

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.

LETTERS

Support road fee

My brother-in-law survived a heart attack because he was able to get medical treatment quickly. I want to know that the roads will stay open between my house and the hospital in Florence.

If the \$35-a-year fee fails on May 19, staffing will have to be cut for road maintenance. When a storm brings multiple fallen trees and slides, rural residents will have longer waits for roads to open. Less than a dime a day seems worth it for the health and safety aspect alone.

I suspect that my actual cost will not be \$35. I think this fee might just save me money. With regular maintenance, there will be fewer potholes so my alignment won't go out as fast. I could easily save more than \$35 a year on tires and alignment costs.

I will be voting "yes" for well maintained roads.

Nancy Nichols
Deadwood

Students in good hands

It was sad to read that Oregon schools were evaluated as close to last of 50 states in recent reports. One reason was Oregon teachers and students have to work harder with fewer school hours and less money per student than other U.S. states.

Following more reports of many Oregon schools dropping out of "Common Core" and quitting annual assessments that each state is free to develop for their own schools, made me wonder if Oregon was determined to be at the bottom of the list.

So it was such a pleasure to see bright smiling faces of Siuslaw fourth-grade students proud of their efforts to understand how Lewis and Clark and their small company of soldiers survived with the help of American Indian tribes to travel across the United States to the Pacific Northwest coast in 1804 ("Classroom Expedition," April 18, A1).

The students studied how to plan an expedition, including food supplies, equipment, keeping detailed accounts and figuring out all the logistics of such an epic journey and worked as a team to help educate other students.

Teacher Gina Halpin understood how to encourage her young students to use Common Core principles of combining math, reading, writing and critical thinking. Excellent preparation for the skills they will need as adults.

The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program came to Siuslaw schools with guidance from seventh-grade teacher Andy Marohl. Students figured out electrical circuits for robots for future technology. Job preparation is vital to give our students the best chance of success as working adults with families.

Now I feel encouraged that Siuslaw students are in good hands, learning and having fun exploring new ideas and knowledge based on Common Core values. Our students will have every chance to be successful with the help of caring educators and support services for all students.

Jenny Velinty
Florence

Make Oregon safer

The Oregon Senate has passed legislation that would require background checks for private firearm sales and transfers, except for close family, and there is an exemption for borrowing guns. The legislation has gone to the Oregon House of Representatives.

I think it should pass.

If you agree, please contact State Rep. Caddy McKeown and ask her to back it.

I am for the right to own firearms, but there should be exceptions for not allowing some "war-type" weapons. Also, if a person is a



domestic abuse offender, a felon or those committed for mental health treatment, they should have that right restricted.

This is already the law for sales from licensed dealers and at gun shows.

In every population, I believe there is a range of people, from a Timothy McVey on one end, to a Mahatma Gandhi on the other, and a "bell curve" of various types in between. In a small group, there may or may not be all types, but as the earth's population grows, those minor populations at the extremes, grow in number.

I believe we have to try to protect others from the actions of the most violent. This may be an inconvenience and add cost to have the checks done, but it may save lives. Statistics show that the three groups mentioned commit crimes with guns at a much higher rate.

We require licenses to drive a car and for car owners to have insurance or proof of financial responsibility, so doesn't it make sense to try to lessen the risk from gun violence?

The phone number and email address of Rep. McKeown is at the bottom of this page. Please take the time to help make Oregon safer.

James A. O'Connell
Florence

Endorse Ward

This is an endorsement for the election of Rob Ward to the board of the Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue District. The date of the election is May 19.

Rob currently holds position No. 3 on the board, and is running to be re-elected. He has served two previous, four-year terms beginning in 2006.

His experience on the fire and rescue board includes vice-chair and secretary-treasurer.

He is well qualified for public service in western Lane County as a former mayor of both Florence and Dunes City.

Craig McMicken
Dunes City

Common sense

Several weeks ago I wrote about the Affordable Health Care Act and the Oregon House Bills being considered for transparency of costs from the providers. Today I am writing about the unspoken and unintended bad consequences of a poorly thought-through ACA.

The generic drug industry has gone through a consolidation and fewer producers for these drugs exist today. Competition has decreased and patents have been sold resulting in huge price increases.

As an example, doxycycline generic has gone from 9 cents to over \$3 per pill. I use a Noritate cream priced at approximately \$75 two years ago. Late in 2014 the average price

for this was \$780, and today the cash price in Florence is \$1,238. This is one half the price of gold bullion.

Due to the fact that I have to purchase a HD policy, my RX costs are not covered until I meet the deductible of \$7,500, and I face the reality of paying the full cash price without a prescription coverage.

Now the good news, I am fed up with the inequality. My RX is made in Canada by Valeant Corp. I signed up with a Canadian online pharmacy and discovered the exact same product cost, delivered through Canada customs cost me a whopping \$54.

This is another way you are being fleeced in healthcare. Become a better-informed advocate and consumer. Write your representatives. We need a healthcare revolution, and common sense.

Tom Payn
Florence

Vote for Nancy

Nancy Rickard has served the citizens of Florence very well, as a member of the school board for 15 years and the last two as a port commissioner. She has taken an active role in the city and the port, going to various meetings in Florence, Mapleton and wherever needed regarding port duties and learning the needs of the community as well.

She is a good neighbor. I have often seen her cleaning up the neighborhood park by herself. Please vote for Nancy Rickard, she is a very good commissioner as well as a very good person.

Ron Preisler
Florence

Get a grip

Oh my, all the problems.

The situation in the middle east is accelerating toward a regionwide conflagration. Vladimir Putin is plotting toward re-establishment of the Soviet empire. Radical Islamic forces are gaining substantial followings worldwide. The Chinese are rapidly approaching hegemony in regional and eventually global economic influence. The United States is literally bankrupt and can't admit it, much less agree to try and deal with it.

On and on the list goes.

And in the face of all this, the issue we seem to focus on most intensely right now when considering potential leaders is their position on gay marriage. Now, I understand this is a serious issue, but come on people; get a grip on some priorities.

Of course this is not a problem for you and I. We are, after all, very intelligent, well informed and most reasonable. It's those other people. You know, "them."

Jimmie Zinn
Florence

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME
The History Channel

- On May 5, 1877, nearly a year after the Battle of the Little Big Horn, Sitting Bull and a band of followers cross into Canada hoping to find safe haven from the U.S. Army. By early 1881, Sitting Bull was the chief of only a small band of mostly older and sick people, and he finally agreed to move 187 Indians to the Standing Rock reservation in South Dakota.

- On May 10, 1909, "Mother" Maybelle Carter is born near Nickelsville, Virginia. From the late 1920s all the way through the 1950s, she was a familiar presence on radio and a powerful influence on the course of country music. She helped make the Carters the "First Family of Country Music" and introduced songs like "Wildwood Flower" and "Can the Circle Be Unbroken."

- On May 6, 1937, the airship Hindenburg, the largest dirigible ever built, bursts into flames upon touching its mooring mast in New Jersey, killing 36 passengers and crewmembers aboard the hydrogen-filled blimp. The "zeppelin" flew at a speed of 6 mph, propelled by a three-horsepower steam engine.

- On May 9, 1950, L. Ron Hubbard publishes "Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health." With this book, Hubbard introduced a branch of self-help psychology called Dianetics, which morphed into a belief system now known as Scientology.

- On May 8, 1972, President Richard Nixon announces that he has ordered the mining of major North Vietnamese ports to prevent the flow of arms and material to the communist forces that had invaded South Vietnam in March.

- On May 4, 1984, New Jersey rocker Bruce Springsteen releases "Pink Cadillac" as a B-side to "Dancing in the Dark," which will become the first and biggest hit single off "Born in the U.S.A."

- On May 7, 1994, Norway's most famous painting, "The Scream" by Edvard Munch, is recovered at a seaside hotel, three months after it was stolen during the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer. The thieves had left a note reading "Thousand thanks for the bad security!"

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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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