

OPINION

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2017 | WEST HAWAII TODAY

LETTERS | YOUR VOICE

Letter short on facts, heavy on fear

This is in response to Ella Rodriguez letter of March 29.

Germany is one of the 28 countries that belong to the European Union. Belonging to the EU means, among other things, that the borders of the countries are open and people can travel in and out of the countries at all times. Therefore, all these countries now have refugees from war torn countries and most are overwhelmed trying to accommodate and integrate them.

Yes, they have to spend a lot of money doing that, but that's what humanitarian aid is all about. As for the claims she makes about German homeless/health problems and lacking education — they are ridiculous. Germany takes care of the homeless, socialized medicine takes care of all and they have some of the best education in the world.

In all countries there will always be criminals, rapes, murders and assaults without definition of race, nationality or religion, and to blame Merkel for them is ridiculous. Unfortunately, because there are hundreds of thousands of refugees there is little time for extensive vetting and there will always be some bad apples getting through one way or another.

The influx of refugees in the U.S. is totally different. Vetting takes about two years without guarantees of being accepted. The San Bernardino attack was by an American-born citizen. Most of the other attacks are by homegrown terrorists (not just here, also in Germany, England, Sweden and other European countries) just as the American neo-nazis have attacked Jewish cemeteries, businesses, mosques and temples.

Interestingly it was Muslims that repaired a destroyed Jewish cemetery! In the U.S. radical Islam promotion happens in some colleges, and prisons create many Islam converts. There are 1.6 billion Muslims in the world. There are generations of peaceful Muslims living in most of the states (including Hawaii). In Hawaii there is no room for racism or religious persecution and we want to keep it that way, Ms. Rodriguez. Check facts so you can understand the politics of other countries better.

Christa Wagner
Kailua-Kona

Hilo column a true tribute

It was refreshing to read Dennis Gregory's Hilo column in Thursday's WHT, April 6, page 4A. I think he reflected upon many of the things that born-on-the-Big Islanders cherish about our island.

I'm still taken aback when I hear some transplants and malihini say they won't or haven't visited Hilo "because it rains all the time." Of course, it doesn't. For those who grew up on the Big Island, Hilo is us, as is Pahala, Oloo, Ninole, Wailea, and all of the other wonderful places we call home.

Mahalo for sharing your poignant memories of our "one-horse town" called Hilo.

Likeke Bumanglag
Kailua-Kona

Tell us about it

Do you have a story idea or news tip? Is there a community problem that has not been addressed?

Do you know someone unique, whose story should be shared and enjoyed with the rest of the community?

We want to know.

Call the West Hawaii Today newsroom at 930-8600 or news@westhawaii.com and share the information with our readers.

It's our community — and we care.

Letters policy

Letters to the editor should be 300 words or less and will be edited for style and grammar. Longer viewpoint guest columns may not exceed 800 words. Email or address letters to:

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WEST HAWAII TODAY | EDITORIAL

Regardless of TMT outcome, help shape Mauna Kea's future

From 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Mayor Harry Kim will lay out his vision for an Aloha for Maunakea World Park.

Kim has been vocal about his dream to create a space on the sacredly held mountain for a park that would symbolize people sharing and working together to achieve the impossible.

"Mauna Kea can be and should be a monument for the world, especially at this time, for mankind's quest of knowledge to make us a better people," he said.

The talk session is hosted by the International Lunar Observatory Association, themed "Maunakea and Hawaii 21st Century Astronomy" at Galaxy Forum Hawaii 2017 at King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel.

How feasible the park idea is, only time will tell.

But it's just one idea for Mauna Kea and there's a group of people who wants to hear as many other ideas for the mountain as possible.

EnVision Maunakea, a 10-member volunteer committee — the Hui Ho'olohe — has recently started meeting with

interested communities in closed-door sessions to hear feedback on what people would like to see on the mountain generations from now.

Susan Maddox, executive team leader for the nonprofit Friends of the Future, spearheaded the effort along with Gregory Chun, who has lived and worked on Hawaii Island since 1999 with Parker Ranch, Kamehameha Investment Corporation and Kamehameha Schools.

In a recent editorial board meeting, the group said their sessions started in Kona recently when they meet with several kupuna. The goal of the sessions is to gather as many perspectives as possible for the future of the mountain. What they gather over the course of the year, they want to put into an official document from which officials, agencies and the governor's office can gain insight to inform future agreements and policies.

We applaud the effort, and hats off to Hui Ho'olohe members Rob Pacheco, Noe Kalipi, Michael Chun, Kanoa Withington, Ku'ulei Bezilla, Don Mitchell, Kihei Seto, Grant Hill, Reggie

Lee and Bobby Hickcox for volunteering their time on such a serious topic.

It is a monumental task they have before them.

Mauna Kea, as most everyone here well knows, is in the middle of a controversy over the proposed construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope, which is being contested by some who believe deeply the sacred mountain shouldn't be the site of such structures.

The contested case around the project has dragged on and an end date seems far off. With TMT leaders announcing recently they've landed a backup deal with Spain to relocate to the Canary Islands should construction not resume on Mauna Kea, it all but feels the telescope has one foot out the door.

So, the listen group might be a little late, at least in regards to TMT, which, incidentally, also had the unhelpful timing of being the first telescope constructed on the mountain during the social media age, where organization is swift and outrage, for whatever reason, is given weight.

But Maddox and

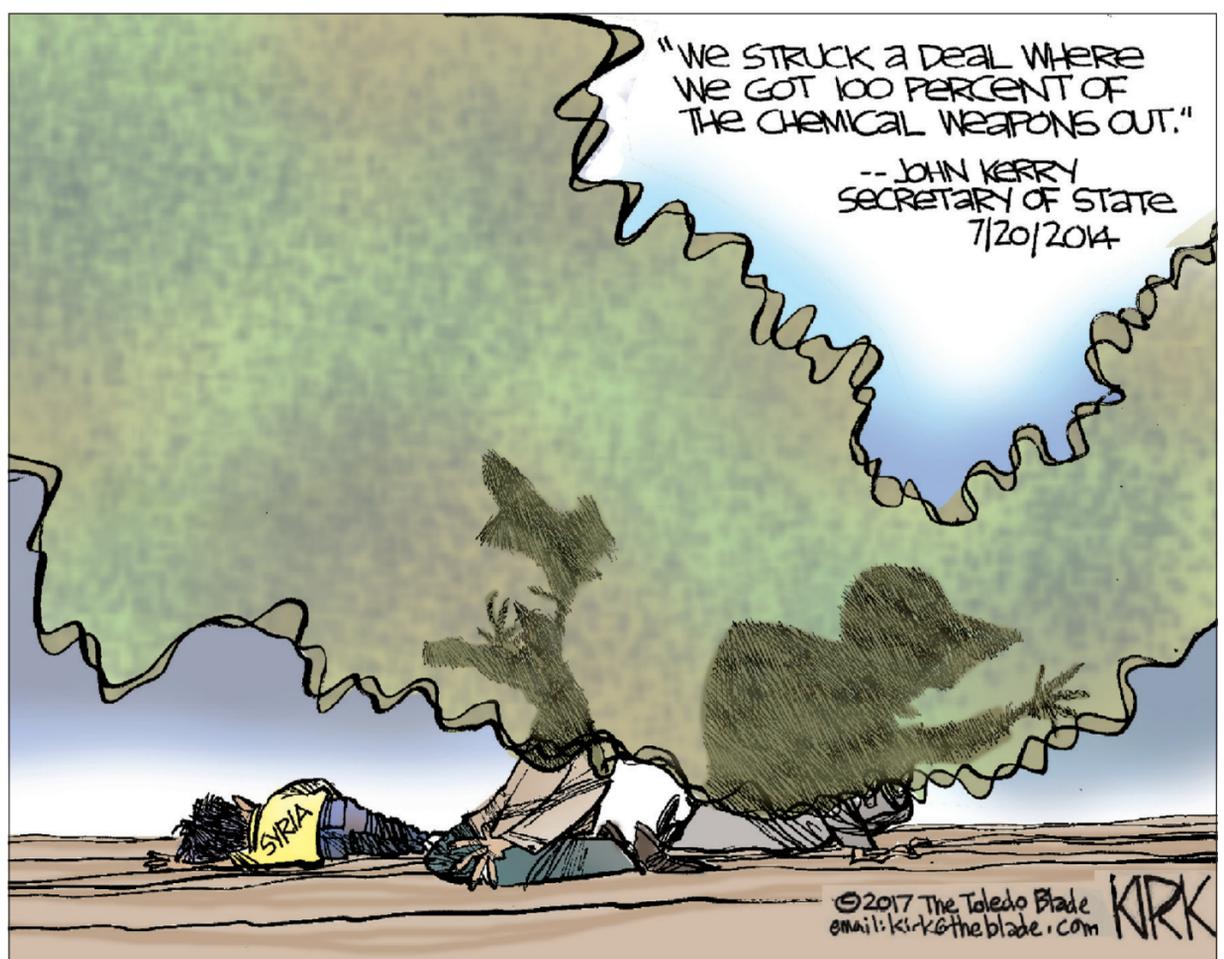
Chun don't expect TMT to dominate their conversation. Their project is much more than just one project, they said.

They've started to hear a wide range of feedback, including what people would like to see for recreational opportunities for the mountain. The listen group, they said, is for every idea under the sun and stars.

But they are familiar with the passions around TMT and the mountain, which is why the listening sessions are closed-door, so people can feel safe sharing their ideas without worry of interruption or rebuttal.

For those looking to become part of a listening session, visit www.envisionmaunakea.org or contact Maddox at Friends of the Future, 885-8336 or susanm@envisionmaunakea.org.

Regardless of what happens with TMT, other ideas, proposals will pop up, and leaders, whoever they turn out to be, will have to decide if it belongs on the mountain. What's being done now can help shape what insight those leaders have when they begin to consider.



KELLY GREENWELL | MY TURN

Uphold Hawaii's welcoming way for immigrants

Recent discourse regarding immigration, both nationally as well as locally, begs the attention of every American, and particularly, every Hawaiian.

With the exception of the few survivors who initially welcomed us, we are in fact all immigrants, including, for that matter, the U.S.

government. For the feds to now threaten our community with reprisal for not endorsing their draconian behavior regarding recent immigration policies I say how dare you?

Americans and especially Hawaiians have welcomed and accepted all who come and in general have honored this tradition for a very

long time. Now, with fear-mongering the standard of Washington and specifically administrative rhetoric, it's time to take a stand. Hawaii, by way of leadership from individuals such as Judge Watson and Rep. Joy San Buenaventura, is making it clear that humanitarianism is not subject to ransom.

One of the "red flags" that inspired this leadership comes from an awareness that when someone accuses another of not being truthful there is a high probability that their real objective is to deflect the focus from their own lie.

Specifically, when Virginia Kice declares that charges against the Immigration and

Customs Enforcement agency (ICE), who she represents, are not true (WHT March 28) we need to bear in mind that she takes orders from an administration in Washington that is yet to tell the truth about anything.

When she states that the "entire concern over what ICE is doing here in Kona is unfounded" she is extending the deceit projected by that agency and we all need to be both aware and vigilant. Note that law in our democracy is made by the legislative branch of government and not by agencies like ICE or the police, regardless of their assertion. Any deviation from this procedure is

simply unconstitutional. Let's understand though that our constitution is merely a document of understanding, only secure if the people representing it are secure — and that security is today at best questionable.

However, beyond the constitution, and the law that may come of it, there is a basic construct of right and wrong and America and especially those of us from this place of aloha, need to remind ourselves that we in fact are first and foremost descendants of immigrants. It is who we are, and an attack against any of us is an attack against us all. Kelly Greenwell is a resident of Kailua-Kona