

Cottage Grove Sentinel
 116 N. Sixth St.
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

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 the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



LETTERS

DON'T DRESS IN DARK CLOTHES WHEN WALKING, RIDING BIKE AT NIGHT

It appears that some people have a death wish. I have noticed during dark and twilight hours a number of people wearing dark clothes (and wearing a hoodies no less) walking and/or riding their bike around town

with no reflectors or lights. If the people guilty of this happen to get hit by a vehicle, you can darn well bet the driver of the vehicle will be at fault in the person's mind that was hit and probably a lawsuit will be filed against the driver.

Even if the driver wins the case, they still lose because of

the trauma of the accident and time spent fighting a frivolous case.

A driver obeying the rules of the road does not deserve to be involved in any incident in such a way.

—Dick Gilkison
 Cottage Grove

Tips for having an eco-friendly holiday season

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

When I was a kid, my grandma always gave me stamped, unfinished pillowcases meant to be cross-stitch embroidered and the edges finished. Every year. I hated them.

But every year, I dutifully smiled and thanked her for her lovely gift. As soon as she was gone, I gave them to my mom and never saw them again. (Mom didn't finish them, either.)

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the average person in the U.S. generates almost six pounds of trash every day and the average has been going up each year. Much of the trash we generate is from food waste and single-use items, such as wrapping and greeting cards. Most of this trash goes to the landfill where it will sit for decades.

Initial production of these items, transport to the store and hauling them away as trash generates costs — financial and environmental.

What if this year we saved some money, time and the environment? What if we gave more thought to what we buy and what we throw away? I'm not talking about deprivation or no presents, just a more thoughtful approach.

Staying organized — Use your phone for shopping lists, store coupons and keeping track of your holiday season calendar.

Greeting cards — Have you tried the ecards online? Compose your message and give

them your contact list. Big chore done! If that won't work, there are holiday postcards that use less paper, don't need envelopes and save on postage. Also, cards that you receive can be reused in crafts next year like gift tags or wrapping small items.

Stop catalogs & junk mail — As you receive unwanted catalogs and junk mail, go to a free online service like CatalogChoice.org to get off these mailing

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Brenda Howard Master Recycler

Decorating — How about a live tree from the nursery that you can plant in your yard after the holidays? Greenery and pine cones collected from your neighborhood?

Gifts — How about gifts for fun experiences rather than physical things? Gift certificates for local restaurants and theaters?

Also, homemade coupons for campouts, trips to outdoor destinations, or washing their car? Maybe some yard work or pet sitting?

If you are crafty, homemade gifts can be special. Packs filled with rice and herbs to warm in the microwave, homemade and home-canned food, shopping bags made from old T-shirts, collections of family recipes, etc.

If purchasing items — Shopping locally can save transport and packaging costs and help the community. Use your reusable shopping bags!

Think how these ideas could simplify your holiday shopping. Save on shopping time, reduced

packaging, no breakage and things not easily forgotten after a few uses.

Gift wrap — Old maps, newspapers, magazines from foreign countries, homemade cloth bags, cloth napkins from the thrift store all make wonderful gift wrap. Thrift shop pillowcases make great gift bags for larger, odd-shaped items.

Stocking stuffers — Reusable produce bags, bamboo toothbrush, reusable bamboo eating utensils, a reusable straw are just a few options.

Hosting gatherings — If you need more dishware than you own for a large gathering, consider taking advantage of the Master Recycler Reusable Dishware Program, which lends silverware, dishes, table linens and serving pieces for groups of up to 150.

Its free! Reusing dishes and table linens, even taking washing into account, uses far less energy and resources than single use, disposable items. Even compostable ones.

For info on the program, or make a reservation, call 541-590-0506.

Cooking & baking — Make time to cook from scratch, buy specialized cooking pans, small appliances and table linens at the thrift store or craigslist, send leftovers home with your guests and compost whatever is left.

I hope these suggestions bring deeper meaning and thoughtfulness to your holidays, as well as helping the environment — and that you don't give raw pillowcases to your grandchildren unless they actually enjoy cross-stitch!

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPS

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Oregon state representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sen. Floyd Prozanski
 District 4 State Senator
 PO Box 11511
 Eugene, Ore. 97440
 Phone: 541-342-2447
 Email: sen.floydprozanski@state.or.us • Rep. Cedric Hayden
 Republican District 7 State Representative
 900 Court St. NE
 Salem, Ore. 97301
 Phone: 503-986-1407
 Website: www.leg.state.or.us/hayden
 Email: rep.cedrichayden@state.or.us | <p>Oregon federal representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rep. Peter DeFazio
 (House of Representatives)
 405 East 8th Ave.
 #2030
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: defazio.house.gov/contact/email-peter
 Phone: 541-465-6732 • Sen. Ron Wyden
 405 East 8th Ave., Suite 2020
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: wyden.senate.gov
 Phone: (541) 431-0229 • Sen. Jeff Merkley
 Email: merkley.senate.gov
 Phone: 541-465-6750 |
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Cottage Grove Sentinel

541-942-3325

Administration

Jenna Bartlett, Group Publisher

Gary Manly, General Manager... Ext. 1207
 gmanly@cg sentinel.com

Gerald Santana, Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1216
 gsantana@cg sentinel.com

Veronica Brinkley, Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1205
 vbrinkley@cg sentinel.com

Carla Skeel, Inside Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1203
 csommers@cg sentinel.com

Editorial

Ned Hickson, Managing Editor... 541-902-3520
 nhickson@cg sentinel.com

Damien Sherwood, Lead Reporter... Ext. 1212
 dsherwood@cg sentinel.com

Nick Snyder, Sports/Community News Reporter... Ext. 1204
 nsnyder@cg sentinel.com

Customer Service

Meg Fringer, Office Manager, Legals, Classifieds... Ext. 1200
 mfringer@cg sentinel.com

Production

Ron Annis, Production Supervisor... Ext. 1215
 graphics@cg sentinel.com

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