

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

Opinion

VIEW FROM UPRIVER



Finding the light

WESLEY VOTH
 For the Siuslaw News

association with green rather than anything having to do with sunrises.

I don't think that other spelling of the word applies to a color that shows up around here — at least in winter.

Many birds that are here now feed on the ground, and are the color of soil and dead leaves. Varied thrushes with their orange breasts and "V" throats — hermit thrushes with brown spotted breasts, brown-streaked song sparrows, robins and tiny winter wrens — churn through the leaf litter throughout this region in a compost-turning operation that is one of the many unsung public works projects of the natural world.

Unsung especially by themselves, who in other times of the year do sing so beautifully.

And by the calendars used by much of the world, and reflecting converging sets of old traditions, we begin a new year with 2017.

For many it is a time for reflection, goal-setting, housecleaning and finding some form of cheer. Fire, firecrackers, wassail that was hot or applejack that was potent, and — for many

of a bygone age — some form of fruitcake.

Sadly, there are places where the only thing people can think of doing with fruitcake these days is throw it, but dried fruit and sometimes meat in some form of cake or pie was a mid-winter mood elevator in many parts of the northern hemisphere across many cultures for thousands of years. It has been a long time since I had one, and even longer since it was a good one.

Our family tended to do a fairly dry mince-meat pie, and homemade using venison and figs and hazelnuts was the best. A few days ago, I was with my surviving siblings and some of our children. Many of our family food traditions were on display, but that one is dead; and I am the lone mourner. I consoled myself with some delightfully restorative jalapeño jelly. And pfeffernusse, the tiny and spicy indestructible German cookie whose name means "pepper nuts."

This morning, at an hour my wife Susie refers to as 0-dark-hundred, I am eating a pseudo-breakfast known by another culture as a mood enhancer: tiramisu (or "pick-me-up"). It was made by our daughter, Beulah, from a recipe we sent her by postcard from Italy when we were there. This confectionary combination

of coffee and chocolate with egg and cookie and mascarpone cheese I can only handle if it is early in the day.

But it is bringing a smile now as I indulge in its stimulating character.

All this past month I have been researching organizations, issues and causes that I have wanted to know more about — a different one each day — as my personal "cause challenge." While the issues of our time seem daunting, I have been inspired in this search by learning of the many people — old, young, male and female, of many races and persuasions and circumstances — who are doing something to make this country, this human dominated earth, a better place for people and the rest of life on the planet.

I have also been moved by the deaths of two men I much admired for their faith and work. One of them, Charlie Kimball, is well known in this community. I have found his quiet, upbeat, caring activism over a long and productive life a great encouragement and example.

Now, from my home to yours, I wish you all a wonderful New Year.

Whatever it takes, make it count.

LETTERS

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 or poetry will not be published.

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

Write to:

Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com

Finally hopeful

After reading Mr. Curt Buttke response (Dec. 28) to a previous letter writer (Dec. 21), I not only do not accept the sources or their conclusions regarding Mr. Trump's mental health, but ask for the shoe to be put on the other foot.

Have we not seen the many articles on real news sites (not Huffington Post) about President-elect Trump's daughter and son-in-law being harassed on a commercial flight? Or the many articles accusing him for being everything from a racist, KKK supporter, anti-Semite and more?

And all by the supposed "non-biased" media. He is not only fit to be President, but soon will be. I believe he will not only represent me, but even those who didn't support him. I voted for him based on many things, the most important being that he won't continue what I consider to be the race-based policies of the previous administration.

I am hopeful for the first time in many years that a pen and a phone will not take the place of



DRIVERS OF NEW YEAR'S PARTIES PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Congress and the people. I also have hope that the rule of law will become the norm once again.

Do I think that it will always go my way?

Of course not.

As a matter of fact I would be happy if it goes my way half the time after feeling I received nothing for eight years.

Unlike those years, I expect to see things getting done for me... And for you.

David T. Eckhardt
 Florence

The Founders' compromise

Mr. Cavarno's Dec. 21 letter provides voting statistics showing that while Mrs. Clinton won the popular vote by over 2 million votes, Mr. Trump won the votes in an overwhelming

majority of the nation's counties. But for the genius of the Electoral College, he says, "a few densely populated Democratic cities like Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City could essentially speak for the rest of our country."

In the 1963 Supreme Court decision in Baker vs. Carr and the line of cases that followed, the Constitution clearly requires electoral districts to be apportioned so that each district is roughly equal in population. More simply, "one person, one vote."

The most recent of these cases, the unanimous decision in Evenwell vs. Abbott earlier this year, went a step further. It affirmed that our representative democracy means "representational equality," with elected officials bound to represent the interests of the all the people in their numerically equal district, whether or not those people are voters.

"One person, one vote" is the lesson learned

from our constitutional history, the Supreme Court's consistent rulings and longstanding practice.

Evenwell vs. Abbott says voting districts should contain roughly the same number of people be they eligible voters, residents, immigrants who are here legally but are not citizens, illegal immigrants and children.

The Electoral College was the Founders' compromise to assure the electoral power of the small (and slave) states against the northern states with their greater number of white-male, enfranchised voters.

As Mr. Cavarno's statistics indicate, when electing the president today, "one person, one vote" can become "one acre, one vote."

Arnold Buchman
 Scottsdale, Ariz.
 (Formerly of Florence)

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John Bartlett
 Jenna Bartlett
 Ned Hickson
 Susan Gutierrez
 Cathy Dietz
 Ron Annis
 Jeremy Gentry

Publisher, ext. 327
 General Manager, ext. 318
 Editor, ext. 313
 Advertising Director, ext. 326
 Office Supervisor, ext. 312
 Production Supervisor
 Press Manager

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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. Kate Brown
 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