

Letters to the editor, March 12

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Body

Columns misstate Sanders' programs and appeal

Regarding Kevin McDermott's column, "'Let the hate feed you.' Sanders' movement is Trumpian in its toxicity." (March 8) and Joe Klein's column "I was the 1968 version of a Bernie Bro. I still regret it." (March 8): I was a little sad after reading both of these opinion pieces.

McDermott started his column by saying that it is a false equivalent to compare President Donald Trump voters to Sen. Bernie Sanders voters. Then he went on to tell us that Sanders promises lots of free stuff and has no way to pay for it. Wrong. Even a Koch brothers-backed study said that one scenario of Medicare for All could save us \$2 trillion over a 10-year period with everyone having health care.

Klein ends his column with the false assumption that only former Vice President Joe Biden can beat President Donald Trump, yet polls have shown both Sanders and Biden would be able to beat Trump.

So the real question is: Are we going to vote for the status-quo? That is voting for corporate Democrats who would continue to sell out the middle class incrementally, or are we going to vote for real change that would improve the quality of life for 90% of us?

Don R. Webb - St Peters

Coronavirus hysteria only validates xenophobia

Regarding "Missouri virus case shows 1 exposure can mean major response" (March 10): Now that we have at least one confirmed case of coronavirus in St. Louis, hysteria seems to be spreading. Viral memes in St. Louis telling people to avoid Asian Americans and restaurants have resulted in reduced business. Ostracizing fellow St. Louisans is never OK.

This level of racism and xenophobia isn't just scary, it's dangerously counterproductive to public health. Just as the flu doesn't discriminate, this virus doesn't care what your ethnicity is.

Despite the fact that the majority of the cases we are now seeing are travelers returning from Italy and Europe, the media sometimes uses Asian faces to illustrate coronavirus stories.

A St. Louis Chinese American woman thought she had coronavirus but didn't. She and her husband were highly responsible and diligent about self-quarantine. People and the media need to spread fact-based information not

fear-mongering. Basic health literacy and public hygiene practices like hand-washing are what will keep us safe. Hysteria is only going to lead to scapegoating and validate xenophobia. This level of fear without facts is what led to Chinese American exclusion and Japanese American internment.

Hold tight to the facts, not the fear. Arm yourself with education, and educate others.

Caroline Fan - Webster Groves

Advice on how to talk to kids about coronavirus

I'm a therapist who treats anxiety, and this is what I'm telling my patients and their families about the coronavirus: You, just like your children, have a right to feel scared, given all of the information, both fact and fiction, that is being pushed through various platforms.

Your children will learn how to cope from you. They will look to you to understand and manage their fears. It is your responsibility to help them better understand the information. Remember, children's level of understanding is based on their age, past experience with fear and current life challenges.

When your child feels able to express big emotions, like fear, a greater depth of trust is established. Depending on the age, their fears and/or questions may seem silly. The proper response might be: Wow, that sounds scary for you, or I'm sorry to hear you have been worrying so much about this.

Statements such as "Don't worry," or "I'll do the worrying for you," might cause children to feel as if their worry is not important to you.

This is a great opportunity to talk about this virus and help them with an appropriate and accurate narrative. Ask questions about what the child might have heard or read about this virus. If you, as a parent are not worried, it's OK to state it that way. It's also OK for the child to be worried, and tell the parents about their concerns so they can talk about them.

Use this opportunity to teach them about prevention and planning.

Rebecca Dougherty-Froelke - Oakville

Look to South Korea on how not to panic

Regarding "Health minister hopes South Korea has 'passed the peak' of outbreak" (March 9): I am formerly from O'Fallon, Missouri, and am studying at Seoul National University. I've lived in South Korea for 10 years. Some apocalyptic accounts of the coronavirus outbreak have circulated. Aside from worries over shortages of masks, the level of panic buying in Korea has been low. Stores are amply stocked with all daily necessities, including toilet paper, and everything from groceries to hand sanitizer can be ordered online and received within 24 hours.

South Korea has a staggering capacity for testing for the virus, as many as 10,000 a day, and the death rate is at 0.6%, far below that of China or even Italy. Testing is free if doctors agree a test is warranted, and thanks to the universal health care system, treatment for coronavirus, or any ailment, is covered.

While the government response has not been perfect, the government has exercised admirable transparency. Daily notifications pass along instructions for preventative measures and inform people of confirmed cases in their neighborhood. Streets are not empty. Cafes nearby my house remain nearly full, and restaurants and movie theaters are open. The economic impact is unmistakable and there is certainly a bit of fear in the air, but it is not the end times some suggest.

Benjamin Engel - Seoul, South Korea

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Graphic

Democratic presidential candidate, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaks to reporters on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, in Burlington, Vt. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

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