

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

LETTERS

Certified gem

We in Florence are so fortunate — the Oregon coast, our public library, City Lights Cinemas and what may have started off as a diamond in the rough, Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW), now a certified gem.

Their production of "Shrek" last weekend was a sparkling, spectacular success. The audience applauded in unison.

Way to go, CROW, and thank you.

Rae and Pat Stutzman
Florence



Elect Judge Brissenden

I am happy to see several candidates for the Florence Justice of the Peace position. Citizen involvement is always a good thing for democracy and the candidates all have good intentions, I believe.

But I know why I am voting for Judge Rick Brissenden. Judge Brissenden has been the Florence Municipal Court judge for almost 20 years, coming over from Eugene every week. When the past Justice of the Peace retired, Florence city employees didn't go to the hardware store looking for a new judge. They called on Judge Brissenden, who they knew could fill in seamlessly and keep the duties fulfilled.

Now, we the citizens are asked to elect a new Justice of the Peace. We don't need a new judge, we already have a great one serving. Laws are getting more complicated, not less so. We need a real legal expert, not just someone willing to give it a try. The Justice of the Peace handles landlord-tenant disputes, small claims issues and traffic, parks, animal and boating violations.

When I want to build a new house, I want a licensed and bonded contractor to do it, not someone who has a variety of past experiences and would love to give this a try. When I need surgery, I want a board-certified surgeon who has years of experience.

But if I have a legal issue with a neighbor that ends up in small claims court, I want a knowledgeable expert lawyer as a judge who understands the nuances of the law and didn't just brush up on the basics the night before. Judge Brissenden is already providing that.

And, I don't have to worry about running into him in the store the next day, when a judgement doesn't go my way. I'm happy that he doesn't live in Florence, have lots of friends here and have conflicts of interest that may sway his judgements.

Judge Brissenden can provide everything Florence needs in a Justice of the Peace. His work with the Municipal Court and Justice of the Peace duties will provide Florence with a continuity we won't have with someone else. He won't have to go to school to learn what the duties are and how to run a courtroom.

And, if Florence does elect a citizen as Justice of the Peace for a term, we know we will have

Judge Brissenden to fall back on when the citizen tires of the job or finds they don't like ruling on their neighbors, or one term is enough to satisfy them to add to their resume. Then, the city will call on Judge Brissenden again to serve as Florence's Justice of the Peace.

Please think carefully about who you want for Florence's Justice of the Peace, and join me in voting for Judge Rick Brissenden.

Mary Beth Rawlins
Florence

Support school bond measure

I am writing in response to the letter written by James McCoey asking us to vote no on the school bond ("Vote 'No' on School Bond," April 20).

I do not know Mr. McCoey, but I gather from his grammatically correct letter that he is well educated. I hope for his sake that his high school was a comfortable place to learn with the rooms being a comfortable temperature and that his school was either not on an earthquake fault or was built to meet seismic and fire codes.

Spending an entire day in the school (which I have as a substitute teacher) is much different than doing the walk through that Mr. McCoey suggests. Our wonderful teachers may spend most of their careers in that building and our students spend four years in a building where hot lunches cannot be provided and science and computer labs cannot be made adequate for today's requirements.

The important matter here is not how old the building is, but how safe it is, and our high school is not safe for numerous reasons.

I am a retired homeowner in our district with no students attending school here. I definitely plan on voting yes for our students as I am sure many retired people did for me when I was school age.

Maureen Miltenberger
Florence

Corporate media

It is extremely sad, scary and not surprising to see the power that corporate agenda expressed through corporate media has to influence opinion in our current presidential election process and national and international affairs.

For instance, corporate media has given little coverage of presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

They have only had about 12-second sound bytes of the "Democracy Spring" protests at the Capitol the last few days, in which thousands of people are trying to shed light on the corrupting effect of corporate money in politics.

Corporate media also says little about the United States' continued involvement in Honduras where we legitimized a coup d'etat of an elected president and the following unfair election a few years back that led to recent assassinations of prominent and renowned environmental and indigenous activists in order to protect trans-national corporate interests.

The lack of coverage by corporate media not only leads to our own ignorance and ensuing impotency as American citizens but to the costs of many lives around the world.

Thank goodness for a "free" Internet and not-for-profit radio and television stations that are not afraid to provide in-depth coverage that traditional media ignores for their own benefit.

Julie MacFarlane
Florence

Telling the truth

Watching the Democratic Party presidential candidates debate April 14, I finalized several conclusions.

Early on, Bernie said that he was doing well because he was telling Americans the truth. One of Hillary's major weaknesses is the perception shared by many that she is shifty, that like her husband she places expediency above integrity.

Bill, a leader of the Democratic Leadership Council of the 1990s, a "new Democrat," was a friend of large corporations. He vigorously promoted NAFTA. He signed into law the GOP legislative repeal of Glass-Steagall, which separated commercial banks from investment banks.

Because a majority of Americans now recognize the great injury done to them by large corporations and because Bernie Sanders is her primary season challenger, Hillary has become suddenly a critic of the TPP trade agreement, the Keystone XL pipeline project, big banks, the fossil fuel industry and Big Pharma.

It was expedient for her both to support the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and to declare in 2007 that that decision had been a mistake.

It is expedient for her now to campaign as a progressive Democrat and to wrap herself around President Obama to curtail Bernie's criticism of certain policies that she asserts she and the president share.

Needing also to separate herself from Bernie, she portrays herself as a pragmatic doer. She agrees with Bernie's diagnoses (because she has to), but "his numbers don't add up." He makes promises; she delivers! (Read Robert Parry's article about Hillary's past decision-making at www.truth-out.org/news/item/35578-is-hillary-clinton-qualified.)

Her preference of a \$12 an hour minimum wage and her declaration that natural gas — its quantity the result of fracking — is the bridge to clean energy are examples of Democratic Party incrementalism, a cutting around the edges of a serious problem, for corporations a protective backfire to arrest a raging forest fire. By donating campaign funds and paying speaking fees to Democratic Party enablers, corporations are able to hedge their bets.

Bernie declared that we should be thinking big, not small. His reference to European countries that provide their citizens the health care, work benefits and education that we do not is a telling indictment of the virulent economic system that controls the levers of American political power. To the argument that Congress would never enact Bernie's policies, I answer, "They didn't Obama's. Why would they Hillary's?"

If we ever break the exploitive stranglehold locked upon us, it will be due to a movement started by a straight-arrow champion of regular people, not by an individual who will do whatever it takes — pander, employ three-quarter falsehood attacks, change policy positions — to win a presidential election.

Harold Titus
Florence

Buying a politician

People, companies and other governments throw many millions of dollars together and basically buy a politician.

Politicians are not supposed to interact with their PACs (Political Action Committees). You can bet that is not the real world. You can also be guaranteed when the politician gets elected that it is payback time.

PACs are responsible for how you think about issues and people. They are working 24/7 to make you buy into their way of thinking. The truth is that it is highly unlikely that you have ever had a completely original thought. Some who read the Siuslaw News obviously have problems in this area.

Trump is the only presidential candidate who dissolved the PACs forming around him and made them return the money to the donors. Everyone else on both sides is bought and paid for.

Martin Cable
Dunes City

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On April 27, 1773, the British Parliament passes the Tea Act, a bill designed to save the East India Company from bankruptcy by greatly lowering the tea tax it paid to the British government and, thus, granting it a monopoly on the American tea trade.

- On April 30, 1927, the first women's federal prison opens in Alderson, West Virginia, to house all women serving federal sentences of more than a year. Most were imprisoned for drug and alcohol charges imposed during Prohibition.

- On May 1, 1931, President Herbert Hoover officially dedicates New York City's Empire State Building, pressing a button from the White House to turn on the building's lights. Hoover's gesture was symbolic; while he remained in Washington, D.C., someone else flicked the switches in New York.

- On April 26, 1954, the Salk polio vaccine field trials, involving 1.8 million children, begin in McLean, Virginia. Children in the U.S., Canada and Finland took part in the double-blind trials, whereby neither the patient nor attending doctor knew if the inoculation was the vaccine or a placebo.

- On April 28, 1967, boxing champion Muhammad Ali refuses to be inducted into the U.S. Army and is immediately stripped of his heavyweight title. Ali, a Muslim, cited religious reasons for his decision to forgo military service.

- On April 25, 1989, James Richardson walks out of a Florida prison 21 years after being wrongfully convicted of killing his seven children. Special prosecutor Janet Reno agreed to the release after evidence showed that the conviction resulted from misconduct by the prosecutor.

- On April 29, 1992, a jury in Los Angeles acquits four police officers who had been charged with using excessive force in arresting black motorist Rodney King. The verdict enraged the black community, prompting three days of widespread rioting, arson and looting.

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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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