

OPINION

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 their Government for a redress of grievances.



Guest Viewpoint The trap door

By Leo Rivers

Cottage Grove resident and In-Home Caregiver

Walking to the post office, I noticed the flag was at half-mast. Going to the front desk, I asked, "Is the flag at half-mast because of the shooting in Texas the other day?"

Yes, it was indeed the school shooting of 10 students and faculty that prompted the lowered flag. I said to myself aloud, "I heard the governor say that the problem was too many doors. Great."

I understand the logic of treating a high school as a tactical target for which you want to control the entrance and exit to harden it from attack. But one of the charming things you see in 1950s television shows is that children walk to school.

Children play in the streets.

Children explore the woods behind the house and call home for permission to

spend the night at a friend's house.

The more you reduce the doors, the more you teach children there is only one way in or out — and the outside is at war with the inside.

By protecting schools by treating them as an advanced military base out in hostile territory, you may indeed choke off the heartbreaking litany of mass shootings at high schools — but in defending that little patch of ground, you have surrendered the battlefield.

Children are very aware of the message their surroundings give them. One of the most distressing soundbites to come out of the wake of that shooting was a young girl saying, "I knew it was only a matter of time until it happened here."

Michael Moore's "Bowling for Columbine" took his usual shotgun approach to social commentary. But he was dead on

when he compared an American city to a Canadian city on either side of the border, both with similar working conditions and economic realities — except in Canada there were maybe two or three shootings a year, as opposed to the U.S.'s dozens.

What was the difference?

He showed footage of television debates and newscasts as they are done in Canada, compared to those in the United States.

The Canadian anchors and politicians were discussing things as adults in measured, calm tones.

The American politicians and newscasters were barking and shaking their fists, diminishing each other with violent language.

I think the lesson here is if you want peace in the U.S., you have to make your peace with the fact that leaders have to lead by example.

LETTERS

Thanks for supporting the American Legion

I would like to thank everyone who generously supported the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy weekend.

Legion members volunteered their time in front of Safeway

during Memorial Day weekend. Many people showed their support for our local veterans by generously donating money.

Some donors were veterans themselves. Others donated in memory and honor of family members and friends.

In exchange, they received a red poppy to wear as a reminder, to themselves and to others, of soldiers who have died in war.

All donations will be used to help support our local veterans with basic needs services.

For information about how you can help veterans in our community, contact the American Legion, Post #32, at 541-942-5991.

—Celia Gowing
Cottage Grove

My commencement speech (Not that anyone asked)

To the Class of 2018, faculty members, parents, dignitaries, misinformed wedding crashers, and Visa/MasterCard representatives who have gathered here today:

I am honored to have the opportunity to address this group of graduating seniors and impart the wisdom I have gained since my own graduation from high school nearly 150 years ago.

Standing before you today, I see the anticipation on your faces as each of you comes to realize what sharing my wisdom with you means: Possibly the shortest commencement speech in school history.

Before long, you will step forward and receive the culmination of 12 — possibly 14 — years of education. You will shake hands with some of those who have helped guide you to this mile-stone. And unless your last name begins with a "Z," you will return to your seat as the rest your classmates step forward to receive their diplomas. That's when you will silently think to yourself, "I really shouldn't have had that second bottle of Mountain Dew."

But you will sit quietly, probably cross-legged, and deal with it. You are now officially your own person — making your own decisions, embracing the rewards and accepting the consequences of those decisions — as you embark on a journey of independence in a world of your own making.

At least until laundry day, when you will return home to eat chocolate chip cookies while mom gets the Cheeto and pizza stains

out of your favorite underwear.

That's because having wisdom isn't about knowing everything. It's also about recognizing and acknowledging when you

shaped like 'Mr. T.'

Truth be told, it's human nature to want to know all the answers. At the same time, culture discourages us from admitting

when we don't have them. You've now spent the better part of your first 17 to 20 years of life receiving an education. Not so you'll have all the answers, but have the courage and wisdom to ask the kinds of questions that will improve your life and, hopefully, the lives of others. This will take more than Googling. More than Wikipedia. Possibly even more than How-To videos on YouTube.

It's certainly going to take a great data and texting plan.

However, most of all it's going to take the kind of determination that got you here; sitting in these chairs; moments away from receiving your diploma; and still regretting that second bottle of Mountain Dew.

Yet, I look upon your faces and see my own hope reflected in them. When you leave here, be courageous and wise. Never be afraid to admit you don't have all the answers. Those who do are destined to a life of empty promises. Usually somewhere in our nation's capital.

Always remember the feeling you have right now. The anticipation. The hope. The unlimited possibilities. It's who you are at this moment.

It's who you will always be as long as you allow yourself to be wise...



The Lighter Side

BY SYNDICATED HUMOR COLUMNIST
NED HICKSON

don't. Just like getting those stains out, it's OK to admit when you don't know how to do something or handle a tough situation in life. A smart person takes ownership of the things they know; I wise person seeks the knowledge of others when they don't.

When I graduated from high school in 1984, there was no Internet.

No Siri.

No Pinterest.

And thankfully, No Kanye West.

Therefore, the Class of 1984 was expected to know EVERYTHING.

The pressure was tremendous! We hugged our parents goodbye and entered a dark, Google-less world. We were young pilots flying blind. Dead stick. Rudderless. Broken-winged. And lots of other euphemisms I am now able to Google for occasions like this. We had no choice but to rely on each other. We pooled our knowledge. Challenged each other.

Together, we advanced ourselves and society by having the courage to answer fundamental questions like: What would happen if we grew chia seeds on a clay pot

Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. 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.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

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