

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

# Opinion

## VIEW FROM UPRIVER



## Casualties of war

WESLEY VOTH  
 For the Siuslaw News

This week has felt like summer. We sit down beside the river in the early evening, watching the play of light on water. The last shafts of setting sun catch the dancing cataracts of the riffles, partnering in a shimmering shimmy. Insects jigger along the surface, swallows swoop and skim, ducks bob by, a boy is fishing blissfully, the osprey pair that nests in a broken-top fir just down from Rainrocks wheels about in an air pirouette, in and out of the sunbeams. It is windless and heavenly, and the color that pairs with the many greens of spring is no longer grey but golden.

The sounds are soothing: ravens rave in rapture, sandpipers pipe, children chatter happily, there is the cooing of the band-tailed pigeons. Up and down the Brickerville bank, people are drawn to the water as to church. The river rushes along in quiet babble, and there is peace in our little valley.

Such are welcome respites from the bustle and complications and even rancor of the rest of life, both locally and what we hear of the wider world. A neighbor told us about her young peach tree dying of something, and when I checked on ours that is now six years old, it too is dying, the leaves shriveling up and the fruit that had set so nicely dropping to the ground. Some of the rhododendrons we planted a few years ago have struggled as well.

The problem seems to happen at this time of year, when I've also had the most trouble with my bees. It is coincidental with herbicides sprayed along the railroad and along the highway, spray that drifts well beyond where it is directed and affects far more than is intended, but whether this is related I cannot tell. The last of my bees dying this spring is mostly the result of a pest I did not even know I had or was anywhere near here, the "small hive beetle" originating in Africa. These are not supposed to be that big of a problem, but a population explosion of these ruined the substantial amount of honey left in my hives, fermenting it and causing it to run out onto the ground, resulting in the demise of this last surviving colony.

The beetles are tunneled into all of the hive wood and wax, which will have to be burned onsite, hopefully also killing the larvae in the ground below. Maybe if I wait a year I could start again. Maybe it has become impossible to raise bees here without the use of chemicals, and if so, I am done.

There is an election on, and there are so many things that trouble me about both the process and the tone. Oregon seems to be the only state moving in the direction of making it not only easier to vote, but including as many people as possible, although we have not been free of politically motivated redistricting. The partisan redistricting and the voting and registration complications going on in most of the nation sows widespread distrust non-involvement at a time when we can least afford it.

And then, there are the fighting words, both between and within the dominating political parties. This much I know, and I know it from being raised in a dysfunctional family, but having worked hard to establish a well-functioning one: Some words should never be spoken. They cannot be taken back, forgotten, or truly forgiven, because they damage and destroy.

Like herbicide sprays, words of hate and belittlement damage and destroy far beyond their immediate intent or their intended targets. They can eventually cause the collapse of entire systems.

## LETTERS

### Election disappointments

In this election cycle, two disappointing things have come to my attention.

First, local volunteers who have invested many volunteer hours on school issues are personally criticized for taking a stand on the current school levy. If citizens don't like an issue, they should criticize the facts bearing on the issue, not volunteer servants. While I am not certain how I feel about seismic boogymen, I respect the work of volunteers who have studied the issue and I thank them for their efforts.

Secondly, I am told the sitting Democrat state legislator from Coos Bay is behind an attempt to have herself written in as the Republican candidate also, thereby eliminating any chance for competition and discussion of her and her party's voting record in the recent legislative session. While it is a legal activity under Oregon law, I suppose some might call that a "dirty trick." However, like beauty, it may be in the eye of the beholder.

As for me, I am writing in a well-qualified Republican, Teri Grier from Coos Bay, for state legislator in House District 9.

Al Pearn  
 Florence

### Legislature loophole

The members of the Oregon Legislature are more and more often using a loophole in the Oregon constitution to eliminate the citizens from the law-making process. The loophole is called the Emergency Clause.

When the emergency clause is added to a bill it cannot be referred to the voters. Once "We the People" are excluded from the law-making



process, we are no longer functioning as a democracy.

Over 50 percent of the bills introduced during the 2016 Oregon legislative session included an emergency clause. What was the emergency? The politicians didn't say, so we don't know.

Why were all these emergencies declared? There is really only one reason. If a bill is passed with an emergency clause attached, it becomes law when the Governor signs it instead of waiting the statutorily required 90 days.

Without the 90-day period, the law cannot be referred to the voters. It eliminates the voters from any chance of participating in the law-making process.

More specifically, during the 2016 short legislative session, 149 bills were introduced in the House, of which 82 (55 percent) contained an emergency clause. The Senate introduced 104 bills, of which 62 (60 percent) contained the emergency clause.

So over 50 percent of the time some politician decided they did not want us to possibly vote on the bill they proposed.

Of the 82 House bills that contained an emergency clause, only

24 were passed into law, that leaves 58 that did not. For the Senate, 17 of the 62 bills introduced with an emergency clause passed, leaving 45 that did not. Just how real do you think the emergencies were for the 58 House bills and 45 Senate bills that were declared as necessary by reason of emergency but were not important enough to pass into law?

Several controversial bills were passed with an emergency clause attached during the recent session, including the "Minimum wage law" and the "No more energy from coal for Oregon." Regardless of your personal stance on these issues, summarily taking away our right to vote is just wrong.

The emergency clause was placed in the constitution to accommodate serious threats to the people of the state, for instance in the case of a tsunami or health epidemic, not to be routinely used to eliminate citizens of the state from the law-making process.

A constitutional amendment is being proposed that will change the allowable use of the emergency clause. The amendment has two basic requirements: 1. The emergency has to be named in the proposed legislation; and, 2. Two-

thirds of the House and Senate have to agree that it is an emergency unless an actual state of emergency has been declared. To bring the amendment to a vote, 118,000 signatures will have to be obtained from registered voters.

I urge you to sign the petition when it comes around. The state needs to have emergency powers in case of a real emergency, but those powers should not be used to completely exclude us from the law-making process by routinely declaring fake emergencies.

David R. Davis  
 Florence

### Support Val Hoyle

One reason for Democrats to be slow in returning ballots for this Primary Election is that they have some hard but good choices to make. Here is a hint to help with decision-making in the race for Secretary of State: Val Hoyle actually lives in Lane County and knows our coast well.

Val has been a strong voice in Salem as a state representative speaking on behalf of Oregonians in a rural district outside the Portland metro area. She will certainly bring that perspective to the job of Secretary of State.

As House majority leader, Val has worked extremely hard to pass legislation on strong education funding, expanding voting rights, background checks for all gun sales, paid sick leave, higher minimum wage, non-polluting fuel and energy sourcing and much more.

The deadline to return ballots to the official drop box on Ninth Street outside the Florence Police Department is 8 p.m. on May 17. Don't forget to sign the outside of the return envelope.

Karin Radtke  
 Yachats

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

### MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On May 19, 1715, the colony of New York passes a law making it illegal to "gather, rake, take up, or bring to the market, any oysters whatsoever" between May and September. This regulation was one of many passed in the early days of America to help preserve certain species.

- On May 22, 1856, Rep. Preston Brooks (D-S.C.) savagely beats Sen. Charles Sumner (R-Mass.) in the halls of Congress as tensions rise over the expansion of slavery. Wielding the gold-topped cane he used for injuries suffered in a duel over politics in 1840, Brooks entered the Senate chamber and attacked Sumner at his desk.

- On May 20, 1873, San Francisco businessman Levi Strauss and Reno, Nevada, tailor Jacob Davis are given a patent to create work pants reinforced with metal rivets, marking the birth of one of the world's most famous garments: blue jeans. They were originally called "waist overalls."

- On May 21, 1881, humanitarians Clara Barton and Adolphus Solomons found the American National Red Cross to provide humanitarian aid to victims of wars and natural disasters.

- On May 18, 1917, six weeks after the United States formally entered the First World War, the U.S. Congress passes the Selective Service Act, giving the U.S. president the power to draft soldiers. Within months, some 10 million men had registered.

- On May 16, 1929, the first-ever Academy Awards ceremony is held. Some 270 people attended, and tickets cost \$5 each. After dinner, complete with numerous speeches, actor Douglas Fairbanks handed out 15 awards in a five-minute ceremony.

- On May 17, 1965, after a two-year investigation, the FBI declares the supposedly pornographic lyrics of "Louie Louie" to be officially unintelligible. Agents had purchased numerous versions of "Louie Louie" played and re-played the song at different speeds in their laboratory.

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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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