

## Letters to the Editor

West County Journals, Attn: Letters

14522 South Outer Forty Drive, Town &amp; Country, Mo., 63017

## OPINIONS

So  
Speak yo  
(314)

## Provel cheese: the scourge of St. Louis

There's been a lot of bad news in St. Louis lately. American Airlines pulled out of Lambert as a hub. Assorted surveys rank the city as one of the fattest, least fit, most crime-ridden places in America. And if that isn't bad enough, the three major grocery stores practically shut down when workers went on strike.

At least that's over. I was beginning to worry about where to buy my Christmas pickle.

The Christmas pickle is a quirky tradition friends in my neighborhood shared with me when I moved to St. Louis in 2002. They hide a pickle in the branches of their Christmas tree. Whoever finds it first on Christmas morning has something good happen to them.

Apparently, this tradition is German in origin. I discovered that fact in the very educational

Laura Hazan

OPINION  
SHAPER

Disney World last winter.

While I was traveling with my family around the globe at the Epcot Center, we stopped in a gift shop in "Germany." Lo and behold, they had a pickle-shaped Christmas ornament. It seemed like a less drippy, less stinky alternative to the real thing so, I bought one for my tree. Far be it for me not to adapt to the customs of my new hometown, as I did with the Halloween joke.

I've celebrated Halloween in Dallas, Washington, D.C., and

New York but didn't discover the Halloween joke until we moved here. Who can resist a knock-knock joke from a costumed child? My son spent hours studying joke books to find the perfect joke for his first Halloween in St. Louis. But I'm confused by the Halloween joke. Why am I still getting tricked when I've already handed out the treat? I think I still have a lot to learn about this custom.

So how could a city with such imaginative traditions be so bad? I blame it all on provel cheese.

Like the Christmas pickle and the Halloween joke, I was unfamiliar with provel until I moved to St. Louis. At first, I thought it was just a brand name for provolone cheese.

"I don't know what it is, but I've been to several restaurants on The Hill and it's in a lot of dishes," my husband told me on

my first trip to The Hill.

"How bad could it be if Italian restaurants are using it?" I asked.

"See for yourself," he replied.

Provel is not bad, but it's not good, either. It's bland when it's cold and slimy when it's hot. Turns out it's an unnatural blending of cheddar, Swiss and provolone cheeses — all perfectly tasty on their own, but blended together? I call it Frankencheese. Swiss and cheddar do not belong in Italian dishes, and neither does provel. Is there something wrong with traditional Italian cheeses such as mozzarella or parmesan?

I think I need to start a movement. I'll call it MMM — Mozzarella Making its Move — or CRAP — Citizens Revolt Against Provel. I'll recruit like-minded St. Louisans to help me rid the city of the scourge that is provel. This cheese has the city in its clutches.

Is it just a coincidence that cities ranked skinnier, more fit and less crime-ridden in national surveys don't even know about provel? I think not. Wake up St. Louis; provel is our archenemy.

A bit of an exaggeration, perhaps, but mozzarella and parmesan are much healthier cheeses, and they taste better, too. I'm all for tasty St. Louis treats such as Ted Drewes, Hodak's fried chicken and toasted ravioli, but provel is one culinary tradition I'll never adopt. However, if you have any good Halloween jokes, please pass them along.

*Laura A. Hazan of Kirkwood is one of 17 West County-area Opinion Shapers. Opinion Shapers are guest writers who submit a column three times a year on areas of interest to them. Hazan is a homemaker.*

Faith in God reaps  
wisdom and courage

## SOUND OFF!

## Space case

George Bush wants to put a space station on the moon. I have a good idea. Let's open a base

of Sound Off!" for 2003, along with comments from a lot of other people. Do we get an award for this journalistic honor, such as a plaque or maybe a gift certificate to Uncle Bill's Donutery House?

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all did not know. He never  
run single song and only had one

who is helping to raise...

# SOUND OFF!

## Thanks, Judy

My kudos to Judy DeRose of Manchester parks and recreation. She actually sent a follow-up letter without being requested to do so on an issue, unlike the city of Manchester, which does not follow up on police incidents, reports, incidents, etc. My kudos go out to a job well done. Thank you, Judy.

## Never mentioned

In his State of the Union address, President George W. Bush never mentioned that over 500 of our military personnel have been killed in Iraq, nor did he mention how he avoided the draft during the Vietnam War. Also not mentioned was the fact that the national debt incurred on his watch is astronomical, or that the number of jobs lost to foreign countries is in the millions. Also missing was his proposal to eliminate overtime. I suppose these things are just too controversial, and he can't handle that.

## Repetition

They say if you repeat something over and over enough times, people will believe it. The Bushies are going to beat the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq dead horse all the way to the November election, until a paranoid American electorate votes for George W. Bush to serve a second presidential term.

## Dangled above danger

The article about David Love, the man blinded in an accident when he was a child, was extremely moving. But I guess it also stirred some anger in me that people like Michael Jackson and the Crocodile Hunter would dangle their children above such danger, just like this man was dangled above danger as a child.

## A question

A question: Do they also give out cleavage awards at the Golden Globe award festivities?

## Praise versus criticism

The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.

## Defending provel

Someone should tell Opinion Shaper columnist and provel cheese hater Laura Hazan that she needs to trade in her taste buds for new ones. As a 75-year-old Italian

who has spent many years in Italian restaurants and pizzerias, I can honestly say Laura should be ashamed of herself for using her Opinion Shaper column to bad-mouth provel cheese.

## Pre-empted

Today our TV programs were pre-empted on two TV stations for installation of the new Catholic hierarchy, and I would like to say that those of us who are not Catholic don't appreciate missing our programs. Plus, the installations in our religions are not covered.

## Liberal busybodies

The president is surely doing a wonderful job, since he gets credit or blame for everything — whether it's good or bad. The Congress includes the entire legislative branch of government and is ignored by the liberal busybodies.

## Concerns in Olivette

This is regarding the city of Olivette. Another City Council election is coming, and we had better be skeptical of those who continue to throw cold water on any progressive proposals. The city of Olivette is poor. We have no money to make it better. Instead, employees are leaving, and those remaining are concerned about their pension and medical insurance being negatively altered. The MoDOT proposal is also being bandied about. MoDOT would pay to fix an obsolete interchange. How can we not accept it? I urge you to be aware of scare tactics.

## Liars and cheats

You all just watch, and go ahead and participate if you will. America will re-elect a bunch of liars and cheats, including the one in the White House. American paranoia of the world will have won out in the end.

## Political interests

Politicians do not serve the interest of the country. They serve the interests of their sponsors. Sometimes these two interests coincide. However, as just plain folk on Main Street, even if you vote, you've already been disenfranchised by the governments in Washington, D.C., and Jefferson City.

## Very frustrated

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himself?

## Incompetent

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the definitions of "just" and  
"unjust" laws in the Rev. Martin

year on areas of interest to them.  
Farrar is a part-time writer and  
part-time writing teacher.

# SOUND OFF!

## Swimming and skating

I read that the Rockwood School District wants to build a swimming pool at an elementary school. What next? A skating rink? Do you smile when your real estate tax bill arrives?

*Editor's note: The proposed pool would be funded by the Rockwood Swim Club, not the school district.*

## An Italian's perspective

This is in response to the provol cheese article by Opinion Shaper columnist Laura Hazan. Evidently, she has no Italian genes. Provel has a mild flavor; is great on salads and sandwiches; and enhances any dish. I was born on the Hill and have been eating provol for 30 years. My family gets upset when we run out. It's just an Italian's perspective.

## A conservative's perspective

To the people who are always bashing Rush Limbaugh and George Bush: I think you are the same people who when told Clinton was having an affair with Monica Lewinsky your response was, "Who cares?"

## Something is wrong

Call **Sound Off!** and express your opinion. **Sound Off!** will be published every Wednesday. Some calls may not be printed if space is not available.

Call (314) 965-7849 to reach **Sound Off!** and leave a recorded message at any time. Comments should be 30 seconds or less, and may be edited for length. Good taste and legal considerations will be our guidelines for publication.

neur. I hope he makes it well — far better than Donald Trump.

## Pre-election promises

Let's stop, listen up and really see what the suited men are doing at our expense. Our lives and families depend on it. Oh, what promises we hear now that election time is near.

## Expressing thanks

I would like to express my thanks to those marvelous AmerenUE workers who have to work outdoors in biting cold temperatures. We thank our firefighters and police, but let's remember to thank our wonderful, outdoor utility workers and newspaper deliverers. God bless you all.