

Letters to the editor | Feb. 17, 2022

February 18, 2022 at 2:54 a.m.

Connecting Voltaire, Jefferson and Spider-Man

Spider-Man knows “with great power comes great responsibility.” There may be no power greater than the freedom of speech, yet its abuse has reached a new and frightening level here in America. It is up to everyone to fact-check first and to believe second. Sometimes that can lead you down a rabbit hole, as is the case with Congressman Jamie Raskin quoting Voltaire with, “Anyone who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.” Voltaire was French so there would not be a direct quote in English. I checked with the Voltaire Institute and they say it is not in his works, but the Cato Institute seems to disagree. Translating, paraphrasing, intent all come into play. So whether Voltaire wrote it, said it, or meant it, is an issue that may never be fully resolved. However, regardless of who said what, the meaning rings true as it has been borne out in history. The Germans believed they were the superior race. To say this ended badly, especially for the Jews, is a serious understatement. As an atheist American, I favor quoting Thomas Jefferson’s statement in the Declaration of Independence “all men are created equal.” Men referring to humankind. And this brings us full circle as Jefferson was a fan of Voltaire. The important thing to bear in mind is if these things ring true and have been borne out in history, it doesn’t really matter who said it but that it was said.

— *Larry DePuy, Eureka*

One local locksmith available when needed

Having lived in our unique, interesting city since two weeks before the 1964 flood, I thought I knew everything I needed to know about it. Not so as I discovered two evenings ago when I was locked out of my home along with my son and his wife. There is a first time for everything and we discovered that Eureka doesn’t have a system in place to help in situations like this one.

My son tried all the things there were to try and we finally used their smartphone to call a locksmith only to discover that there was no one available for our zip code. We got a telephone book and called one that advertised 24-hour emergency service but they had just gone to bed even though it was early evening. We also called two other local numbers and no one was available.

Thank goodness for neighboring Fortuna. He advertises 24-hour service and had just come in from work, had an early morning appointment ahead of him but he honored his ad and came to

let us in to my house where my pets were very glad to see us. And, at 84 years old, I was very happy to be back in my warm home as it was 11 p.m. by the time this adventure was over, most of it spent trying to find a locksmith.

It seems like these businesses would coordinate with Fortuna and McKinleyville to provide emergency service and gain some goodwill and new customers.

– *Louise Sturdivant, Eureka*

PG&E talks about higher-priced bills

We are hearing from our Eureka-area natural gas customers that their energy bills are higher than normal. We understand any increase can be challenging. We are taking action and here to help.

Natural gas prices have gone up significantly, about 90% higher than last winter in PG&E's service area. This is happening nationwide, and globally it's even higher, about 400%. PG&E passes through the cost of energy purchases directly to our customers and does not mark-up that cost. What we pay for our customers' energy supply, both natural gas and electricity, we pass through directly to customers.

Higher natural gas costs combined with lower-than-normal temperatures in some areas are causing folks to crank up their heaters, resulting in an increase in monthly energy bills.

PG&E works to reduce gas price volatility impacts by buying and storing gas when prices are lower for use when prices are higher and maintaining access to lower-cost gas in gas production basins.

Customers can help cut costs, too. More than 70% of winter energy costs are from the heating system, water heater, and washer/dryer. A few ways to save:

- Set the thermostat at 68 degrees or lower, health permitting, save 2% for each degree the thermostat is lowered.
- Clean or replace air filters monthly, and keep warm air moving by reversing ceiling fans to force warm air into living spaces.
- Set the water heater thermostat to 120 degrees or lower; install low-flow fixtures to use less water (or take shorter showers); wash clothes in cold water.

As the weather warms up, usually during March and April, energy usage and bills should decrease. For more info, visit www.pge.com/winter.