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# OPINION

WEDNESDAY

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## The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

## National, local groups partner in support of law enforcement

On Friday, Jan. 9, partnering organizations in support of law enforcement officers nationwide will promote a National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day.

In light of recent negativity directed toward law enforcement nationally, there is a need to show law enforcement officers that our citizens recognize the difficult and sometimes impossible career they have chosen, in public service to us all.

Each day, 780,000 police officers across the country put a badge on and go to work knowing they may face extremely dangerous situations. On average, between 105 and 203 officers die in the line of duty each year; 50,000 officers are assaulted in the line of duty each year; 14,000 officers are injured in the line of duty each year; and more than 300 officers commit suicide each year.

Citizens who appreciate law

enforcement and are discouraged about the negative attention being given to law enforcement are encouraged to take time on Friday to show their support, and can do so in any number of ways, including: changing profile pictures on social media to the image provided at [www.facebook.com/nationalcops](http://www.facebook.com/nationalcops), by wearing blue clothing in support of law enforcement, sending a card of support to our local Justice Center, Oregon

State Police or Lane County Sheriff's Office, sharing a story about a positive law enforcement experience on social media, asking children in your community to write letters in support of law enforcement, by participating in Project Blue Light and displaying a blue light in support of law enforcement, organizing an event or a rally in support of law enforcement officers, advertising support through local media outlets/billboards, or

posting the public service announcement supplied by "COPS" to your organization's webpage or social media pages.

Most important, if you see a police officer, thank them for their service.

Wives and friends of Florence police have organized a decorating "party" for a major intersection to honor the Florence Police Department and will bring lunch and snacks to the department.

## Police officers most often misrepresented in media, public eye

To Theresa Baer and to the Florence community we serve:

As of late I have seen some harsh criticisms in the national and local media regarding the men and women of law enforcement. There is a villainization of police taking place that far outweighs the post Rodney King era of some years back. The tragedy of that incident affected the whole of law enforcement for years.

Today, however, the unfounded accusations against police officers as murderers of young black men, accusations that police somehow are providing a criminal disservice to Americans or that police in general are some sort of jack-booted thugs are sad and hurtful misrepresentations.

The vile expressions of hate and disrespect for our police, for those who daily risk their lives on behalf of the public they serve, is the worst I have ever seen. I have invested over 40 years as a member of the law enforcement community and have worked with both large and small agencies. I shall state, with conviction, that I have never seen or personally been involved with any police officer who was intent on killing anyone.

I understand that within any organization you may end up with a bad actor. But in police work, it is the exception and a rare one at that.

If a perpetrator is intent on inflicting bodily harm to an officer and threatening the officer's life or the life of others, then the officer is left with little

choice. We know that most officer-involved shootings erupt and are over in seconds, not minutes. The intent of the officer becomes one of self-preservation or preservation of the life of someone else.

Being a cop:

It's all about what they do and occasionally how they die.

The men and women of law enforcement are your neighbors. Their kids go to school with yours. They attend your church or place of worship. They believe in living in a safe community and have made it part of their lives to make it happen. They see the worst and the best in a community and, above all, they respect the laws they are charged with enforcing.

They desire to go home at night (or at the end of their shift) just like everyone else in their community, yet they work in a profession that can take away that opportunity in the blink of an eye. They know there are people in the community that care not whether they live or die; they know that some have no problem with pulling the trigger. They know that if the "bad guy" wants to hurt you or kill you, he has the advantage.

They know that they may have only a split second to make a decision that will decide whether they live or die, will ever see their children again, or their wives or their parents. They also know if they make that split-second

### GUEST VIEWPOINT

By LYNN F. LAMM  
CHIEF OF POLICE, FLORENCE

decision and take the life of another human being, they will be subject to review boards, grand juries and prosecutorial decisions that may take weeks or months to determine if they, in their split-second decision-making, committed the crime of murder or were justified in the shooting.

Obviously, when it's a matter of self-preservation, and the officer's decision to shoot or don't shoot is immediate, then mistakes can happen; for example, a person chooses to disregard the officer's order to show his hands and instead pulls an object from his jacket pocket and raises it in a threatening manner. Under such a circumstance, how long would you wait to make a shoot/don't shoot determination?

How many of you, while on your way to work, would ever think about having to defend yourself or others, and in the process, take a human life? Cops do.

How many of you think about keeping yourself in good physical shape so you can handle a drunk at the local bar? One who stands 6 feet, 2 inches, works in construction and tells you he is going to pull your head off and stick it where the sun doesn't shine?

How many of you would ever won-

der about how you're going to tell a young mother that her 8-year-old child was hit and killed by a drunk driver?

How many of you would wonder how you are going to explain to an elderly couple, in their 80s, that it was two 14-year-old boys who burglarized and trashed their home and their American Indian arrowhead collection, numbering in the hundreds, which they had collected over every wedding anniversary for the past 60 years, had been thrown into the Siuslaw River by the two young burglars?

How many of you would be up to delivering the death message to parents of three teenagers who died in a tragic accident?

How many of you can even imagine walking up to a vehicle to advise the driver that the license tabs are expired and the next thing you see is a handgun pointing at your face?

How many of you can imagine being sent on a suicidal person welfare check and upon arrival you find what was once a family of four are now all deceased?

How many of you can imagine being there for your community, being there because police are needed, being there because who else would protect our citizens and their families?

The men and women of law enforcement are there because being a law enforcement officer is an

admirable profession. They find the lost 5-year-old who elected to crawl into the clothes hamper to take a nap. They spot the smoke at 3 a.m. and if possible get you and your family out of the house. If you are a victim, they work diligently to arrest the "bad guy" and recover your stolen property.

They remind you when your tags are expired, your taillights are burned out or when your driving exceeding the posted speed. Not always with a citation, often with just a verbal advisement. They spend time in our schools and work at building rapport with our children.

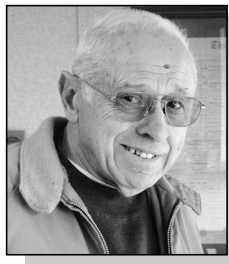
They come when you're in immediate need or will be there to assist you if you need long-term help. And, they give you their best 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. They are vigilant while you sleep and they are on duty when you are enjoying your holiday.

They are truly the "good guys." They are our warriors, and all too often our warriors make the ultimate sacrifice. For that, we must all be thankful.

If there is ever a time to recognize such sacrifice, it is now. Americans need to support their police.

Please reach out and honor them on Friday, Jan. 9, Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. If you should have the opportunity, thank them personally for what they do for us. Right now they could use your vote of confidence.

## NEIGHBORS



### Potpourri

BOB JACKSON  
NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENT  
For the Siuslaw News

Potpourri is best described as any mixture of unrelated subjects; and such is the state of my muddled whimsical mind as I scatter thoughts to the wind during this holiday season.

You may recall that for years Merle Tipler accompanied his wife Joanne on her Travel Tyme bus tours. What is not generally known is that this affable gentleman had another life, far different than cruises and casino tour buses.

For something like 45 years he was employed at Davidson Industries on the Siuslaw River near Mapleton. He

told me that he operated something I think he called a triple saw. He remembered there were around 500 settings to choose from. It boggled my mind! I am thinking, maybe five decisions without those extra zeroes would have been my limit. He also had foot controls to manipulate.

Every trade has its own jargon. Merle told me how Don Davidson would sometimes stand behind him and suggest leaving or adding more "wane." I sort of understand waxing and waning of the moon, but I wondered, what's wane?

Turns out it would be trim for defects like bark or even taper along

the edges of the lumber.

As for Joanne, who had enriched so many lives, she was stricken with Parkinson's disease and confined to her bed with round-the-clock care. Tragically, her caregiver was convicted of first-degree criminal mistreatment and aggravated theft of over \$61,000 plus unspecified charges made to credit cards stolen from Tipler's home. Joanne, 74, died July 2011 while the investigation was still underway.

On a lighter note, this is from a letter sent to our daughter-in-law Janeen Jackson, who now lives in San Diego:

Dear Neen, Do you remember the Tom Hanks movie "Castaway"? Marooned on a deserted island, he found a volleyball, which was imprinted with the trademark Wilson, that had floated in on his beach. Hanks drew eyes on it and sort of

adopted it for something to talk to, and naturally he called it Wilson. Eventually he lost the ball to the ocean and was devastated. Well, the other day we lost our "Wilson."

When we moved to Greentrees nearly 10 years ago, there was a long log with the stump still attached hung up on the beach in front of our home. When we had the big rip-rap rocks brought in to protect the bank, the log was moved out of the way by the big excavator. Because it was rotten, half of it broke away.

All these years, because of the long projecting roots, the stump and remaining log stayed there, surviving high tides, boat wakes and fierce wind storms.

Seagulls, crows and funny little top-knotted kingfishers found it to be a fine resting place. It was the first thing we saw every morning, and we

watched it disappear into the darkness every night.

Much as in the musical "My Fair Lady," "like breathing in and breathing out," we had "grown accustomed to its face."

And yes, when we came home from town the other day something was missing.

There had been an unusually high tide and unbelievably after all these years, our Wilson was gone. Did it make it all the way out to the Siuslaw bar and the open ocean? We will never know.

Recently we were eating lunch while sitting by the big windows overlooking the river.

Peggy remarked, "I miss our old stump."

Does Wilson miss us? I wonder. Remember, I told you we were going nuts.

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