

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

# Opinion

## VIEW FROM UPRIVER



## Words worth living up to

WESLEY VOTH  
 For the Siuslaw News

including the Toleration Act, in 1689. It is quintessential American irony that within another generation it was this family branch who became Quakers themselves, and remained so on down to me.

Needless to say, these ancestors fleeing from persecution they found intolerable, didn't get it right when they first tried creating something new on this continent. Or, for us, on this side of this continent a while later. It took some time, and finding common cause among a motley and diverse grouping of peoples, but before there was a constitution, before there was a first (or second) amendment, when we were figuring out the sort of nation we might become, we made this stunning declaration: *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

While these words have become some of the best known and loved anywhere, we have never managed to behave as though we really believe them to be true. Or to behave even by the best principals of our respective various religions. Or to treat people well and fairly

regardless of birthplace, race, gender, age, economic status, education, citizenship or political or religious affiliation. But, the idea persists. We are still working at it because the idea continues to stir and inform our nobler principles.

However, there are among us people and companies who profit from disinformation. Who profit from war. Who profit from dis-sension. Who profit from fear mongering. Who profit from various forms of economic slavery. Who profit from running prisons whose purpose is not reform, and for-profit universities whose purpose is not education. Who profit from do-nothing government.

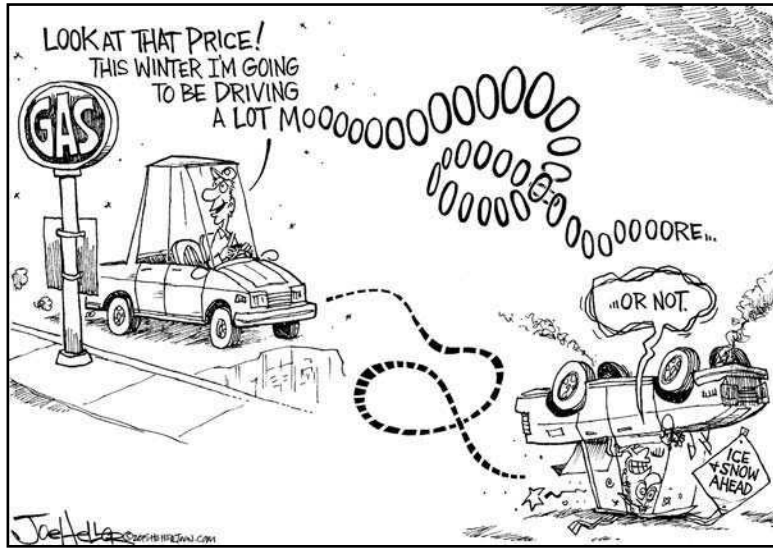
These same people and companies do not think they should bear the costs of government, community infrastructure, free and appropriate public education, veterans, health care or even their own foolish investment risks. And thanks to the Supreme Court decision known as Citizens United, those who profit most from the above can freely wield the most power and speech to make sure this very profitable — for them — system prevails, and without real cost — to them.

I think it clear that the noble declaration that brought us as far as we've come cannot survive indefinitely against this imbalance. But I'm thankful that in the current war of words, it has not yet been completely drowned out.

We can't let it be.

Another Thanksgiving passes, and that which divides us, even within families, is being stirred up. It turns out I had ancestors at that first 1621 Plymouth Thanksgiving — John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, who soon married and had 10 children. Since they were prominent in the leadership of the colony and church, both benefited from the largess of, and then were culpable in the poor relations with, that region's original inhabitants.

Both were still alive and prominent when the colony put four Quakers, including a woman named Mary Dyer, to death for the audacity of being a different kind of Puritan. Even the efforts of Charles II, newly restored in the British monarchy after a bloody religious war in England, failed to stop to further actions of this sort, until eventually the colony's charter was revoked and an English governor installed to enforce English law,



## LETTERS

### No more marijuana

I just received a notification of a Florence City Council meeting to discuss Ordinance No. 12 series 2015, proposing changes to allow marijuana dispensaries, wholesale and distribution centers within the city limits.

I am 65 years old and wish that Florence does not become like Eugene with 14 businesses to purchase this drug.

Michael Ksen  
 Florence

*A city council and planning commission public hearing is scheduled for Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. at the Florence Events Center to discuss amendments to the city's marijuana code. —Editor*

### ISIS strategy

From its beginnings as a Sunni terrorist group in Iraq, ISIS' attacks in Paris have demonstrated a murderous reach now extending beyond its proclaimed Islamic State caliphate into the very heart of Europe.

Followers of ISIS are religious extremists who see the unconverted as sinners beyond redemption and

themselves as defenders of an absolute moral theology with the devout duty to mercilessly destroy all apostates and nonbelievers. Their pathological zealotry, seemingly irrational, is perfectly consistent with their commitment to erasing the corruptions of modernity by returning civilization to the purity of seventh-century Shiria law.

Jihadist fanaticism such as the Paris attacks is nihilism that has gotten religion. All values other than Koranic fundamentalism are meaningless, all apostates and non-believers are to be annihilated.

ISIS strategy is to polarize Western society by attacks, like Paris, to provoke overreactions by Western governments against innocent Muslims. Thusly alienated, Muslims in the West will be left to either apostatize or to emigrate to the Islamic State to escape persecution. The goal is to set conditions for an apocalyptic war with the West, the prerequisite to the arrival of the Mahdi — Muhammad's successor, yet to come — who will liberate Islam from cruelty, introducing a time of serenity with people living true to religious values and re-establishing righteousness.

ISIS' commitment to an apoca-

lyptic confrontation with modernity, rooted in seventh-century Koranic injunctions, is prophetic, not political. It is not subject to negotiation or compromise. If the ISIS strategy is allowed to work, this one, minor, nihilistic sect of Islam's many denominations could be the nihilism that Nietzsche predicted would "eventually destroy all other moral, religious and metaphysical convictions and precipitate a crisis in human history."

The problem is not the world's 1.6 billion Muslims. The problem is the estimated 20,000 to 30,000 ISIS jihadists among them who want to impose the ISIS interpretation of Islam on them and the rest of society. The challenge is to identify and eliminate these relatively few needles without setting the whole haystack on fire.

Arnold Buchman  
 Florence

### Autumn Harvest

The recent local dinner and school garden fundraiser at Homegrown Pub was a great success. I want to thank all the folks that attended the dinner and generously donated \$850 to the Siuslaw

Elementary School garden.

Thank you to the folks that donated scrumptious desserts to be auctioned for the garden and to Kelsey and the Homegrown staff for creating a beautiful meal made with local ingredients.

Thank you to the local farms and producers — Whiskey Creek Organics, Wintergreen, Greenfields, Willamette Valley Creamery, Round Barn Beef, Fiacre Acres, Hummingbird and more — that contributed to our meal and continue to contribute to our community.

Thank you Lyza for doing an amazing job as school garden coordinator.

The more we support events such as this, as well as farmers markets, CSAs and our local food co-op, the more we are supporting our local farms and producers. And by doing this we are creating local food sustainability, increasing economic development in Florence, decreasing our carbon footprint and building community.

By supporting our school garden we are empowering our kids to be healthy in so many ways.

Jen Nelson  
 Florence

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

### MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On Dec. 2, 1859, in Charles Town, Virginia, abolitionist John Brown is executed on charges of treason, murder and insurrection. Brown became militant during the mid-1850s, when he fought pro-slavery settlers in the sharply divided Kansas Free State territory.

- On Dec. 6, 1917, a Belgian steamer and French freighter, both loaded with ammunition, explode in Canada's Halifax Harbor, leveling part of the town and killing nearly 1,600 people and injuring some 8,000. The ships carried 8 million tons of TNT intended for use in World War I.

- On Dec. 5, 1945, five U.S. Navy torpedo-bombers take off from Florida on a routine training mission over the Atlantic Ocean. The squadron leader later reported that his compass had failed and his position was unknown, and a rescue aircraft was dispatched with a 13-man crew. No trace of the 27 crewmen or six aircraft was ever found.

- On Dec. 4, 1956, the "Million Dollar Quartet" convenes at Sun Studios in Memphis, Tennessee, in an historic impromptu jam session. Present were Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis Presley. A tape recorded that day was not discovered until 1981.

- On Nov. 30, 1965, lawyer Ralph Nader publishes the muckraking book "Unsafe at Any Speed." It became a bestseller and prompted the passage of seat-belt laws in 49 states (all but New Hampshire).

- On Dec. 3, 1979, eleven people are killed in a stampede outside a Who concert in Cincinnati when a crowd of general-admission ticket-holders surged forward in an attempt to secure prime unreserved seats inside, known as festival seating.

- On Dec. 1, 1990, 132 feet below the English Channel, workers drill an opening through a wall of rock, connecting the two ends of an underwater tunnel linking Great Britain with the European mainland for the first time in more than 8,000 years.

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## 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.

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