

Bunnies are not starter pets

If anyone could've seen me, I would have made quite a sight.

Luckily, it was a dark October night when I ran around my neighbor's yard with a blanket, trying to catch the rabbit I spotted while taking my dog out on a walk. The bunny in question was clearly domesticated, and was just as clearly abandoned, so my plan was to nab it and bring it back home, where we had an extra cage.

You can probably imagine my wife's astonishment when I returned — she sent her husband out with one pet, and he came home with two.

Unfortunately, we couldn't keep the rabbit, as we already had one of our own (and bonding two rabbits is a long, arduous process). So, we dubbed our furry interloper "Guest" in order to discourage ourselves from adopting him and eventually found a rabbit rescue that was able to take him.

This is not the first time I've rescued a lost bun, and it won't be the last (my friends don't call me a Disney Princess for my long, luscious golden locks). Unfortunately, I'm not able to keep every rabbit I come across.

What I can do, though, is tell you that if you're looking for an easy, inexpensive pet that does well with little children and needs minimal space — then stay far, far away from rabbits.

Let's start with the cost, since that's seems the best way to scare any parent away from buying their child a fuzzy friend.

Alone, bunnies are fairly cheap — I'm talking \$40 at



RAY MILLER-STILL
EDITOR

most for standard breeds. But what you may not know is that rabbits are considered "exotic" pets, meaning you need to find a special vet to take care of them, which starts ramping up costs quickly.

For example, the average cost of spaying or neutering your rabbit is around \$250, according to the

House Rabbit Society.

Of course, you may ask why altering your rabbit is necessary if you're only getting one. Then I'd probably slap you for not doing your research, then inform you that altering your rabbit will help it live longer (especially female rabbits), be less aggressive (especially male rabbits), limit destructive behavior (so long as we're talking cost, carpet replacement is not inexpensive), and in general, be a better companion.

On top of the alteration are the twice-yearly checkups with your vet. These are especially important because a bun's teeth never stop growing, and small problems can become big ones with little to no notice.

Then factor in the cost of daily care — for food, you need fresh greens, pellets, and unlimited hay on the daily, and to keep them clean, you need to change out the litter two to three times a week. These small ticket items can add up to \$85 a month, according to My House Rabbit.

In total, the average rabbit owner can expect to spend between \$600 - \$1,100 a year on their pet, according to Money Management. This

See **BUNS**, Page 7

Finding my inner foodie

A gathering at a local store's Mother's Day display made me chuckle. Several men and women were engaged in a tell-all of personal oddities they attributed to their Moms. Layered with the laughter was a poignant sense of gratitude and love for those who had given them life. I couldn't help but reflect on the more subtle lessons I learned from my Mom.

My Mother was a healthy "foodie" in an era before such terms were coined. Our dinner table routinely sported homemade plain yogurt, stir-fried organic vegetables, and brown rice. Sugar cereals were unheard of in our cupboard, and whole-grain bread was the only lunch sandwich option.

As children, my siblings and I did not always recognize the wisdom in Mom's health-conscious lifestyle. School lunches were one point of contention. Our string cheese, bagged veggies, whole fruit, and sprout-filled whole-grain sandwich never qualified us for the great "lunch barter." Twinkies and Cheetos were the stuff of other kids' dreams...not ours. The only interests our lunches generated were the identification of unknown fruits and vegetables. Through us, our classmates were introduced to jimica, figs, kumquats and yellow beets.

One benefit of my mother's love of healthy food was our restaurant exposure. There were no quick trips to drive-through restaurants for us. Fast food in our vernacular was how rapidly you ate your home-prepared dinner before the soccer game. We were, however, occasionally taken to fancy, expensive restaurants. Exposure to delicious, quality food was important to Mom. From a young age, we got to accompany my parents to high-end food establishments a couple times a year.

My Mother's determination to expose us to all things good in the culinary world was not always easy. My toddler sister once loudly whispered, "Dis is better dan Mc'O'Donalls," which got the snickers of an entire candlelit restaurant and ousted my father's sneak trip to the forbidden Golden Arches in one breath. Her follow-up comment, after downing a succulent



JULIE REECE-DEMARCO
FINDING KIND

chunk of lobster, "Dis is da best hamster I've ever eaten," was met with loud laughter from all the surrounding tables.

I marvel that Mom persevered through accidentally tipped chairs, spilled water glasses and the rare glare of patrons who believed sit-down restaurants and consumers under eighteen should be mutually exclusive. Yet through the process we gained an impressive set of table manners, a wonderful exposure to different foods, and a love of quality ingredients. Our reward for a semester of straight As was getting to choose a restaurant for a one-on-one dinner with a parent. Those dinners became among our most cherished memories.

Sugar in our home was virtually nonexistent. Rare treats were hoarded and protected. Mom's announcement that she had avoided all sugar during her pregnancies with us was met with a begrudging, "We didn't even get sugar in utero." Most of the dramatic moments in our childhood revolved around these precious sugary treasures. The great mysteries of the Reece household included, Who ate the ears off sister's chocolate Easter bunny? Who swiped Halloween candy from someone else's pumpkin? Who licked the frosting off the edges of the birthday cupcakes, leaving a telltale frosting-free inch perimeter around each?

One Valentine's Day, my mom taught me a great lesson about food. Three Mothers baked cakes for our elementary school classroom party. My Mother was among them. The cake decorating expert's frosting-laden cake was covered with handmade sugary, decadent roses, flowers, hearts and figurines. The cake looked like it had come directly off the Candyland game board. The second, slightly lopsided cake, was covered in store-purchased candy. My Mother's made-from-scratch cake with fresh strawberry icing looked terribly plain between the two sugar-loaded confectionary dream cakes.

We lined up for cake, and I watched with great disappointment as the Candyland cake pieces disappeared. I was still in line as the person, two in

front of me, took the last piece of the cinnamon-heart-covered lopsided cake. I was stuck with Mom's plain confection. I trudged back to my seat, cake in hand, feeling terribly disappointed. My disappointment was broken with an "ouch" by the girl next to me. She pulled a long toothpick out of her mouth. The candy-covered cake had toothpicks holding it together. Suddenly I was glad I hadn't gotten that one. I noticed the girl on the other side of me was picking all the frosting decorations off her cake. "Can I have that?" I asked.

I eagerly put the frosting rose in my mouth, and then subtly spit it into my napkin. It didn't taste like the frosting I knew. It tasted like sugared shortening. "Not very good, is it?" my friend whispered. I grimaced then offered her a bite of my Mother's plain-looking, homemade cake. "This is delicious," she said, dumping her cake to get a piece of my Mom's. One by one, I observed my classmates — who had eagerly snapped up the dream cakes — barter for my Mom's creation. I watched kids, initially disappointed to get the plainer-looking cake, now thrilled at their choice. As we went home that day, I discussed my observations. My Mom reminded me, "The quality of something a lot of times is what's on the inside. Sometimes you have to look past the exterior to see what you really have."

As a Mother, I smiled knowingly at my young children's rolled eyes and disappointed gazes when we walked by the sugary lunch treat aisle. I watched them gaze longingly at the brightly covered sugar cereal boxes while they placed the Cheerios in the cart. These days, I enjoy watching college daughters teach roommates to roast vegetables. I smile while preparing the steamed clams, asparagus and grilled salmon they request for their birthday dinners. I know now what my Mother knew long ago. In some ways it is about food, choosing and enjoying wonderful quality ingredients and being grateful for what you have. But it is also about much more: loving someone enough to care what they put in their bodies; teaching manners; enjoying one another's company; and creating memories.

Thanks to my Mother, I have found and embraced my inner-foodie.

Georgia's voting laws are more about staying in power than race

Is the new Georgia voting law racist? This law was recently passed by the Republican controlled Georgia State legislature on strict party-line votes and was signed by the Republican Governor. In order to answer the question of racism, we need to understand

how voting is carried out in Washington State and then contrast it with the Georgia voting law.

Before that question can be answered, a broader, more important question must be asked: Why did Georgia change its voting procedures when it did, just a few months after the 2020 presidential election?



RICH ELFERS
IN FOCUS

The Georgia Secretary of State, Brad Raffensperger, first defended the integrity of the 2020 election results, telling then-President Trump that the election results were both "fair and secure." Additionally, two recounts were made, one by hand, that confirmed that

Joe Biden had won the electoral votes by a margin of about 12,000.

Raffensperger then supported the new law, saying that it was an overall boost for election security. It added four voting procedure changes, according to an April 9, 2021 NPR article by Ailsa Chang and Emma Bowman entitled "Georgia

Secretary of State Says New Law 'Restores Confidence' ". Voter ID requirements for absentee ballots, expanded access to early in-person voting, mandated shorter runoff period times, and reduced wait times.

Why also did Republicans in 47 other states submit bills to their legislatures to change voting requirements? The obvious answer

was that they didn't like the presidential election results. Republicans fared well in both the U.S. House and in many state legislatures, but Donald Trump lost the election.

Requiring voter ID seems to be just adding a hurdle to voting. In Washington State, all ballots are mail-in and no picture voter ID is required. Why do Georgia

Republicans require it when few cases of fraud have been found in their state? The argument for photo IDs should be based upon data, not feeling.

In Washington, no one has to request a ballot if they are registered to vote. There is no waiting in line. Postage is paid for by the State. Secure ballot boxes are abundant. No voter identification is

required. No party has been found to be disadvantaged by voting by mail. Security and safeguards are in place to avoid fraud, such as signature checking. Vote by mail has worked quite efficiently and fraud free for a decade in this state, since 2011.

The new Georgia law making it a crime to hand

See **ELFERS**, Page 7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Legislators shouldn't determine what care voters can receive

Congratulations to Daisy Devine on a very well written article ("Banning gender-affirming care leads to suffering," published April 14) and to the Courier-Herald for putting it on your opinion page. State legislators deciding who can receive medical care and what medical care is a terrible idea.

You wouldn't go to a veterinarian to work on your teeth and you wouldn't go to a lawyer to get cancer treatment! What young people, and adults for that matter, need is medical and emotional support. Major medical associations agree these policies and laws are bad policies. Transgender folks already struggle with hate crimes against them, murder, and prejudice; denying them access to medical and emotional care will lead to more suffering and possibly suicide.

Legislators are not qualified to make medical and psychological decisions for a specific group of Americans. I hope Daisy is right. Hope and love can solve this.

Ellen Koehn
Enumclaw

The Jan. 6 protest, BLM riots, and the Reichstag

Number of people that died in the Rwanda Genocides - 850,000.

Number of Civilians killed in the Vietnam War (North and South) - 627,000.

Number of people that died during 9/11 - 3,000.

The number of people that died during the Capitol Building vandalism was four Trump supporters. One was shot by an unnamed Capitol policeman, one had a stroke, one had a heart attack, one had an overdose of amphetamines. The police guy that supposedly was "viciously beaten to death with a fire extinguisher" — that never happened. After the fracas he went back to his department and texted his brother

that he had been pepper sprayed twice. Later autopsies showed no "blunt force trauma."

The damage? Several windows were broken, and the Speaker of the House lectern had been stolen - and the guy who took it arrested. Probably under \$50,000 max damage. Antifa/BLM riots has caused over \$2 billion dollars in damage to federal buildings and small business shops.

Candace Owens brought up a "Fun Fact" in history. In 1933 the Home of the German Parliament (the "Reichstag Building") had a fire started by a lone Communist and it did a lot of damage to the building. In the spirit of Winston Churchill's statement of "Never let a good Crises go to waste," Hitler's group started screaming and started the "Reichstag Fire Decree." They started yelling that the "Communists were plotting against us!" They then (for your protection) suspended civil liberties - and started gathering up all the communist Germans. The rights of Habeas Corpus, Freedom of Expression, Freedom of the Press, Public Assembly and secrecy of your mail and phone was taken away.

Now - it would be an extreme "conspiracy theory" to suggest any similarities between then and now, but it sure is strange some of the similarities. Why would asking any questions about this event get you shut down? Fired?

The Pravda political news services (CNN/MSNBC, etc.) all claimed that it was only Trump's group at the Capitol (Do you remember John Sullivan? He is a known antifa/BLM activist who attended the protest at the Capitol). Smells a little Reichstag to me - in my opinion of course.

The progressives and the media immediately started screaming armed insurrection! Coincidence? I think not.

Oh, I keep forgetting. Did I mention that on the Jan. 6 "protest" the FBI announced that no guns were found - I did see one guy, using a crutch against someone else, so that might have been a weapon of mass destruction.

It was a stupid thing for the Trump Supporters to go into the building - but an "armed insurrection"? Progressives and the media have milked it for as much mileage as they can get.

David Cannon
Enumclaw

THE COURIER-HERALD

Send letters to rstill@courierherald.com or 1186 Myrtle Ave., Enumclaw, WA 98022. Deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday. All letters should be typed and must include a name and phone number or email address for verification. Letters should not exceed 500 words. Letters may be edited for content. The opinions of the authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Courier-Herald.

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Volume 121 — Issue No. 29

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Blotter Buns

From Page 6

causing a disturbance. He was transported to St. Elizabeth Hospital for an involuntary commitment.

- A report told of a Smokey Bear sign being cut down at Roosevelt Avenue and Farman Street.

BLACK DIAMOND

April 11

- A report of a multi-vehicle collision was first received by Valley Communication and forwarded to Black Diamond police at 2:35 p.m. Officers responded to the 31100 block of Third Avenue where they found four vehicles involved in a single collision. An investigation was conducted and one of the drivers was cited for following too close.

April 9

- Officers were on patrol just after 11 p.m. when they observed a large fire in the 28800 block of 216th Avenue Southwest. They determined the property owner was burning construction debris and notified the fire department which helped extinguish the illegal blaze. An investigation was initiated and charges were pending.

- Just before noon, officers were sent to a residence on Southeast 294th Street after receiving a report of a domestic issue that had turned physical. Outside the residence they made contact with a suspect who was arrested and booked into the Issaquah jail, charged with fourth-degree assault/domestic violence.

April 8

- Officers received an afternoon call regarding a vehicle prowler. A female caller told 911 someone had opened the door of her car and rummaged through the vehicle. The incident occurred four days earlier, but she wanted to make a report. An officer learned nothing had been taken and that the caller just wanted police to be aware of the incident.

April 7

- City police heard from the Seattle Police Department and were asked to check on the welfare of an individual at a residence on Southeast 304th Place. They were later advised that the person had been located by the SPD.

- Officers were dispatched at 5:28 p.m. to an automobile accident at the intersection of Baker Street and Third Avenue. Police conducted an investigation while an injured driver was taken to a local medical facility. Both vehicles were towed from the scene.

April 6

- Police received a 1:23 p.m. call from Valley Communication regarding a three-vehicle collision at Third Avenue and Park Street. Officers arrived and conducted an investigation. Two of the involved vehicles were towed from the scene and one was driven away.

- Police were directed to a Fifth Avenue residence after hearing of a disturbance. Officers determined no crime had been committed and the individuals involved agreed to remain separated for the night.

- A report of a vehicle prowler had an officer responding to the 32300 block of Lynch Lane. It was reported that an unknown person had entered an unlocked vehicle and stolen loose change.

April 5

- A speeding vehicle was stopped at 11:03 p.m. by officers on patrol in the 23400 block of Southeast 288th Street. They found the driver had a suspended license and the vehicle did not have a required ignition interlock device. The driver was arrested and released while the vehicle was turned over to the registered owner.

April 5

- An officer responded to the 32900 block of Ten Trails Parkway after hearing of a vehicle theft. A report was taken and the missing vehicle was entered into the state system.

Buns

From Page 4

is slightly less expensive than a dog, and far more expensive than hamsters and other small mammals, which only cost between \$300 - \$500 a year.

And that's all before any emergencies, and rabbits are fragile creatures. For example, buns must — and I mean must — eat every 12 hours, or they will start to go into gastrointestinal stasis (which is a fun way of saying their digestive system freezes up, and you need to get them to a hospital, STAT). These sorts of emergencies can cost you hundreds of dollars.

Play space also needs to be a huge consideration. Rabbits need plenty of room to romp around — the House Rabbit Society suggests a play area of roughly 24 square feet for five hours of play a day. That can be hard to manage, especially in small homes or if you have little kids around.

Finally, remember: this is all just for *one* rabbit, and due to their social nature, they need *constant* companionship. If that can't come from you, the responsible adult (buns and little kids do not mix well, as again, they're very fragile), then you seriously need to consider investing in another rabbit to keep your first from becoming bored and lonely (which often manifests as destructive behavior, often to the detriment of your favorite piece of furniture and power cords). So get ready to double their costs, and spend months having separate living spaces for those rabbits as you slowly bond them.

But if it turns out you have the time, space, and extra little bit of money, bunnies are absolutely wonderful pets. They're quiet, cuddly, and when you get to know them, have big personalities (one of ours is a little daredevil and doesn't believe she's a ground creature, and the other is quite fastidious about where his toys are kept). Just keep them away from anything you don't want chewed up!

Elfers

From Page 4

out food and water to waiting voters is absurd, even if poll workers can hand them out. Also, limiting the voting times from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or no later than from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. benefits Republicans since working-class Democrats usually work until 5 p.m. or later whereas Republicans often have more freedom to vote during the day.

The goal of Washington State election officials is to get as many voters as possible. There is no such thing as "quality votes," as one Arizona Republican lawmaker recently asserted. This statement implies that those who vote Republican are "quality" while those who vote Democratic are not. No definition of "quality" was offered.

Why is Georgia so backward in its voting rules, and why are Republicans so fearful that they tried to fix a system that was both fair and secure according to their own elected officials in the 2020 election?

Based upon several statements by President Trump and by an attorney who answered a question by Justice Barrett in a Supreme Court trial about the reason

for throwing out ballots delivered to a wrong precinct, Arizona GOP attorney Michael Carvin responded, "It puts us at a competitive disadvantage relative to the Democrats."

But is racism the reason?

The obvious answer seems to be "it depends." It's all about power. That is certain. Republicans lost control of both the presidency and the Senate.

It's clear that several parts of Georgia's new voting requirements disadvantage Blacks, other minorities, and the poor, making it more difficult for them to submit their ballots, limiting, for instance, the number of secure ballot boxes in the state. Many Blacks and poor people have a more difficult time getting to those boxes because of a lack of transportation.

The Republican Party is in crisis. It abandoned its morality to support Donald Trump's authoritarianism. It is a party deeply divided with no guiding principles except to win. Republicans are looking to the past because facing the future foretells that they must either change or die. They're in deep denial. Racism is part of our national past that many Republicans are desperately clinging to. Changing demographics will likely settle the question for them, whether they like it or not.

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Looking beyond America's borders

“Beyond America's borders live not a lesser people.” — Beau of the Fifth Column

Immigration is in the news on a daily basis. Conservatives call the issue on our southern border a crisis. Progressives and moderates see the issue through the perspective of the famous poem by Emma Lazarus found in the inscription on the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your

poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

So, whose perspective is correct? That depends on two things: your political



RICH ELFERS
IN FOCUS

perspective and your level of fear. We're living in an age where journalists are often required to give differing points of view even when there is only one right answer. With some issues there is no equivalency. One perspective is correct and the other is grossly wrong. The issue of immigration, though complex, really has only one answer—one of empathy over fear.

We are a nation of immigrants. There have been times in our history when Americans feared Irish, Germans, Italians, Jews, Eastern Europeans, Black rebels, and all Catholics. Later in our history we feared the Japanese, whether citizens or not. Currently our fear turns us against Muslims, Mexicans, and migrants from Central

America. This fear is based partly on racism, or in other words, it's based on the belief that people who are non-whites, especially if they are poor, are inferior to whites. The problem of fear arises among many conservatives because they lack empathy—feeling what it's like to be someone else.

Now that American demographics are shifting to make our nation a plurality of races, there has been a desire and an actual attempt, mainly by white males, to end our democracy and to set up a dictatorship. Fortunately, that attempt of Jan. 6 failed, but the threat is not gone.

If you have ever had conversations with conservatives over immigration as I have, you will soon find that showing any empathy toward the Haitians and central Americans crossing our southern border will elicit, the “What about...” response:

“What about immigrants stealing American jobs, grabbing up housing, using taxpayer money, living on American welfare, raping, stealing from, and murdering American citizens?” All these “Whataboutism's” are really attempts to deflect from the humanity of those beyond our borders, from those who are different from the current white majority due to the color of their skin and their culture.

These fearful statements are often not based upon reality. The jobs illegal immigrants are taking are usually jobs Americans do not want. Picking fruit and vegetables, slaughtering and preparing chicken and other meats, jobs that are labor intensive and dangerous. If immigrants didn't do these jobs, then our food prices would increase as they are doing right now.

Arguments are made that immigrants are stealing

taxpayer money by getting welfare and free medical care and filling our public schools with children whose parents don't pay taxes. In reality, illegal immigrants often have to pay into Social Security with no expectation of ever getting the money back in their old age. In order to keep their jobs, they have to work and pay taxes on their labors.

I haven't seen any proof that immigrants take more from our society than they put into it. Examples are cited about illegal immigrants who steal, rape and murder Americans. While this does happen, most illegal immigrants are hardworking law-abiding people who want to avoid any contact with police for fear of being deported. These statements are used as talking points by many conservative politicians who gain votes by engendering fear of “the others” in their constituents.

We have a labor shortage in this country, especially in the lower-paying tiers like daycare, working in nursing homes and food production and distribution. The reality is that businesses, seeing our declining population will, over the next twenty years, be pushing the government to pass laws that bring more immigrants in to fill the shortages. “Compassion” will come as a result, not due to empathy, but because of capitalism and the desire for profit.

Emma Lazarus' quotation sees immigrants as assets, not as people to fear. The United States has always been a settler nation that has been made great because it has been built upon immigration. It's time to find ways to show empathy to immigrants while setting firm yet compassionate standards and regulations for their entry.

Missed connection: The Nazi at the Log Show

You had to know this was coming, right? It wasn't like you were trying to be subtle.

I mean, anyone who chooses to wear a high-lighter-yellow sweater is practically begging to be noticed.

But amazingly enough, that fashion faux pas was the least noticeable thing about you, given the Nazi Germany Schutzstaffel (SS) bolts were featured prominently on your beanie.

Was there a certain style you were going for? Did you wake up and think to yourself, “I need something that screams racist, but is also cozy?” I bet you do your shopping at Aryan Apparel.

But it wasn't just the bolts — no, just in case we couldn't already tell you make a habit of being on the wrong side of history, you were wearing the Confederate Flag, too! I can only assume you also have an extensive LaserDisc collection, listen to Prussian Blue on your Zune, and consider your purchase of a Google Glass money well spent.

And why, exactly, did you feel the need to dress in your David Dukes at the Log Show, anyway? Don't give



RAY MILLER-STILL
EDITOR

me that whole “heritage” runaround. Fun fact: during World War II, the South was “the quickest to support military action in Europe,” according to the Washington Post. “As early as 1939, public opinion polls found that support for the Allies — including the possibility of U.S. military action — was strongest among Southern respondents. Southern newspapers, too, opposed the Nazis and rejected

comparisons between the German regime and their own region's racial politics.”

Of course, those comparisons were fairly accurate, but man — can you imagine the original Klan being all like, “Sure, we're racist, but at least we're not *those guys*?”

It baffles the mind.

Sigh. OK. Time to get serious for a bit, because as much as I believe humor is a valid strategy for combating your kind of extremism, there really isn't anything funny about the fact that you felt completely at home putting your hate and ignorance on full display.

It's one thing to have the white nationalist organization Patriot Front visit our little corner of the

world every few weeks, littering our cities with thinly-veiled messages of racism, fascism, and violence.

(Another fun fact: Since Jan. 6, 2020, I've counted at least 191 stickers, posters, and flyers put up around Enumclaw, let alone Buckley and Black Diamond. Look closely around downtown, and you'll see the scars of battle on nearly every street sign and light pole.)

But it's a whole other beast to see someone who ascribes to one of the world's most evil ideologies simply saunter down the street. Like you're just a normal, everyday dude with normal, everyday beliefs.

I didn't stop to talk with you that day for several reasons, but that doesn't mean I simply shrugged and walked away, like I'm sure so many other people do.

I went home, and immediately started writing this column.

And I know you probably won't even read it, even if you are a Plateau resident. That's alright, because even though I'm addressing you and your beliefs, the message of this piece is for everyone else.

See, I'm not surprised by the fact that extremism exists in our sleepy little cities. I know you people exist, and I know you're growing bolder as our country continues to suffer

from hyper-polarization; during President Trump's administration, the Southern Poverty Law Center recorded a 55 percent increase in white nationalist groups across the country.

No, I am far more troubled by the fact that, in my experience actively combating Patriot Front in Enumclaw for the last two years, most folks would rather turn a blind eye to the hate encroaching on their community than take a stand against it.

It's clear to me that you, and others of your ilk, have taken advantage of our passiveness, our willingness to write off real extremism while we sit comfortably in our own bubbles of bias and fight our various culture wars in the comment section of Facebook.

So I hope this serves as a wake-up call for the Plateau. I hope knowing that you're out there will help people realize that our communities are not immune to hatred, and that more must be done to resist its spread.

(I should say, I don't blame the Log Show in the least for your appearance, though I did let organizers know you were walking around).

I strongly believe in the First Amendment. I strongly believe that

everyday people should be able to go about their lives without being afraid of retaliation for their morals and beliefs.

But when you wear those bolts, you aren't just expressing an opinion — you are calling for action. For tyranny.

For genocide. Those bolts will always hold an evil power in this world. A power that must always be held to account and brought, thrashing and cursing, into the light.

So even though I can't do more than call you out in this column, I invite you to come to my office to sit down with me, face to face, for an official interview and follow up to this column. Despite the fact that I believe what I have written is fair and deserved, you are owed an opportunity to share your side of the story.

I'll be honest, you won't find much of a friend sitting across the table from you. Your feet will be held to the fire.

But I take my role as a newsman and a journalist seriously, and I will honor my sacred promise to fairly and accurately represent you.

The choice is yours — you know where to find me.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I support your new conservative columnist

I am writing in support of your new columnist Dan Shannon.

The perspective that he provides is complete with factual information backed up by original sources. I understand that there may be readers that get upset by the point of view that he provides. However, if one does not like the message, is it right to “shoot the messenger”?

It is vitally important that media such as the Courier-Herald allow their readers to use their logical thinking skills to reason through ideas rather than silence and remove ideas such as those presented in Mr. Shannon's column. It is imperative that citizens are provided with views that they may not agree with.

Joe Frame
Buckley

Milage taxes will affect the less well-off

Evidently, it is unthinkable to Larry Benson that those who can afford a hybrid or electric vehicle should be punished, as he put it, if they had the burden of an extra tax based upon the miles they drive (“Responses to letter writers, columnists,” published Sept. 22). No, that punishment and extra financial burden belongs to those less well-off who can't afford a hybrid or an electric vehicle.

It will be decades or longer, if ever, that a majority will be driving hybrids or electric vehicles so in the meantime, Mr. Benson will enjoy the benefits of traveling on those roads and highways the less wealthy funded.

Elaine Biggerstaff
Bonney Lake

Thank you to those who helped restore power

Due to the wind/rain storm on Sept. 17/18, I lost electricity to my home in Enumclaw.

Thank you to all you people who worked diligently to rectify the situation, which in my case was less than a day and a half.

The event made me realize again how important that service is. Without it there was no TV, cooking on the stove or using the microwave, hot water, lighting, computer, phone, keeping the refrigerator cool or freezing, or having furnace heat. I greatly appreciated my flashlight, fireplace, cell phone, and blankets.

Thanks for giving up your weekend to make sure we residents were taken care of as quickly as possible.

Darlene Dihel
Enumclaw

Columnist must be the only one in the room

I didn't expect to be writing this letter about Dan Shannon's column (A White Elephant problem,” published Sept. 8) after reading his initial column a few weeks ago, where he explained how he would only be concerned with the facts of any given situation that he might be referring to. Wow, was I

wrong.

Facts, boy I don't know, he puts out lots of numbers associated with his “opinions” of various situations, but there are zero source references to support any of his claims. Here's one fact that he failed to mention when he referred to 9/11: While it was a terrible tragedy, perpetrated by a small group of terrorists, we went to war with two countries, one of which wasn't even involved in that tragedy, and killed approximately 71,000 Afghan civilians, and even worse, between 187,000 and 207,000 Iraqi civilians. How many more terrorists do you suppose these tragedies may have created?

Five dollar a gallon gas? Where is that in evidence? As it turns out there are many reasons for gas prices to rise and fall, none of which any president may or may not be responsible for, which include: The dot com bust putting a chill on the economy, falling U.S. production giving OPEC more pricing power, rising oil prices helping spur the 2008-2009 recession, which crashed oil prices, economic recovery sending oil prices back to \$100/bbl, U.S. fracking boom breaking OPEC's hold on oil prices, again crashing prices, and prices declining because of COVID-19. All of these things happened over the course of the terms of 3 different presidents: Bush, Obama and Trump.

Illegal immigration and its effects: His claim that illegals are responsible for “so much crime” in our country while several empirical studies generally find that immigrants do not increase local crime rates, and are less likely to cause crime than their native-born peers, and are less likely to be incarcerated than native-born Americans. Our thriving economy depends on illegals to keep prices and wages low. If politicians wanted to stop illegal immigration all they would have to do is prosecute businesses that hire them. It's that simple, but neither party will admit to that or do anything about it. He also makes no mention of the fact that the right's “God,” Ronald Reagan, gave amnesty to 3 million illegals when he was president.

“Billions of dollars of military equipment left behind?” All that was left behind was destroyed except for equipment in the hands of the Afghan armies.

Finally, respect: Referring to our current president as “Old Joe” and a past president, probably one of the greatest humanitarians in our history, as “Mr. Peanut” is beyond disparaging. Dan Shannon, “The Smartest Man in the Room?” From the actual “facts” quoted in his column, he must be the only one in the room, just sayin'.

Larry Benson
Enumclaw

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Volume 122 — Issue No. 1

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A midterm election prediction

In democracies, politics is an arms race of ideas. Just as the Democrat has to be responsive to the people when governing, when seeking office it helps to propose policies that the voters like and it pays to do more (as opposed to less)—even if the economic consequences are damaging down the road” (Bruce Buena de Mesquita and Alistair Smith. “The Dictator’s Handbook” p. 46).

If we take this quotation and then use it to analyze the two major American parties, which one has followed this rule for the 2022 midterms? The obvious answer is the Democrats. In March of 2021, the Democrats passed the American Rescue Plan. It was a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package. It helped to fuel “short term inflation” according to a Federal Reserve paper (<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/10/19/economy/inflation-biden-stimulus/index.html>).

On Nov. 15, 2021, President Biden signed a \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill into law, which will improve the nation’s bridges, highways, broadband, water, and energy systems. This new law will create thousands of jobs—an example of winning the arms race of ideas.

Biden also tried to get another \$1 trillion social and climate package called “Build Back Better” (BBB) through Congress in December 2021 but failed because no Republicans would vote for it and Democratic Senators Manchin and Sinema refused to go along.

What have the Republicans offered in terms of new ideas that appeal to voters? First, we need to be aware that the Republicans are engaged in a political civil war between Trump followers and Senator Mitch McConnell supporters. When asked what Republicans were offering the American people with their political platform, McConnell stated, “That is a very good question. And I’ll let you know when we take it [the Senate] back.” (<https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/senate-gop-hide-its-legislative-plans-until-after-election->



RICH ELFERS
IN FOCUS

day-n1287767) According to the same article, “McConnell, I assume, is hoping that anger with Democrats will carry his members over the finish line,” said Frank Luntz, a pollster who worked with Newt Gingrich, then-GOP House

whip, to develop the “Contract with America.” The anger referred to is over rising inflation rates. But, since most Americans support Ukraine’s valiant defense against the autocratic Putin and his military invasion, they may be more forgiving with higher inflation rates due to rising petroleum costs, sanctions, and rising food costs.

McConnell seems to be using the same tactic that the Democrats used in the 2020 presidential race when they ran on an anti-Trump platform. McConnell’s high-risk strategy doesn’t follow Bueno de Mesquita and Smith’s principle of politics in democracies.

Voters may be more forgiving of Biden and the Democrats than McConnell calculates because they see that even though Biden failed so far with BBB, if the Democrats win in 2022, they could then push rewards like coverage of childcare costs for voters.

In the 1858 Illinois senatorial race, Republican Abraham Lincoln debated Democrat Stephen A. Douglas. During the debate, Lincoln forced Douglas to take a “let each state decide” approach to the issue of slavery. Douglas’s Democratic Party was divided over the issue of slavery. The northern Democrats were anti-slavery. As a result, Douglas won the Senate race in Illinois, but his equivocal stance on slavery angered southern Democrats in the 1860 presidential election, causing them to vote for other candidates. It allowed Lincoln to win with less than 40 percent of the popular vote and almost no southern votes. (Bueno de Mesquita p. 45) The fight between McConnell and Trump could cause just such a division among the Republicans in November 2022.

As Bueno de Mesquita states, “Competition in democracies is cerebral, not physical. Killing foes works for dictators, but it is a pretty surefire path to political oblivion in a democracy.... If you reward your cronies at the expense of the broader public, as you would in a dictatorship [think of the 2017 Republican tax cut

See **ELFERS**, Page 16

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

More ways to help you be Mindful

Editor’s note: The following is a continuation of “Direct your brain to heal,” a SoHaPP column published monthly:

Have you noticed the Enumclaw School District’s Kindness campaign, ‘Be the ‘I in Kind’? The science behind happiness was emphasized in the district several years, and in particular the importance of kindness was the primary instigator for the creation of the community’s SoHaPP, the Science of Happiness and Positive Psychology. SoHaPP’s practice of Habits for Happiness (H4H) had Kindness as our focus in February’s Courier-Herald article.

The school district also promotes another emphasis for one of the five habits in H4H, that of being more Mindful. They use “conscious discipline” to help students be more mindful of their behavior. In March’s article on being more Mindful, we suggested you find the way suiting you best for increasing this habit. Were you able to?

A Tai Chi teacher of mine, Michael Gilman from Port Townsend, has a wonderful newsletter (www.gilman-studio.com), and has granted the right to re-post. From

ancient experts to the modern, he speaks of the separation of meditative aspects (Qigong) from the form work of Tai Chi, suggesting the form contains all. Here’s part of Training Tip #359:

“Buddhism arrived in China at the beginning of the first century AD. Around 400 AD, Ta-Mo, a Buddhist monk from India, is credited with introducing what later became know as Shaolin Kung Fu, or Zen (Chan) Buddhism, which evolved into Tai Chi Chuan. This is of course a simplification of a process that took place over hundreds of years.

There were/are at least seven types of meditation in the Zen Buddhist (Tai Chi) school. They are:

- Meditation through breathing exercises;
- Meditation by concentrating one’s mind on a single point;
- Meditation through visualization;
- Meditation through Mantrum Yoga – the reciting or intoning of incantations or mystic words;
- Meditation by absorbing one’s mind in Good Will, or devotional thoughts;
- Meditation by identifying the Mind Essence;

See **LETTER**, Page 16

When to fight, and when to flee: Fatherly advice to my young son

Have you ever been unexpectedly airborne?

I don’t mean the Hollywood-Tower-Of-Terror-lifts-your-butt-out-of-the-seat sort of thrill, or even the your-friend-pushes-you-off-the-zipline-platform-because-you-were-too-scared-and-besides-you’re-holding-up-the-line kind of experience.

No, I mean walking along when, in between steps, you find that your feet are no longer in any contact with the cement and your body is being flung at high velocity in a novel direction.

It’s not a fun feeling. Though, of course, the landing felt quite worse.

So maybe it was the shock of suddenly being parallel to the ground when I was perpendicular a second ago; perhaps it was because I hit my head when speed had finished its thing and gravity took over; but it took me an embarrassing couple of moments to realize two men had begun yelling demands and violently patting me down.

That was the first time I was mugged.

Now, 15 years later (good God, was it really that long ago?) I can look back at this traumatic moment of my life and laugh. In fact, I do it quite often — I love telling this story to anyone who will listen, maybe especially strangers at a bar.

After all, “Any man willing to paint himself in the shadow of his failures will make far more interesting conversation....”

And, according to many people — close friends at the time included — I did, in fact, fail this encounter.

They didn’t blame me for being where I was, or what I was doing (which, by the way, was coming home by bus after sneaking out to see my girlfriend late at night, walking the final mile home with my phone in hand, Zune in my pocket, and earbuds blasting Panic At The Disco).

They blamed me for not fighting back. See, at this point in my life, I’d been studying various martial arts for several years, from kiddie gloves to Muay Thai. That gym was practically a second home then, since I not only trained there, but also taught lessons, and finished what homework I could between classes.

It was, apparently, expected of me to kick some butt.

That’s not even close to what I did, of course. Even if I had my wits about me and all of my training didn’t fly out the proverbial window in the face of an unanticipated bum rush, I was far more learned in the well-known fighting technique those in the industry call “the thousand-yard

dash” than I was in arm bars and chokeholds.

So that’s exactly what I did — after, for whatever reason beyond my comprehension, faking an asthma attack (not hard to do when the wind is knocked out of you), confirming as best I could the duo had no weapons, and somehow snatching my phone back before absolutely booking it. (My Zune, alas, I had to leave behind, much like how the music world abandoned the ill-fated Microsoft device not much later.)

They gave chase for far longer than I expected, though I suppose they were suddenly more interested in teaching me a lesson than recovering their ill-gotten goods. Once I was clearly pulling away, though, they had to satisfy themselves with shouting some not-so-veiled threats in my direction. At that point, though, I had to start giving thought toward what the hell I was going to tell my parents — I think this is what people mean when they say, “out of the fire, into the frying pan.”

Thank goodness the second time I was mugged was far more cordial.

This was right after high school, when I made the extremely adult decision to move to New York before ensconcing myself in the most liberal bubble I could find (a.k.a. The Evergreen State College — yes, I’m a Geoduck).

My time in The Big Apple was certainly an adventure, and I’m sure I’ll get to sharing it with you some day.

This particular incident happened in the wee hours of Nov. 1, as I was making the subway trip from north Harlem, where there was a wild Halloween party, to my quiet apartment on Halsey Street in Brooklyn.

I had recently discovered a magic store and was brushing up on my card tricks and sleight-of-hand, so naturally, I showed up at this wingding armed with a cape, top hat, pressed dress shirt, disappearing walking cane, and as many decks of cards as I could reasonably carry without looking like I was trying to smuggle cigarettes in my slacks.

Of course, my attire was far less fanciful on the return trip home — my cape was folded up, the cane pocketed, shirt disheveled, and the top hat, well, who knows. So to all around me, I looked like some little lost white boy doing his best to stay conscious enough to recognize when his stop came up.

Which is probably why the 300-pound gorilla across the aisle noticed me (before you read into that, he was



RAY MILLER-STILL
EDITOR

white).

This time around, I was listening to Three Doors Down on a hand-me-down iPod (at this point, the Zune was a rather expensive paperweight) when I noticed this near-derthal trying to get my attention.

Clearly, I took out my earbuds to ask him what was up —

but before I could get a word out, he stated, very matter-of-factly and in a tone that only comes with habitually making similar ultimatums, “You have two options: give me your iPod; give me your phone; or I beat the s**t out of you.”

As you’ve most likely assumed at this point, yes, I was extremely hungover. Which probably explains why my brain failed to notice the potential danger I was in, and instead focused on the fact that this walking tank actually gave me three options, not two. I might be embellishing here, but it’s not improbable that I silently counted the possible recourses on my fingers before realizing what was about to transpire.

A quick triage determined that my phone was, although fairly outdated, absolutely necessary to keep, as well as my head. That left the iPod, which already didn’t have enough memory to even hold a third of my music collection, and the headphones — the bare-bones kind that came with the device — were aiding my migraine, rather than soothing it.

So I quickly passed it over.

And — to my absolute amazement — we shook hands before he got off at the next stop, soon to be disappointed by my taste in music, I’m sure.

Now, I don’t want to give the impression that we were the only people in the subway car — it was actually quite crowded, mostly with young adults who I figured would not be interested in stepping in if this guy decided to introduce his fist to my face.

But the woman sitting next to me was actually playing with her digital camera when this exchange transpired. After he exited stage left, she suddenly looked at me and asked, “Did you just get mugged?”

Replying in the affirmative, she quickly swore and pocketed her valuables — figuring, somehow, that she could suddenly share the same fate as I, despite the departed villain.

I soon reached my stop, walked to my apartment building, and climbed the four stories up to my roof-access pad, the adrenaline suddenly sinking in.

My roommate — who

normally did a fair job ignoring me unless I brought home an eighth — noticed my pale (OK, paler than normal) complexion, and assumed the party went poorly. Or, it went too well. Really, it depends on what goals you set.

After correcting his supposition, he immediately began berating me for, you guessed it, not fighting back. I’m not even positive he was aware of my decade spent training in martial arts — he just expected me to put up my dukes and defend my honor, no matter that “my honor” in this situation was a paltry bit of plastic and data.

Now, two points of data does not a pattern make, but I find myself far more concerned with this idea that it’s preferable to fight over material objects than the fact there’s people out there who will take your stuff by force. Of course, this does not mean there’s never no reason to defend yourself — I just think doing it over a credit card you can easily cancel or a phone you can brick is simply not worth it.

So at the end of the day, now that I’m a father, I’m looking forward to passing these stories down to my child, both to make him laugh as well as hopefully glean something from the valuable lessons I had to learn the hard way.

First and foremost, it’s almost always better to run than to fight, and there’s never any shame in doing so; similarly, if running is not an option, simply giving your attacker what they want is far preferable than a beating. Your wellbeing is far more important than anything you may have in your pockets.

Second, then, is to never expect help from the people around you — although my first mugging happened late at night, seeing a teenager being chased by two men in the middle of the street should have clued passing drivers in to something being off. And, of course, anyone else on my train car in New York who overheard the not-so-subtle “conversation” we had could have similarly given aid, and they did not.

Bystander apathy is a hell of a thing — which is why, third, you should always be aware of where you are and who is around you. Not just for your safety, but for other’s as well, as I would hope that you will grow up to be a person who is willing to offer assistance in a dangerous situation, and not succumb to the mindset that “someone else” will step in to help.

And, finally, if everything goes to s**, you hit first, hit hard, and hit dirty. I’ll be more than glad to show you a few things.



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Volume 122 — Issue No. 27

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