

**Siuslaw News**  
**P.O. Box 10**  
**Florence, OR 97439**

# Opinion

#IAMUCC

## DISASTER PREP

BY DAVE ROBINSON  
 Special to the Siuslaw News

## Active shooter

“Active shooter on Oregon community college campus!” was on the CNN news feed on my smart phone. My blood began to race and I nearly dropped my phone bringing up more details. I have two grandkids in the local community college. As it turned out, it was another campus about 60 miles away.

Stories of heroism along with stories of unthinkable insanity are still coming out. Political types are quick to make hay of one form or another. Everyone in Southwestern Oregon is grieving not only the tragic losses, but just the fact that “this happened here.”

Police train and school administrators plan for what they hope will never happen on their watch. Lockdown drills are held in schools all across the country. Some states even require periodic lockdowns. But no amount of preplanning can cover every contingency.

The day after the Umpqua Community College shooting, certain mis-information and misguided posts on social media led to mid-morning school shutdowns in our own county. Every police officer, paramedic and emergency room worker knows that scared people behave badly. That’s where dozens of mildly (to not-so-mildly) anxious parents began arriving at schools to pick up not

only their own children, but in some cases, their friends’ kids as well. Phone calls clogged lines into the administrative offices, and traffic flow problems restricted the movement of school buses. Add to this certain school policies designed to keep kids safe by restricting who can pick up whom and you’ve got the recipe for a secondary disaster.

Now take this to the next level. Let’s suppose there is a natural disaster. We’ll use “earthquake” just for the sake of discussion. The roads are busted up, the phone lines are completely down, electrical power is out and the schools are full of our kids. Have you discussed this scenario with your family? Do you have a plan to reunite your family if this happens? Even if schools can deliver your children home, is anyone going to be there? Who have you authorized to pick up your children at the school if you can’t get there? Do your kids know what to do? These are all questions families need to address and get settled now, before something happens.

Likewise, schools need to work on disaster planning. Is there a drill that can be designed to simulate a disaster and how do we pull it off? Something that goes beyond the lockdown or the “soft lockdown.” How do we make it work when nothing else (like

phones) does? Fire drills are proven to save lives and have for decades. Lockdown drills, unscheduled school closure drills and serious disaster drills will save lives as well.

To plan for such a contingency, some schools have purchased lockdown kits. The kit is usually stored in a five-gallon bucket and contains water pouches, food bars, first-aid supplies and many other items considered useful to weather such an incident.

Some even include a snap-on toilet seat/lid complete with toilet bags to provide for the sanitary needs that would eventually arise.

Ideally, each classroom would have a kit with enough supplies to meet the needs of several students. One kit I checked out sold for \$70 and contained 30 water pouches. It also had a battery-powered radio, several light sticks and several other items.

It is unfortunate we have had to turn our schools into fortresses, but with the right planning and some supplies on hand, we can make our schools safer for our kids.

*Dave Robinson is the postmaster in Bandon, Ore., and author of “Disaster Prep for the Rest of Us.” He may be contacted at disasterprep.dave@gmail.com. Visit his website for more disaster preparedness tips, www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com.*

## YESTERDAY’S NEWS

### MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On Oct. 16, 1793, nine months after the execution of her husband, King Louis XVI of France, Marie-Antoinette follows him to the guillotine. At a time of economic turmoil in France, she lived extravagantly and allegedly responded to news that the French peasantry had no bread to eat by callously replying, “Let them eat cake.”

- On Oct. 18, 1867, the U.S. formally takes possession of Alaska after buying the territory from Russia for \$7.2 million, or less than 2 cents an acre. The American public ridiculed the purchase, believing the land to be barren and worthless.

- On Oct. 17, 1931, gangster Al Capone is sentenced to 11 years in prison, signaling the downfall of one of the most notorious criminals of the 1920s and ‘30s. FBI agent Eliot Ness and his men routinely broke up Capone’s bootlegging businesses, but it was tax-evasion charges that finally stuck.

- On Oct. 12, 1940, cowboy-movie star Tom Mix is killed when he loses control of his speeding Cord Phaeton convertible and rolls into a dry wash in Arizona. Mix was hit in the back of the head by a heavy aluminum suitcase, killing him almost instantly.

- On Oct. 13, 1957, American movie audiences are treated to the science-fiction thriller “The Amazing Colossal Man.” Other films of the Cold War nuclear-weapon culture included “Them!” (1954) and “The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms” (1953).

- On Oct. 14, 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis begins, bringing the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear conflict. High-altitude photographs offered evidence of Soviet-made medium-range missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles from the U.S.

- On Oct. 15, 1989, Canadian ice hockey great Wayne Gretzky breaks Gordie Howe’s National Hockey League career scoring record of 1,850 points. Gretzky dominated professional hockey during the 1980s, setting numerous records.

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## Port facing difficult decision

Bob Forsythe’s announcement that he will be stepping down as manager of the Port of Siuslaw comes as no surprise, but it still feels unsettling and represents a possible turning point in the port’s current progress toward fiscal responsibility and self-sustainability (“Port Manager Resigns,” Sept. 26, A1).

Forsythe and his dedicated staff, over the past few years, have turned a derelict of a port into a seaworthy vessel. After years, if not decades, of neglect and decline, we now have the beginnings of a real economic development engine, capable of raising the tide and lifting all those in its basin.

Forsythe’s efforts and successes did not come without much personal and professional strife and admonishment from a variety of sources, both inside and outside of the port’s governing body. Regardless of those criticisms, Forsythe’s greatest contribution was his fair, even-handed, yet unrelenting determination to ensure all tasks, however menial, were completed on time, on budget and with the greatest benefits to all parties involved.

I wish him and his new bride the best as they pursue their dreams and aspirations.

Now, the port’s governing body has a difficult decision to make; will it turn the vessel back toward the shoals of self-interests and risk sinking the ship, or will they reach out and recruit the best captain possible and continue to tack a straight line toward economic responsibility and community success without undue personal meddling for personal gain?



This decision will either herald a triumph or a train-wreck, of which, hopefully, the people of the Port of Siuslaw will be paying close attention. I know I will be.

Bill Fleenor  
 Former Port of Siuslaw  
 Commissioner  
 Mapleton

## Australia’s approach to gun violence

During our quadrennial political silly season, we hear a lot about American Exceptionalism. Depending upon the candidate (and his or her audience), our national uniqueness is alluded to in a variety of terms. But, the tragedy at Umpqua Community College reminds us yet again that the particulars of our professed uniqueness are not all positive.

Among advanced nations, we are virtually unique in refusing to admit the deadly connection between firearms and mass murder. How many other countries have, like our FBI does, a category, “mass murder,” for reporting the murdering of four or more persons during a single event.

Other countries do experience

instances of similar carnage, but not with the regularity that we do.

The statistics of gun violence have become as routine as a president standing before us offering the nation’s condolences. But, between unrecognized mental illness, constitutional rights, a plethora of firearms and a cultural “frontier” tradition of self reliance on guns, it is all too clear that a “silver bullet” solution is beyond our political reach.

But is there any good reason to not treat a painful symptom — that mass murder category — even though we know it will not cure the underlying illness?

Case in point: Australia. On April 28-29, 1996, 35 people were killed and 23 wounded, mainly at a tourist site in the city of Port Arthur, by a 28-year-old Australian using an AR-15, an FN FAL and a Daewoo Precision 12-gauge shotgun, all semi-automatic assault-type weapons. It later emerged that the perpetrator had significant “intellectual disabilities.”

Australia’s response was the National Firearms Programme Implementation Act 1996, restricting the private ownership

of semi-automatic rifles and shot guns as well as introducing uniform firearms licensing and instituting a mandatory buy-back program for newly banned weapons.

John Howard, Prime Minister when the National Firearms Programme was enacted with bipartisan support, called on America to follow in Australia’s footsteps.

In the decade before the Port Arthur massacre, there had been 11 mass murders in Australia. Since enactment of the National Firearms Programme, there hasn’t been a single one.

Arnold Buchman  
 Florence

## Rods support

It appears that some people think the Rods ‘n’ Rhodies car show is unappreciated by our Chamber of Commerce or our Old Town merchants (“Car Show,” Sept. 30).

A quick search on the Internet showed a big colorful Web page listed under the events section on the chamber’s website. Also, there were many posters promoting the event around town. You could even find these posters outside of our town.

As for the merchants in Old Town, they gave an amazing number of awards, as noted in the awards list in the Siuslaw News a week later. There were so many categories it felt as if every car won an award. It appeared that these winners were voted on by the merchants of Old Town. If that’s not gratitude, then I guess I don’t know what gratitude is.

I say kudos to the merchants of Old Town and the same to our Chamber of Commerce.

Long live Rods ‘n’ Rhodies.  
 Michael Davis  
 Florence

## LETTERS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer’s full name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published.

All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to:  
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## Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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 Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

### NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$71; 10-weeks subscription, \$18; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$94; 10-weeks subscription, \$24; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$120; Out of United States — 1-year subscription, \$200; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.  
 Website and E-Edition: www.TheSiuslawNews.com

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