College?

Many political observers believe — and this belief is confirmed by House member Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) — that these endless hearings have been largely political theater; and like the parallel "email scandal," motivated by Republican attempts to "hobble" and/or reduce the poll numbers and popularity of the Democrat frontrunner Hillary Clinton.

So let me posit this: If Clinton should be held accountable for the five Americans killed in Libya, then we should also hold FDR accountable for the thousands of U.S. service men and women killed at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and as Donald Trump recently intimated, George Bush should be held accountable for "not keeping us safe" on Sept. 11, 2001.

How so? Although I don't know if the conspiracy theorists are correct regarding FDR's motives in seemingly provoking the Japanese and leaving Pearl Harbor relatively "undefended," I've read that Bush never read Richard Clarke's (the Anti-terrorism Czar) memo outlining the plans of jihadist to use hijack commercial airplanes as flying bombs to inflict maximum civilian casualties.

Similarly, Bush's Vice President Dick Cheney, who often misrepresented the "facts in

evidence," should be held accountable for the 5,500 U.S. deaths, 40,000 casualties and added \$4 trillion deficit that resulted from the United States's disastrous 2003 Iraq invasion.

I'm all for congressional hearings, particularly as it regards attacks on our nation, acts of domestic terrorism or our justifications for our attacks on others, especially when dozens of thousands of lives are lost. But let's agree that another vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act (56 and counting) or another Benghazi hearing simply represent the "Political Theater of the Absurd" and represent another reason why Americans are so disaffected by their representative democracy.

Jeffrey M. Shear
Florence

Common sense approach to gun control

I've done a little research on the Australian firearm program and I have a few comments. I don't believe their type of gun control would work in the United States to prevent mass shootings.

The first reason: The current population of Australia is approximately 23 million. Considering the quantity of firearms confiscated, reported after 1997, was between 100,000 to 1,000,000, it means much less than 5 percent of the Australian population were affected by the then new program.

Compare that number to the current U.S. population of 321 million. Here, the reported 315 million legal firearms are anywhere from 32 to 47 percent of the population. That works out to roughly 100 to 150 million firearm owners. And, that doesn't count the black market. A lot of Americans that would have their second and fourth amendments curtailed.

This brings up my second point: In Australia, there is no bill of rights. Australian owners of

permitted and approved firearms are subject to police search procedures. This means they can enter your premises or vehicle at any time of day or night to search without a warrant, in perpetuity.

If the Australian mandatory confiscation program were to come here, our fourth amendment right to unreasonable search and seizure would go out the door. It would be reasonable to say that the same program of limiting type of firearm, size of caliber, size of magazine, etc., that you could own, would also go out the door, thereby affecting the second amendment. The sheer numbers involved and loss of rights for so many Americans, by comparison, just won't work. Not unless the Bill of Rights is substantially changed.

My third comment: Prior to 1997, the Australian firearm owners also didn't have an effective spokes organization. Considering the tiny population of firearm owners affected, it's no wonder their legislature found it easy to take away any perceived rights.

During my search of the Australian firearm program of 1997 documents, I could not find a solid mental health component in their assessments in determining their new regulations.

In the United States, we have several firearm organizations that speak on behalf of firearm owners. The one that is the most prolific is, dare I say their name, the NRA. I am not a spokesperson for them nor am I a member. But, I agree with them on some form of a bill that has a mental health component/database to add to the National Instant Background Check System.

To me, this would be a common sense approach to identifying and flagging a potential person of threat rather than taking away the rights of millions of Americans. But, this is just my opinion.

Michael Davis
Florence

Columbus Day

Are you kidding me? Someone wants to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day? I can hardly pronounce it.

I'm referring to an article written in the Nov. 10 issue ("City Considers Columbus Day Name Change," page A1). Is this what our elected city council members are up to when they meet?

Columbus Day isn't about a race, it's about America, a country. There is a movement to remove everything about what makes this country what it is, and I'm surprised to see it leaking into our town, which is solidly made up of a community of people who value this country's roots.

The majority of us probably have Native American blood running through our veins, which I am one of also, but this name change for this holiday is crazy. Let's keep the race issue out of this one. I don't believe the Florence City Council has the right to make this kind of decision for all of us.

Donna Dobson
Florence

Cure cancer

I am 75 years old and, although I still drink and smoke, I am in fairly good health for someone my age. In the past 10 years, I have lost a number of friends, both young and old, who had no vices, ate healthy and exercised, and cancer still took them from me.

Instead of spending billions/trillions on a trip to Mars or engaging in more unwarranted conflicts, why not infuse those monies into research to cure cancer and other cures for Alzheimer's and paralysis using stem cells? Seems like our government is more concerned about going into space and to war than fighting diseases and the health of humans.

Win Jolley
Florence

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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