

Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

VIEW FROM UPRIVER



Making things work

WESLEY VOTH
 For the Siuslaw News

dawn, turkey vultures riding the wind currents; ospreys and ravens trying to impress their mates with yet another fancy stick; the surreal electric green of new leaf.

Local rain gauge folks tell me that we have passed the three-foot mark; last year this point wasn't reached

until the end of September. This heavy rainfall has caused numerous slides, including ones that still have Highway 36 closed — as I write this — near Triangle Lake, and North Fork Siuslaw Road closed near the ridge crest — that one's been more than a month. For people who regularly move back and forth between the separated points, the alternatives add many miles and remind us how quickly infrastructure we depend on can be altered.

I have just finished listening to the audio version of the book "A Fighting Chance," written and read by Elizabeth Warren. I found the book very compelling, the improbable story of how a little girl who grew up in small Oklahoma City suburbs came to be a law professor at Harvard and then elected to the U.S. Senate by the state of Massachusetts, along the way seeing to the formation of a new government agency — the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau — that works to provide the same kinds of safeguards regarding finan-

cial documents like mortgages that we have come to expect for appliances like toasters.

One of her early eye-opening moments came when she asked a congressman visiting her law school class about what kind of consumer research had been done in making a new bankruptcy law. There hadn't been any. Together with some of her colleagues she set out to learn just who was declaring bankruptcy and why. The information she learned led her to believe consumers were being left out of consideration, and to work hard against bankruptcy laws stacked against them; in 2005 the banking industry got what it wanted anyway.

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, she fought to have banks held accountable, and for a government that works for the common people, and fights on their behalf, instead of conducting business only for the too-big-to-fail corporations. It is a fight she continues, a cause she advocates with both insight and clarity.

As usual, I checked this out from the library and listened to it as I delivered mail to this rural community. Driving past houses that have been foreclosed over the past 10 years, the daily evidence of deep financial discouragement, often carrying messages from the banks or other creditors for whom I am frequently compelled to collect signatures. It is a sobering sight. We need a government that works for us. Does its job. I am supporting people who I believe are part of doing so.

It is spring, and we — most states and municipalities — agree to changing our clocks to shift more daylight to a later time slot. The better to be outside. Or, use less electricity for lighting. There are two things that seem amazing to me about this: 1) People grumble and say the same things about it I have been hearing all my life (or at least since I was in junior high school when it was enacted more or less in its current form); and 2) It actually happens, and we all make the change and move on.

Spring here in Mapleton ushers in a series of mini and not so mini-events. Some of these are fleeting, others will remain at least part way through the summer. Among the fleeting: the sweet smell of cottonwood trees leafing out and that amazing scent the lilacs produce in blossom; flowering currant with those unbelievably pink flower bracts; winged ants flying forth and fern fronds, well, fronding. And, around for a season: robin song at

LETTERS

Up in arms

Why is the left up in arms over Donald Trump? The answer is he poses a threat to the status quo. The left tried to take Donald's First Amendment rights away in Chicago — it backfired!

Hillary Clinton is being investigated by the FBI for Benghazi — emails and Clinton Foundation. No one on the right is being investigated by anyone.

Bernie Sanders has been preaching open rebellion from the very beginning and even more scary is income redistribution. This was tried in 1917 in Russia. Many, many millions of people died over that and it failed dramatically.

How could any American support the likes of Bernie and Hillary?

Martin Cable
 Dunes City

Supreme Court nomination

President Obama has nominated the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Merrick B. Garland, for the Supreme Court.

Judge Garland was appointed to the D.C. Circuit after having clerked for Second Circuit Judge Henry Friendly and Supreme Court Justice William Brennan. He left a partnership in a prestigious D.C. law firm to be an assistant district attorney, after which he became the top official in the Justice Department Criminal Division and led the investigations into the Unabomber, the Oklahoma City and Atlanta Olympics bombings.

Judge Garland is a respected, moderate, first-rate jurist with two decades on the federal bench. Nevertheless, he is to be denied even courtesy meetings with Republican senators let alone the constitutionally required advise and consent senate hearing by the Republican-controlled senate.

Some suggest this is payback for the rejection of Judge Robert Bork's nomination in 1987 by a Democratically-controlled sen-



ate. But, that is forgetting that even after the Senate Judiciary Committee voted against him 9 to 5, Bork's name, at President Reagan's insistence, went to the Senate floor for an up-or-down vote where 58 senators, Democrats and Republicans, voted to reject the nomination.

Senate Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, moments after the nomination, tweeted that the president is trying "to politicize it for the purposes of the election." Payback or polarized politics, this Harvard-educated member of the legal establishment in saner times would have been the ideal conciliatory nominee if the Republican leadership were even slightly open to compromise.

But, they aren't. Why? Because a public hearing on Judge Garland's nomination would clearly demonstrate that this mainstream nominee is politically unacceptable to the ideological base that holds their party hostage only because he is a centrist.

With the kind of impeccable credentials that

make it virtually impossible for a Republican-controlled senate to object to Judge Garland's qualifications to sit on the Supreme Court, it appears that polarized politics is trumping responsible governance.

Arnold Buchman
 Florence

A great Western

Thanks to Tim Sapp of TR Hunter Real Estate and Michael Falter of City Lights Cinemas for presenting a great Western classic, "Stagecoach," on March 17.

Tim was the financial "champion" and Michael, owner of the movie theater, added to this showing with his very insightful presentation about the history of the Western film genre.

There is more to come — show up for these other films for your enjoyment and your support of City Lights Cinemas.

John and Penny Maciolek
 Westlake

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On April 1, 1700, English pranksters begin popularizing the annual tradition of April Fools' Day by playing practical jokes on each other. It's thought that when the start of the new year moved to Jan. 1 with the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, some people unwittingly continued to celebrate it in late March through April 1, and they became the butt of jokes and hoaxes.

- On March 30, 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward signs a treaty with Russia for the purchase of Alaska for \$7 million. The deal was ridiculed in Congress and in the press as "Seward's folly," "Seward's ice-box," and President Andrew Johnson's "polar bear garden."

- On March 31, 1889, the Eiffel Tower is dedicated in Paris. The Tower was almost demolished when the lease on the land expired in 1909, but its value as an antenna for radio transmission saved it.

- On April 3, 1948, President Harry Truman signs off on legislation establishing the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, known as the Marshall Plan, to aid in the economic recovery of Europe after World War II.

- On March 29, 1951, in one of the most sensational trials in American history, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are convicted of espionage for their role in passing atomic secrets to the Soviets. They were executed in 1953.

- On March 28, 1979, the worst nuclear accident in U.S. history takes place at the Three Mile Island plant in Pennsylvania. Due to technical malfunctions and human error, the reactor came within an hour of a complete meltdown.

- On April 2, 1992, a jury in New York finds mobster John Gotti, nicknamed "the Teflon Don" for his ability to avoid conviction, guilty on 13 counts. FBI official James Fox was quoted as saying, "The don is covered in Velcro, and every charge stuck."

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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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