

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

VIEW FROM UPRIVER



Getting beyond 'No'

WESLEY VOTH
For the Siuslaw News

chicks normally leave the nest sometime in July. But there are so many things that might not go well: weather (this nest is more exposed than many are, and a chick might blow off the nest prematurely), or accident to parents or chicks, or one chick might push the other out, or a hawk might snatch one or both. It is part-

ly these risks that make it interesting to watch, but also just the moment to moment interactions of an eagle family, such as the way when it's been windy that one parent hangs out on the nest on the windward side, or conducts ongoing nest maintenance.

There is a bumper sticker on the back of a pick-up I see here regularly that says "Vote No." Some say this seems to stand for the voting precinct where I live, which is No. 704 or basically the Mapleton School District, covering the communities of Mapleton, Swisshome, Deadwood and all of the tiny places in between.

We have said "No" to Siuslaw Library District bonds and measures, "No" to the Lane County public safety measure in 2013 despite our loud clamoring for its services, "No" to 4-H and Extension Services, "No" to a Lane County Road Safety measure — nos outnumbering yeses on a variety of tax issues over the years, whether or not people in surrounding areas

agreed with us.

But "No" is not the entire voting record of this community, nor its historic record. We have voted "Yes" to fire district measures and we have voted "Yes" to Western Lane County Ambulance services measures. We built schools throughout this region, often through a bond process, and even though only the current Mapleton K-12 complex of buildings is still used as a school, some of those other buildings are still in use, most notably the one currently owned by the Lion's Club housing the Mapleton Branch Library, Mapleton Water District offices, outreach services and AA meetings.

We built a pool that a determined number of us aren't ready to kiss goodbye. We have built churches, businesses, homes and help maintain parks and some of our public spaces. So I know we care collectively.

Three generations ago, my very poorest relatives lived in Swisshome, having little beyond pride and a strong work ethic. Yet they sent both their son and their daughter to college immediately following World War II, and they helped to build the church building in Swisshome. I think they were typical of the kind of people who lived here then. We who live here now have benefitted from their sacrifices, including these buildings. Surely we can at least fix some of them.

Beat the expectations. Citizen up! Vote "Yes" on the Mapleton School bond.

I have been watching a National Park Service-hosted live webcam of a bald eagle nest on the Channel Islands off the California coast. This one is especially interesting because it has sound, and if it is going in the background while I am doing other things, I can hear when the two chicks interact with each other or the parents arrive, and can look over and see what is happening.

When wind isn't buffeting the microphone, one can hear the songs of meadowlarks, hermit thrush and the call of quail or flicker. Our local eagle nests are obscured by vegetation and well camouflaged, and it is impossible to tell what was going on beyond a lot of noise when the adults are near or at the nest. The web address for the live feed is www.nps.gov/chis/learn/photosmultimedia/bald-eagle-webcam.htm.

As I write this there are two chicks about two months old on the nest. If all goes well, this drama could continue to be watchable until the

LETTERS

Strong schools make strong communities

The Mapleton School District is seeking a \$4 million bond, which will be matched by the State of Oregon for a total budget of \$8 million, if the community supports the bond in the upcoming election.

This is an opportunity the district has not seen in 55-plus years of service to the Mapleton community, if ever. The last school bond was passed in 1961. The rate for the bond is \$1.59/\$1,000 of assessed value for 25 years. The median assessed value within the Mapleton School District is \$114,500, which equates to \$15 per month.

The bond is a must for the district to repair deteriorating infrastructure on 65-year-old buildings. This would include accessibility, water, sewer, electrical, siding, windows, roofing, school security entry and exit, asbestos abatement, restructuring of classrooms, HVAC systems and Wi-Fi.

The district plans to vacate the middle school building and the south wing of the elementary school. This will bring the middle school students into the high school, will condense the elementary buildings and save operating costs within the district. The district will continue to lease the middle school building to generate income and increase community access.

The board will scrutinize cost estimates to complete phases of the project closely. We feel we can save dollars throughout the project, which will be added back into the construction budget for addressing other priority maintenance items on the list of improvements.

There are many reasons to approve this bond measure for the improvement of our school, which is the heart of the Mapleton com-

munity. We understand the associated costs will be an impact on every patron within the district. As you gather information on making an informed decision when you cast your vote in the next couple of weeks, I ask that you make sure it is not based on social media, but from the true information being presented by the district.

There is a lot of misinformation being discussed within the community. Information can be obtained from the district's website, from the district office or by calling a school board member. Now is the time to ask questions. It is amazing to me that we are of the age now that it is our turn to assure our school district stays solid and our generation invests in the kids of tomorrow.

To take a line from the show "Cheers," Mapleton is a unique community where everybody knows your name. We are a strong community now and still will be after the votes are counted May 17. I believe that strong schools make strong communities. Please give this some serious consideration.

Carl H. West
Mapleton

Invest in our future

As a current member of the Siuslaw School Board and with 40 years of experience in public education, I would like to share my thoughts on the multiple benefits a new Siuslaw High School will provide to our community that go far beyond the scope of producing well-educated graduates.

Based on my experience, many people view financing education as an "expense" because they base their beliefs on a business model that seeks to economize by implementing cuts in utilities, overhead, payroll and capital improvements.

That is a method businesses may use to increase profits and reward owners and stockholders. Schools, however, are not businesses — they do so much more for our community rather than earning cash profits.

Schools are not owned, they are public; there are no stockholders, there are stakeholders. And, while it may be a somewhat overused phrase, I believe that spending on the education of children should not be viewed as simply an expense — financing our schools is truly an investment in our future. After all, we are the stakeholders. The positive returns to our community if we choose to invest in good schools for our children are myriad.

First, every dollar spent in our local school district is returned to our community. Over 80 percent of our district's budget is spent on salaries for personnel. The wages of those employees are spent locally. Area businesses and contractors are utilized for building and major repairs at school sites. Buses need fuel. Students and teachers buy materials for classes. These dollars stay in our community and support economic growth.

Many of the students who graduate from our local schools stay in our community. If our schools are adequately funded and therefore able to provide advanced classes, up-to-date technology and career/vocational training, everyone in our community benefits from an educated work force. Additionally, high school graduates are less likely to commit crimes and become an actual "expense" to our community as part of the justice system.

Doctors looking for a community in which to establish a practice and teachers seeking employment consider many factors before making a decision, which include the quality of the schools in the area. A major

concern, especially to those with young children, is that the schools are safe and provide a quality education. I doubt that many who read that the Siuslaw High School is seismically unsound, unsafe and crowded will be motivated to move here.

Finally, there is a tangible community characteristic coupled with our city's schools: civic pride. The residents of Florence are understandably proud of our library, our Events Center and our Senior Center. A new safe, smart and sustainable high school should be added to that list of accomplishments. Our community should be proud to say that we have the best schools that we can provide for our children.

Please join me in voting yes on the bond for new high school construction.

Bill McDougle
Florence

Worth the price

We are writing in support of the Siuslaw High School bond measure. We do not have children, and yet we believe in the importance of local students having a high school where they have basic fire and earthquake protection, where they have access to the classrooms and lab facilities they need to succeed in school.

To provide a functional, secure school for local kids is worth an additional \$0.31 per \$1,000 of assessed value in property taxes (\$57 per year for our house).

The benefits to our community of increased economic development, enhanced quality of life and future opportunities for our children are well worth the price. Please join us in supporting local students. Vote yes on Measure 20-241.

Susy Lacer and Bart Mealer
Florence

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On May 4, 1776, Rhode Island, the colony founded by the most-radical religious dissenters from the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Colony, becomes the first North American colony to renounce its allegiance to King George III. Ironically, Rhode Island would be the last state to ratify the new American Constitution.

- On May 8, 1792, Congress passes the second portion of the Militia Act, requiring that every free able-bodied white male citizen between the ages of 18 and 45 be enrolled in the militia.

- On May 7, 1915, the British ocean liner Lusitania is torpedoed without warning by a German submarine off Ireland, sinking within 20 minutes. More than 1,100 people perished, including more than 120 Americans, hastening the U.S. entry into World War I.

- On May 2, 1939, New York Yankees first baseman Lou Gehrig benches himself for poor play and ends his record streak of consecutive games played at 2,130. Gehrig was the first major-league player to have his uniform number retired.

- On May 5, 1961, from Cape Canaveral, Florida, Navy Commander Alan Shepard Jr. is launched into space aboard the Freedom 7 space capsule, becoming the first American astronaut to travel into space. The suborbital flight lasted 15 minutes and reached a height of 116 miles.

- On May 6, 1970, hundreds of colleges and universities across the nation shut down as thousands of students join a nationwide campus protest. The protests were a reaction to the shooting of four students at Kent State University by National Guardsmen during an anti-Vietnam War demonstration.

- On May 3, 1986, 54-year-old Willie Shoemaker, aboard Ferdinand, becomes the oldest jockey ever to win the Kentucky Derby. Even as a full-grown man, "Shoe" was just 4 feet 11 inches tall and 98 pounds.

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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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