

Letters to the Editor:

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OPINION

SATURDAY

MARCH 28 • 2015

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.

LETTERS

Building bids

I want to compliment Mike Nielson on his letter to the editor, "Unscrupulous Building Contractors," March 21. Although a bit older than his sister, over the years I have gone through renovations, additions and painting projects of the few houses I have owned. What I have learned is never get an estimate, but ask for a bid.

This year I will have the exterior of my house painted and I have made a detailed bid request document that includes the scope of work, including a physical inspection of the work to be done and just not a walk around estimate. It is very detailed and includes specifications of products, warranties and application processes.

It also includes payment schedules. Upfront I will pay for material cost but nothing else. Payment schedule will be broken down in two phases, first being acceptance of prep work and then final painting once accepted.

Ask for references and actually visit projects that contractors have done and talk to the owners. First, I need to get the leak in my roof done.

Win Jolley
Florence

Kudos to volunteers

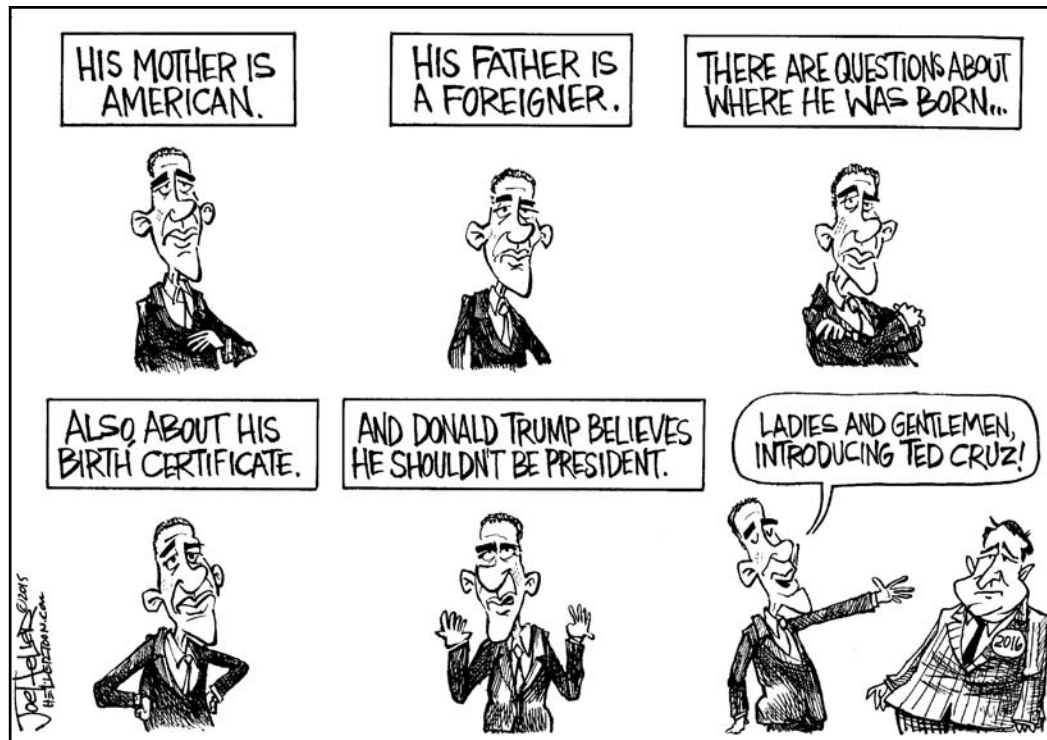
The sixth annual Shamrock Run took place Saturday, March 14, this year. It was a very rainy and windy day to say the least, but most runners on the Oregon coast are used to this climate and showed up for the run.

What is remarkable and commendable is all the volunteers directing traffic and runners along the course — all of them with a smile and an encouraging word to the runners. They are not paid for their effort, nor do they get the "glory" of running the race and being a participant.

They have to be in their places along the course long before the runners and walkers show up, and stay there for a couple hours or more in the pouring rain.

I want to say a big thank you to all these wonderful people. You are very much appreciated.

Kerstin Johnsen
Florence



YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME
The History Channel

• On April 2, 1863, responding to acute food shortages, hundreds of women riot in Richmond, Virginia, breaking windows and looting stores, before Confederate President Jefferson Davis threw his pocket change at them from the top of a wagon. Davis ordered the crowd to disperse or he would order the militia to fire on them.

• On April 3, 1882, one of America's most famous criminals, Jesse James, is shot to death by fellow gang member Bob Ford. Detective magazines had glamorized the James gang, turning them into Robin Hoods. In reality, Jesse James was a ruthless killer who stole only for himself.

• On March 31, 1931, Knute Rockne, the legendary Notre Dame football coach, is killed in a plane crash. He was 43. From 1918 to 1930, Rockne compiled a record of 105 wins, 12 losses and 5 ties, and won six national championships.

• On April 1, 1948, Soviet troops begin stopping U.S. and British military trains traveling through the Russian sector to and from Berlin. In June, the Soviets began a full-scale blockade of the U.S.-British-French sectors. Thus began the Berlin Blockade, when U.S. aircraft began dropping supplies into Berlin.

• On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. is shot to death at a hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. A single shot fired by James Earl Ray from more than 200 feet away struck King in the neck. The death of America's leading civil-rights advocate sparked a wave of rioting in black communities around the country.

• On April 5, 1976, Howard Hughes, one of the richest men to emerge from the American West, dies while flying from Acapulco to Houston for medical treatment. Hughes' bizarre behavior grew worse in his final years, as he became obsessed with privacy and sometimes worked for days at a stretch in a black-curtained room without sleeping.

• On March 30, 1980, a floating apartment platform for oil workers in the North Sea 235 miles east of Scotland collapses, killing 123 people. No one was expecting that a large wave would collapse and capsize the platform.

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VIEW FROM UPRIVER



Vernal fireworks

WESLEY VOTH
For the Siuslaw News

The coming of spring and end of Lenten, also known as the vernal equinox, marks an explosion of green leaf and blossom tint, a flurry of feather and fur, a quickening in the egg masses in the ditches, a swelling of life in the waterways as myriads of salmon fry pass tail first downstream, wary of merganser and cormorant, of mink and otter, of heron and kingfisher. Mating swallows collide with me three times in their frenzy while our daughter's dog looks on in surprise.

I always inventory what I see on the first day of spring: violet green swallows and band-tailed pigeons; the first bleeding hearts, wild iris, Hooker's fairybells and native trailing blackberry blossoms; blooms on the Big-leaf maples. There are leaves on the willows, on the salmonberry, elderberry and thimbleberry canes; up from the earth explode huge leafed cow parsley, manroot vines, the fern

fronds of bracken, lady, deer and sword. Mosses and resurrection fern grab the last direct sun they'll get before leaf fall.

On Sweet Creek Road, in the pastures I notice three of last year's fawns with what appears to be deer hair-loss syndrome. While the mothers seem

unaffected, these yearlings at first showed what looked like white patches, and then have kept working at these areas with teeth and hoof and rubbing against things until the winter coat is gone along both sides. The syndrome is apparently caused by heavy lice infestation of a type unknown here prior to 1995, thought to have originally come from deer of the eastern hemisphere raised domestically in the United States. So far it has seemed to cause problems for black-tailed deer in lower elevations between the coast and the Cascades in Oregon, Washington and California, resulting in the deaths of many affected deer. I hope these survive.

Several people have asked what was meant in my last column by "terrestrial" birds. It refers to land; terms for other types of birds are aquatic focused — waterfowl and shorebirds. For many of these latter, if not most, native vegetation is also critical to their habi-

tat. In an article last week in this paper about spraying in a recently logged area, salmonberry was lumped with other "invasives" such as Scot's broom. While salmonberry may be unwanted by someone who is trying to grow Douglas-fir as a crop, it is a native plant tough enough to outcompete Scot's broom in many settings, and I for one hate to see it killed indiscriminately with herbicides.

Last year a Walton woman who wildcrafts many local forest foods told me that she adds the blossoms of Big-leaf maple to her stinging nettle pesto and gets a result more like guacamole. After some experimentation over the last couple of days, I have found that lightly steamed (5 minutes max) blossoms with equal parts well steamed nettles, oil (I like olive, sunflower, or grape seed), roasted nuts (hazelnuts or walnuts or sunflower seeds), parmesan cheese and a little salt, well pureed in a blender or food processor yields a great pesto or guacamole-like dip that is great with dark bread, pasta, or corn chips.

Big-leaf maple blossoms are coming on now, and due to variations in trees and temperature and sunlight, will probably be findable somewhere locally for the next month. Each emerging bract contains a flower stalk and a leaf stalk — use just the flower stalk. And if in your experimentation you find better or more interesting results, don't hesitate to let me know.

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor on subjects of general interest to its readership.

Brevity is mandatory, and letters are subject to editing.

Libelous letters and poetry will not be published. Thank-you letters are generally inappropriate.

Publication of any letter is not guaranteed. Handwritten or submitted letters via mail must be signed over the writer's name. All letters must include an address and phone number of the writer for verification.

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