

OPINION

SATURDAY

Last words

Always take hold of things by the smooth handle.

— Thomas Jefferson

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Editor takes flight

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK
THERESA BAER



This is being written on my last day at the Siuslaw News. Technically I don't consider myself a procrastinator, but even though the words of this editorial have been running through my brain for weeks, I am just now sitting down to write it. All the perfect words and turns of phrases, of course, have flown right out of my head.

I certainly thought long and hard about leaving this job and this town, and as the time to go creeps up, I sure would like to cry a little.

While I'm doing that, I will share that working for the Siuslaw News has been a pretty wild ride. I've met more people and learned more about people than I could have imagined. Incredible people in this area, and I am absolutely honored that I've been allowed to see into their lives, and that many of these people have become extraordinary friends.

When I first took the editor's chair in August 2007, I had lots of ideas and enthusiasm. I don't have quite so many ideas these days, but I still believe the Siuslaw News will thrive and

succeed with the times, getting better every year.

I can easily see that happening with the staff in place now.

I've worked with Ryan Cronk, who will be taking over as editor, for about seven years. When I was cleaning out my office, I came across a photo of him when he first started. Ha! (said with love and laughter). Yes, this job changes you. All Ryan has done is grow. His writing skills are excellent, and he is bright and smart and still has most of his memory intact.

Working with Ned Hickson since Day One — some of you can imagine what that's been like. He is the glue that bonds the newsroom. Always calm, always together and, of course, with an outrageous sense of humor. It's not every job that allows the opportunities for belly laughs every day.

Jack Davis hasn't been in the newsroom for quite a year, but he fit right in from the start. He is genuinely interested in his town and learning all its workings. He's excellent at reading people, and he has another amazing quality rarely seen these days: Jack is chivalrous. He has come sweeping into my office or out on a story on a number of occasions to rescue me from whatever fix from which I needed rescuing.

The newest addition to the newsroom is Chantelle Meyer. She just started this week and will be a full-time reporter working on the city, police and government beat, and like the rest of us, will have an array of other jobs and beats to juggle. Chantelle worked with us as an intern last summer and proved already that she can stand being in the same room with the rest of us for hours at a time. She is the crowning addition to this team.

I will live forever with pride for having worked in this newsroom for these eight years. There are many co-workers here with whom I have become great friends, so many people taking me under their wings and treating me like family.

My love and thanks to you all. I will miss each and everyone of you.

Finally, I say goodbye to my town. I have no idea what the future holds for me once I move back to Southern California, but I like to think I'll be back one day.

I have loved every minute living here surrounded by ocean and lakes and trees and wildlife and the best people on earth.

And so I close with an editorial not about business or politics or government or ethics. It's about love.

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

• On Jan. 23, 1775, London merchants petition Parliament for relief from the financial hardship put upon them by the curtailment of trade with the North American colonies. Most critical to the merchants' concerns were the 2 million pounds sterling in outstanding debts owed to them.

• On Jan. 19, 1915, during World War I, Britain suffers its first casualties from an air attack when two German zeppelins drop bombs on Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn on the eastern coast of England.

• On Jan. 20, 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt is inaugurated for the second time as president. The Constitution had originally set March 4 as the presidential inauguration date to allow the winner time to travel to the nation's capital.

• On Jan. 25, 1949, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences holds its first annual awards ceremony in Los Angeles. The now-famous award statuette "Emmy" was a feminized version of "immy," the shorthand term for the image orthicon tube that was used in TV cameras until the 1960s.

• On Jan. 24, 1956, Look magazine publishes the confessions of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, two white men from Mississippi who were acquitted in the 1955 kidnapping and murder of black teenager Emmett Till. In August 1955, on a visit to relatives, the 14-year-old Till had allegedly whistled at a white woman who ran a store.

• On Jan. 21, 1977, President Jimmy Carter grants an unconditional pardon to hundreds of thousands of men who evaded the draft during the Vietnam War. Some 100,000 young Americans went abroad, with 90 percent going to Canada. The Canadian government had instructed border guards not to ask too many questions.

• On Jan. 22, 1981, the final portrait of John Lennon and wife, Yoko, appears on the cover of Rolling Stone. The photo, taken 12 hours before Lennon was assassinated, shows a naked Lennon curled up in a fetal embrace with a fully clothed Yoko. Photographer Annie Liebowitz had been told by a Rolling Stone editor, "Please get me some pictures without [Yoko]."

VIEW FROM UPRIVER



Pooling our best efforts to restore a precious dream

WESLEY VOTH
For the Siuslaw News

Some ideas refuse to die quietly. And sometimes dreams that took a lot of effort have a way of festering when they fall on hard times, bringing out conflicting and sometimes acrimonious sentiments among those in the community carrying on.

Mapleton Pool is one such example, one thing this entire community built together through a lot of effort, now empty in an unused building in a school with a fraction of its former numbers, now at risk of permanently becoming a former hole.

Mapleton Pool began as an idea in 1972. The community was a more prosperous place in those days, but it was still a long 14 years from the first donation to the day when the first person jumped into the completed pool. While there is a family name and a memorial attached to that first donation and that first person in the pool, according to a member of that family now active in its restoration, it was never their intention that it be anything but a community pool.

From the cover of a calendar sold to raise funds during another

period of struggle in 2004, "After that (first donation), money came in from many families and sources. Some funds came bit by bit from auctions, bake sales, bingo, concerts and personal donations. Major contributions and efforts came from Davidson Industries, the Mapleton Lion's Club and companies like Lagler Logging Co. Volunteer workers did much of the construction work. Florence artist Pauline Cox painted several murals of water sports and family fun on the pool walls. A hydrotherapy spa and fitness room

were added years later, also funded by grants and gifts."

Over the years, Mapleton residents swam there, from the youngest to the oldest, learning water skills through classes that were part of both the school's and the community's curriculum. It was a place where all generations of Mapleton got fit and recreated together.

The great American poet Langston Hughes in his signature piece, titled "Harlem," asks, "What happens to a dream deferred; does it shrivel up like a raisin in the sun?"

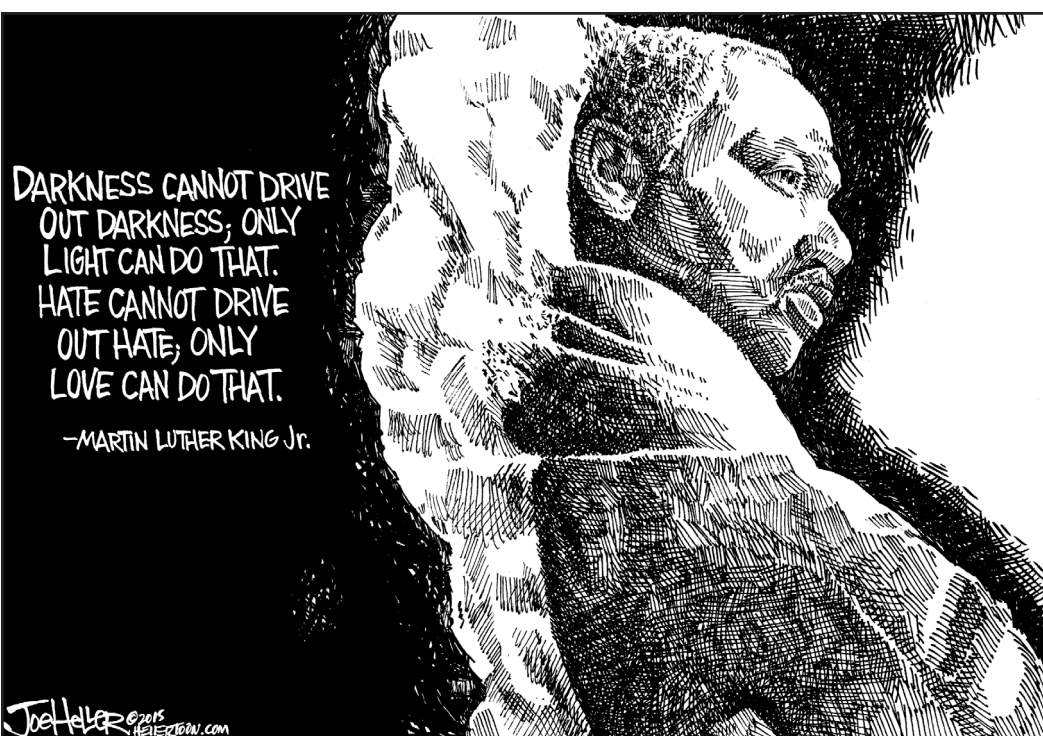
Harlem, like Mapleton, had a heyday, and the poet writes long after economic depression helped erase all but the memory of those days. He uses a number of other images like "rot" and "explode" in

addition to shriveling up to refer to what happens to thwarted dreams, none of them pretty. Kind of like the way in which an empty pool in an unused building in a school with a fraction of its former numbers is not pretty.

Currently there is a groundswell of enthusiasm and optimism in wresting the pool and all it has meant from the naysayers and pessimists one and all. This groundswell is an unprecedented group of folk, combining some involved from the pool's beginning, to those who have been trying without much support to keep the dream alive over the past 10 years, to those newly come to either the community or the idea.

There is also interest from beyond our immediate community. Nothing short of better than ever can do justice to or properly honor the work and sacrifice of those who made the pool possible in the first place.

On a page in the calendar mentioned to earlier is a photograph of Mapleton's postmistress from an earlier era, Ida May, in her 90s when the image was memorably captured by Ned Hickson. She is shown in the water with a group of very young children who are learning to swim. That photo is the essence of what we want to hang on to: this community, together, whole, bathing in the love and handiwork of those who have gone before us and made this possible.



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