

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

# Opinion

## LETTERS

### Unanswered questions

The Siuslaw School District wants the residential property owners of Florence to approve a \$36.9 million bond issue for the construction of a new school.

The bond will be for 25 years. If we assume a favorable rate of 4 percent, then the school will spend \$36.9 million for the new school and an estimated \$21.5 million in bank interest over the life of the bond; total expenditure: \$58.4 million.

I recommend we disapprove it for now. What troubles me is the lack of information provided to the taxpayers by the school board. I have unanswered questions.

1. If my property's assessed rate continues to go up each year, as it has for the past six, what happens to that additional money the school board receives?

2. Is the school board required to apply all new funds received as a result of this increase to the bond issue?

3. Does the increase cease when the bond issue is paid off or does it just continue for 25 years?

4. Is this increase in fact limited to 25 years?

5. Is the school board asserting their 100 percent confidence that there will be no cost overruns?

6. Is the school board allowed to increase the money spent on the school without voter approval?

7. Is there a contractual document that binds the school board's actions regarding the use of these new funds?

Florence is not a typical city, it is a retirement community with a large number of people on a fixed income. Not a year has gone by since we moved here in 2009 that there has not been an increase in fees or taxes by fire, rescue, schools, Florence city, Port of Siuslaw, FURA or some other authority who is dipping into my pocket.

I don't like the fait accompli manner in which this has been handled by the school board.

Joseph Wise  
 Florence

### Viking school bond

Florence does not need a \$36 million Taj Mahal. Seems the people who drew up plans are only interested in making a fat profit for themselves, not the interest of the local taxpayers.

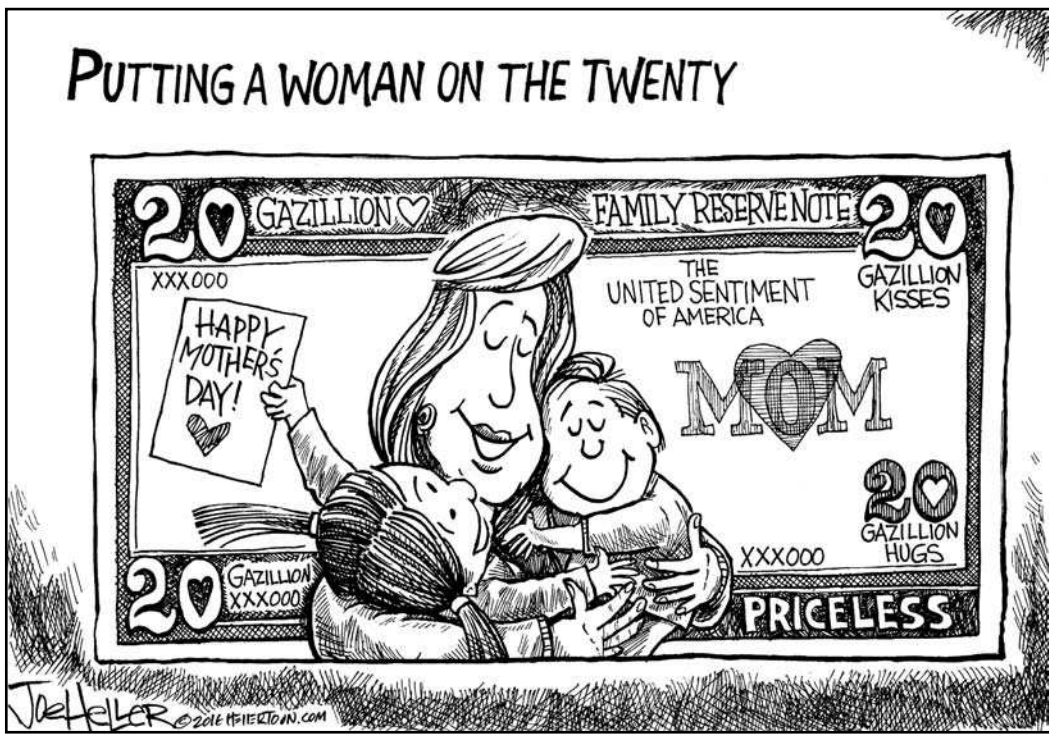
More than half the people who live here are retired on fixed incomes. Some are in good shape money wise, others like myself are not. There are not a lot of high-paying jobs in this town, which makes a lot of renters who don't pay taxes.

The school board does not make good sense. They should have invited all the contractors and working and retired builders to try and figure out how to reinforce the existing buildings with masonry and steel panels for structural and seismic shear for existing walls. The slabs don't need removal and the existing concrete sits on solid soil. New construction would be on fill and take years to settle.

Add new insulated glass, new paint, floor cover where needed, solar panels for electricity savings and a new dining hall close to the courtyard, which could be built on the east side of the basketball gym, using an existing wall that would save a lot of money. It could have skylights to make it a cheerful place to eat and meet and access the existing bathrooms, cleaned up and painted.

I have paid property taxes for over 26 years here. I don't get much for my tax dollars from the county, mostly the road crew who do a good job, fire department and ambulance. I vote no on this overpriced boondoggle by the school board.

John Hans  
 Florence



### Voting for new school

The most important group in the whole school election is the kids. When I was in school faced with a similar issue, "if the adults did not care about my welfare and education, why then should I care," and many kids agreed. It was very depressing to our spirit.

Ann Moseley  
 Florence

### Thank you, educators

I want to commend our local teachers for doing so much with their limited resources. Our teachers, volunteers and coaches are so creative. Educating 400-plus kids in a facility that was designed to house 275 is no easy task.

Kudos for having kids in the science labs wait their turn to conduct experiments because the lab stations can only handle half the number of kids in the class. A special kudos to the school board member who brought in portable bunsen burners because the district cannot cover the cost of repairing the gas tank.

Hats off to the physical education teachers and coaches who are able to teach a group of 25 to 30 in a weightlifting class by having them lift outdoors and in the rain because the weight room can only hold 10 to 12 at a time safely.

I also want to express my gratitude to the visiting teams who come to play basketball at Siuslaw High School. Your willingness to dress down in one of the classrooms because the locker rooms cannot accommodate both teams at the same time is much appreciated.

Let's not forget thanking the students for doing as well as they can with the technology they have. They use a Wi-Fi system that is unreliable because it is an old system and not up to speed with the latest standards.

A big thanks goes out to the administrators and the cafeteria staff for not letting the fact that the high school was built without a cafeteria stop them from feeding the kids. Your creativity in bringing in portable warmers with food prepared at one of the other schools is commendable. I want to thank those students who are willing to eat on the floor or benches because there is not enough table seating.

I understand your struggles. I have heard some tell me that "\$39 million is too much!" Well then, I wonder what they think is enough. I wish they understood construction costs and that it's not only bricks and mortar, but all that must go in it as well as meet the seismic standards required. Some have said to me, "I do not want to pay more taxes." I agree. I do not want to pay more taxes either. Then I remember that we are only talking about a slight annual increase for a couple years because of the short overlap from paying off the bond for the other buildings in the school district.

We can gripe about how poorly the building was designed or about the limited resources. However, griping does not educate our students nor provide them with the resources to be com-

petitive in today's employment market.

I wonder, if we as a community are telling our students, teachers and administrators to adapt to an ever-changing world, well then, why can't we as a community?

Bob Teter  
 Florence

### Elect Judge Brissenden

Rick Brissenden, Florence Municipal Court Judge for over 15 years, was appointed to officially replace the retiring Lane County Justice of the Peace beginning March 1, 2016.

Judge Brissenden was able to fill the position easily. Judge Brissenden will remain in that position through December 2016, no matter who is elected to the position.

Since Judge Brissenden will have been the Lane County Justice of the Peace for almost a year, why would we want to change him out for someone who is not even a lawyer?

The state legislature almost outlawed citizen-JPs this past year, as not qualified to fulfill the ever-more complicated Justice of the Peace duties. The eastern Oregon counties blocked the ban; it really is a hang over from the Old West when any citizen could "administer" justice.

A compromise was made to require citizen-JPs to complete 30 hours of schooling, most likely in another state, at taxpayer expense. This "education" is a far cry from the 15 years of experience as a Lane County Judge that Judge Brissenden already has.

I wouldn't hire Judge Brissenden to wire my house for electricity — I want a licensed electrician. If I have an animal control violation, I don't want to run into my judge at the store every day. Isn't it a conflict of interest, if the judge knows one or both of the parties in a case? Is it a good idea to have a citizen-JP who knows everyone in town?

Judge Brissenden has worked well with local law enforcement for over 15 years; he has listened carefully to offenders, even writing personal letters to them. He is already familiar with search warrant and charging procedures, and won't have to "check the book" in the middle of the night when those calls come in.

In conversation with Judge Brissenden, he was excited about ideas for ways to extend services to the Oakridge and east county folks who have lost their local JP; for example, bringing mediation services as an option for small claims cases or landlord-tenant disputes in Oakridge.

Lane County is the same size as the state of Connecticut. Do the other candidates have ideas for improving service to the rest of their constituents outside Florence, and the proven skill to implement them?

Please join me in voting for Judge Rick Brissenden for Lane County Justice of the Peace, the only logical choice.

Eugene Bukowski  
 Florence

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

### MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On May 9, 1671, in London, Thomas Blood, an Irish adventurer known as "Captain Blood," is captured trying to steal the Crown Jewels from the Tower of London. King Charles was so impressed that he made Blood a member of his court with an annual pension.

- On May 10, 1869, the presidents of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads meet in Utah and drive a ceremonial last spike into a rail line, making transcontinental rail travel possible for the first time.

- On May 11, 1934, a massive storm sends 350 million tons of topsoil flying across the parched Great Plains as far east as New York. Even ships some 300 miles offshore saw dust collect on their decks.

- On May 15, 1942, legislation creating the Women's Army Corps becomes law, granting women official military status. However, it would not be until 1980 that 16,000 women who had joined the early WACs would receive veterans' benefits.

- On May 12, 1975, the American freighter Mayaguez is captured by communist government forces in Cambodia. In response, President Gerald Ford ordered the bombing of the Cambodian port where the gunboats had come from. Forty-one Americans died, most of them in an accidental explosion during the attack.

- On May 13, 1985, in Philadelphia, police drop a small bomb on the roof of a row house on Osage Avenue in an attempt to end a standoff with the radical cult group MOVE. The explosion sparked a fire that killed 11 people and burned down 61 homes.

- On May 14, 1999, President Bill Clinton apologizes directly to Chinese President Jiang Zemin on the phone for the accidental NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia. The Chinese president had refused to accept a phone call from Clinton for four days.

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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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