

Survive July 4 with the family's other side

EASTSIDE: CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

Red- and Blue-Staters 101



Jeremy Greenberg

(Note: This week's column is an excerpt from my forthcoming book, Relative Discomfort: The Family Survival Guide. I simply couldn't wait to share it with you. Enjoy, and look for the book in stores this fall. I will also be doing some book and stand-up events across the country – with special attention paid to Kirkland, Redmond and my homeys of the greater Eastside. Hope to see you there!)

Every year, 4th of July celebrations and family reunions bring together our conservative and liberal relatives for the time-honored tradition of eating barbecue and accusing the "other side" of destroying America.

But just because we've got relatives from "Red" and "Blue" states with differing political views doesn't mean our family gathering will turn into a joint session of Congress.

These events can be peaceful. Our family members can put aside their differences and focus on common interests, like keeping the uncle everyone refuses to let babysit from taking the kids on a nature walk.

Let's begin by looking at some little-known facts about Red and Blue-Staters: Did you know conservative Red-Staters have six toes on each foot? It's true. They use the extra toe to press harder on the gas pedals of their environment-destroying, fossil fuel-guzzling SUVs. Red-Staters also have an extra set of protective eyelids they can close while hunting or watching the news.

Did you know liberal Blue-Staters also have an extra muscle in their forehead that allows them to roll their eyes two centimeters higher than everyone else? It's true. And Blue-Staters sigh an octave higher than most people.

Blue-Staters also read from top to bottom, so as not to offend Chinese people, and Red-Staters consider reading to be one of the black arts. They will only put their eyes to a document if it's an appropriation of wetlands, or a bill to make Birkenstocks illegal.

Blue-Staters are fine with having Spanish as a second national language, because they have no cultural identity. Red-Staters claim that the country already has a second national language: motor-engine revving.

When it comes to entertainment, Blue-Staters will watch anything, so long as it's based on a vial of tears found in an immigrant's basement. Red-Staters will also watch anything, provided that it features a robot, a nuclear attack or crime-fighting aliens.

You down with O.P.P.?

(Other people's politics)

Finally, just remember that coming from a mixed-politics family is just like being in a mixed-race marriage, except that your "Red" cousins won't try to scare you by driving you through their neighborhood. And, with just a little understanding and preparation, our liberal and conservative relatives will get along so well, you'd think they were family.

Jeremy Greenberg is a writer, comedian and resident of Kirkland. He is the author of the forthcoming book, Relative Discomfort: The Family Survival Guide (Andrews McMeel). Learn more at www.jeremygreenberg.com.

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7:30 p.m.

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