

## Letters to the Editor:

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## OPINION

SATURDAY

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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.

## Coast Guard to the rescue

## GUEST VIEWPOINT

BY DANIEL BLOMBERG  
CHAPLAIN, LANE COUNTY ADULT CORRECTIONS,  
EUGENE

I am writing to commend the U.S. Coast Guard and the fine men that recently came to our assistance. At about 7 p.m., April 17, I came upon a strange sight when I went to pick up my wife at the North Jetty. A cold wind was blowing briskly as I pulled into the parking lot where the Siuslaw River flows into the ocean. After picking up my wife, Marilee, I noticed a man laying on the ground, covered with a jacket, next to a motorcycle with his head covered up.

At first I thought he might have been drinking and had merely passed out. But on closer inspection, I saw there were two motorcycles and a large young man standing there in a T-shirt, looking distressed. I circled back in my car and asked the young man if everything was alright. It wasn't.

The man, Aaron, explained that he and his buddy had been out on the jetty rocks when his buddy began to feel ill. He became dizzy and fell on the rugged rocks and soon began to vomit. Alarmed, Aaron struggled to pick him up and carry him back to the parking lot. In the process, they both fell on to the rough rocks, scraping their arms and legs.

It had been nearly two hours later when I showed up. To my amazement, I learned that many people had come by but no one had offered to help. Some had even laughed at him as they walked by.

Aaron was freezing cold, chilled by the biting wind that was blowing sand sideways. I immediately offered him a towel I had in my trunk and a wool cap. After further inquiries, I learned that his friend had a serious liver condition and had been jaundiced since his youth. Aaron had called another friend in Eugene to come and get them, with plans to load their motorcycles into his pickup truck. Upon learning that he wouldn't arrive for another 30 minutes, I offered to run back to our RV and get a warm blanket and a heavy down-filled parka for Aaron to wear.

Upon my return, I was impressed to call the local Coast Guard station, knowing they always come by the jetty at sunset to check on the tower lights. I reasoned that they could be trained in first aid and could be of some assistance. I barely had time to pray for him before three strapping, young men showed up in a pickup. Immediately they were surrounding the fallen man, asking him questions and gathering a medical history, before calling 911. Within minutes, an ambulance arrived.

It was determined that the friend needed to go to the hospital, so the guardsmen helped him onto a stretcher and into the ambulance. By then, Aaron's other friend had arrived from Eugene with his pickup truck. The three guardsmen assisted Aaron in loading the two heavy motorcycles onto the pickup.

We thanked them profusely for their assistance and shook hands with all of them as they said goodbye. They then did their regular inspection and returned to their duty station.

This incident has reminded me how important it is to have a Coast Guard presence readily available when needed. I know there has been talk of closing this station because of budget concerns, and relocating the unit to Coos Bay, Ore. I believe that would be a terrible disservice to the people of Oregon and those poor souls in distress, whether they be in a sinking ship or in peril in a parking lot.

These guardsmen went above and beyond the call of duty, putting a very human face in a much needed place — a reminder to our community of how we should care for and serve one another as members of the human race.

## VIEW FROM UPRIVER



WESLEY VOTH  
For the Siuslaw News

## Liberty and justice for all

early moral education, and my father explaining to me that the reason he did not want me to recite the Pledge of Allegiance with my kindergarten class was because it claimed there was liberty and justice for all, which was not true.

I was told that Jesus expected my yes to mean yes, and my no to mean no. Caring about my neighbor meant every person with whom I came in contact, regardless of who they were or how they treated me. As it turned out, the greatest failing of this moral education was that its view of evil was too puny.

Sadly, universal liberty and justice is still a myth in Portland, in Oregon, in any part of the United States where I have ever been. As the program I watched pointed out, the Albina District problems went far beyond the racial intolerance of some individuals, they were perpetuated through systemic policy: banks allowed to discriminate within the "redline" of the district; planning commission and school

board and federal projects used to confine and then chip away at education and housing; police misconduct largely condoned.

Apparently African-Americans believe Oregon is a poor place to live; the 2013 census numbers them at only 2 percent of our state's population. Our actions have achieved more than our original black exclusionary laws could ever have hoped.

Some people believe things are better now on the liberty and justice front. I think they are worse, and we're moving in the wrong directions. Some say our government is too big, but apparently it's not big enough to ensure even the most basic of human rights: clean air and water, or a free and appropriate public education for all of its children.

And there is no justice without economic justice. The richest individuals and corporations who buy our elections and benefit most from the way the system is rigged, flaunt any meaningful taxes and bow to no flag.

Martin Luther King Jr. said that evil triumphs when good people do nothing. I regret that I have focused way more of my life on being good than acting to bring about liberty and justice for all.

## LETTERS

## Dramatic delivery

A recent story on the news made my day.

On hearing about the pilot landing his home-built auto-gyro on the White House grounds under the nose of the very Secret Service Corps, I immediately thought back to a story from long-ago childhood, about the brave little tailor who faced the giants with nothing but a needle and a spool of thread.

Only in America could a middle-aged mailman see a dream come through, a mission as it were, to get a message to Congress — dramatically and attention-getting. He hit the jackpot with this one, and I applauded him for getting it done. An important message too about the almighty dollar buying our government.

This man put together a letter for each member of Congress, then went ahead and built the method of getting them there. He signaled his intentions, and was probably very surprised to find nothing or no-one in his way. No scrambled jet fighters to wave him down when he got into the no-fly zone around the White House. No squad of soldiers lined up to meet him on landing. He unfastened his cache of letters from the machine and then surrendered to the Secret Service, who by then were ready to meet him. I bet all their faces were red as they should be.

Are these indeed the men who, on being selected to serve, would be ready to take a bullet for the President?

And three cheers for the "brave little mailman," for showing us that the Secret Service is not quite what it should be. Perhaps a thinning of the ranks might be in order about now?

Connie DeGray  
Florence

## Community radio support

As a former board member of West Lane Translator, FCC licensee for the new noncommercial radio KXCR 90.7 FM, I appreciated your recent coverage noting the station's starting year on-air ("Community Radio Station Celebrates First Anniversary," April 15, A1).

Your story brought to mind the broad community support our station effort received, including unanimous resolutions of support from Dunes City and Lane County, and letters from so many community-based organization like the library, the realtors' association, the watershed council and others.

In fact (small clarification) our effort had no federal funding. Congress, in its wisdom, canceled its long-standing community assistance program (worth about \$12 million nationally)

after it successfully subsidized the conversion of commercial television from analog to digital signals for over \$200 million.

KXCR station support started with and remains dependent on our Oregon community of listeners and supporters.

Rand Dawson  
Siltcoos Lake

## Protect our water

The Florence dunal aquifer, designated the only "sole source" aquifer in Oregon by the U.S. EPA in 1987, is "an aquifer that supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water consumed in the area overlaying the aquifer, where there are no alternative drinking water sources that could physically, legally, and economically supply all those who depend upon the aquifer for drinking water."

In 2009, Florence City Council updated the 2003 Drinking Water Protection Plan for Florence, joining with 19 federal, state, tribal and local agencies in a three-year project funded by the EPA and certified by the DEQ: "Residents and businesses within the Florence Urban Growth Boundary rely entirely on water from the aquifer for their public water supply. In addition, all streams, lakes and wetlands in the aquifer boundary are hydrologically connected with the groundwater system."

Community concern for the aquifer, and its hydrologic system is well documented in City Comprehensive Plan policies and annual City Council Goals. Some of the city's responsibilities include: Identifying and obtaining agreements from stake holders on strategies for protecting water quality in the aquifer; engage in a public process to improve awareness of threats to our drinking water quality; and update the list of potential contaminants and Potential Contaminant Source Inventory.

This is timely information. This past year, residents in the watershed have been exposed to spraying of glyphosate formulations and the burning of sprayed brush. Now, spraying begins again with tryclipir and glyphosate, and is expected to continue for up to four years.

This should move us into action. Heceta Water District asked the land owners to use hand methods for brush control, which would have been partially funded by the district. They declined. Now a larger group of concerned citizens have petitioned the city to take a role in protecting our water source, as Florence had the foresight to do in 1987 through 2009.

Studies around the world classify glyphosate based formulations as endocrine disrupters at

levels permitted in drinking water, "a real cell impact of glyphosate-based herbicides ... in food, feed or in the environment has thus to be considered, and their classifications as carcinogens/mutagens, reprotoxics ...." And World Health Organization research has just declared glyphosate a "probable cause of cancer."

Dr. Thierry Vrain, soil biologist, geneticist and former head of Agriculture Canada and Summerland Research for 30 years, says glyphosate is one of the most important threats of our time: "Glyphosate based formulations (like Round-Up) are used on 500,000,000 acres of crops and forests, migrating through soils, water, and into our bodies through our food and water. Glyphosate alone competes with the necessary minerals in living cells and can kill all 100 trillion good bacteria that keep plants and animals alive ... in doses as low as one or two parts per million. ... We are on a steady diet of antibiotics damaging to our immune systems from glyphosate residue on and in our foods."

Jim Furnish, former Siuslaw National Forest supervisor and deputy chief of the Forest Service, in a recent Register-Guard article, said, "The Federal Government ceased using forest herbicides in Oregon just before my arrival after notoriously losing a landmark lawsuit over human health issues associated with miscarriages and birth defects ...." (Federal forests now use more natural methods.)

But Oregon's state and private forests, not regulated as well as they are in California and Washington, leave us open to investors with a cost/benefit bias, at great expense to citizens and the environment. Triangle Lake has been documenting illnesses and miscarriages for decades, after spraying on state and private forest lands. Florence is not immune to this threat.

Furnish supports Senate Bill 613, "a simple law that would require accurate records, accountability and access to information concerning poisons used in forestry applications." It's a start, and should encourage pro-active pressure from localities whose water is affected, as well as state legislation that stops herbicide spraying all together. Any combination of toxic chemicals in our water is unacceptable.

We can do this as we have done in the past by acting on and expanding Florence's Aquifer Protection Plan. We can call our legislators in support of Senate Bill 613, and ask them to propose stronger legislation.

Our water, our lives, and our livelihood should be that important to us.

Joann Henderson  
Florence

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