

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion



Democracy isn't in the chosen — but in the choosing

I'm writing this Tuesday morning, well before the final votes will be tallied later tonight and, quite possibly, contested by one side or the other in the days and weeks ahead.

As much as I'd like to believe tonight will close the final chapter in a political season that has played out more like a work of fiction than reality, my gut tells me there is already a sequel in the works to this poorly written chapter in American political history. Yet, as I slipped my ballot

into the drop box this morning, I thought of the poem "Election Day, November 1884" by Walt Whitman. In it, he eloquently expresses the simple but important notion that the act of voting is, in itself, more powerful than any individual elected within our Democracy.

"The still small voice vibrating — America's choosing day, the heart of it not in the chosen, (but) the act itself the main — the quadriennial choosing..."

In this era of social media coverage, on-demand sound-bites and the constant barrage of political ads, posts and Tweets, it's easy to forget the fundamental value our vote represents — and that the sum total of our Democracy is larger than any one individual. I have faith in our system of

checks and balances, the Constitution, our Bill of Rights and, most importantly, my fellow Americans' right to choose a president.

Over the years, I've had my candidates win and I've had

them lose — some during the final elections and others well before. However, regardless of who was sworn in, I felt humbled being part of a process that began as notions and fervent scribbling by our forefathers nearly 250 years ago.

It was a system created to give a voice to its people. And while it certainly isn't perfect, even *that* is a reflection of our

national and its voice. As I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, I don't particularly care for either presidential candidate, neither of whom I honestly feel represents the best of the American people,

their values or ideals. For me, filling out my ballot was like choosing between the last two kids waiting to be picked for the kickball team; one can kick and the other can catch, but I know whoever I choose is going to cost me some runs.

However, like kickball, our system of Democracy is based on the principle that we aren't

defined by one individual but by the voice — and choice — of many.

By the time you read this, that choice will have been made. And regardless of who is sworn in on January 20th, I will support that choice — not as a Democrat, Republican or Independent.

I will support it as a fellow American who believes that the heart of Democracy doesn't rest within the chosen, but within the hearts of those who do the choosing.

Following a political season that has, by design from both sides, steadily and deeply divided us all, I hope you'll join me in moving forward as a people united by the belief in — and our respect for — the voice we share as Americans...

*If I should need to name,
 O Western World,
 your powerfulest
 scene and show,
 'Twould not be you, Niagara
 Nor you, ye limitless prairies
 Nor your huge rifts of
 canyons, Colorado,
 Nor you, Yosemite
 Nor Yellowstone, with all its
 geyser-loops ascending to the
 skies,
 Nor Oregon's white cones
 Nor Huron's belt of mighty
 lakes; nor Mississippi's
 stream:*

*This seething hemisphere's
 humanity, as now, I'd name
 the still small voice vibrating
 on America's choosing day...*

— Walt Whitman

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From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County.

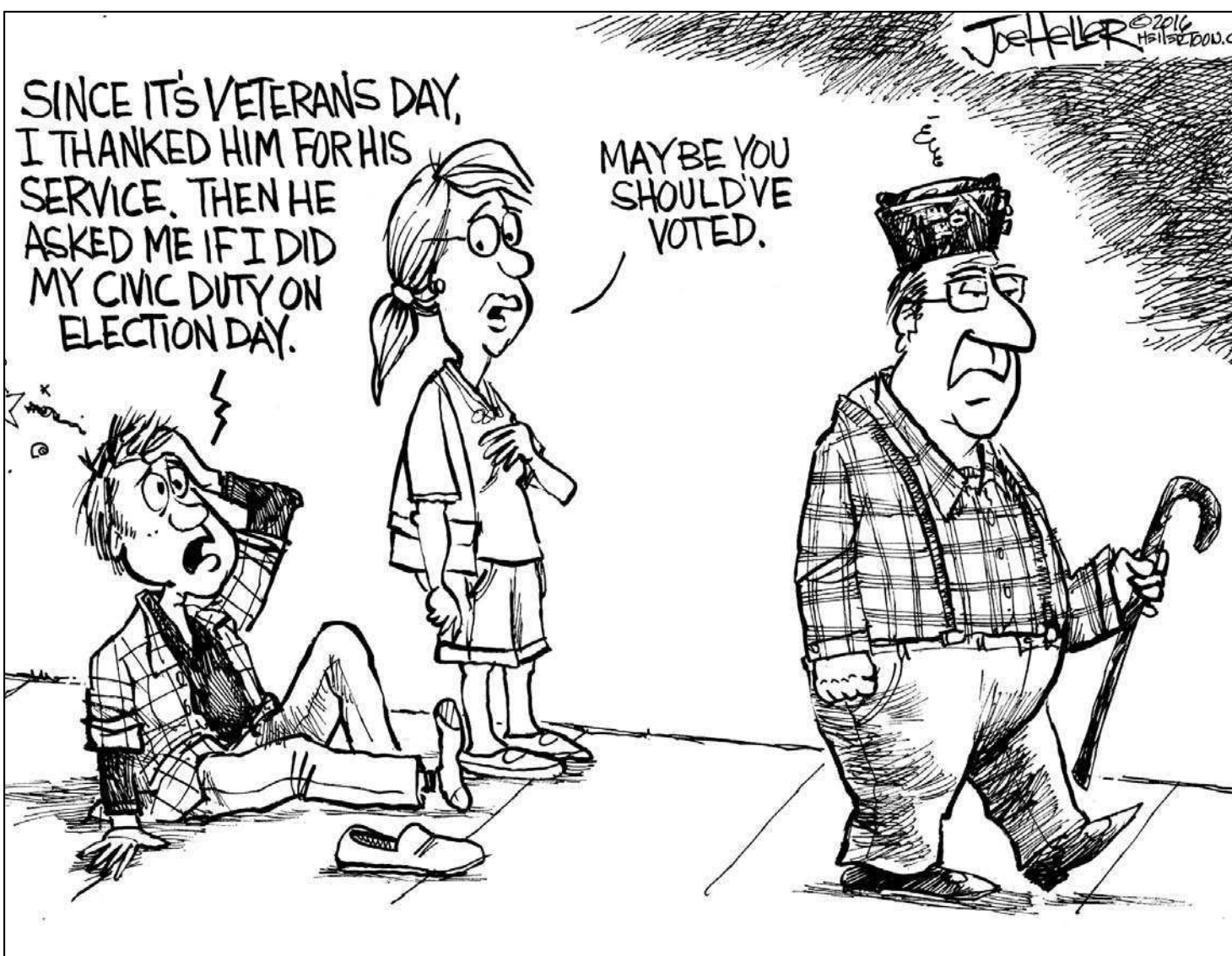
Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification.

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 or poetry will not be published.

All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to:
Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com



LETTERS

Joyful 'Pirates'

My friend and I just came from this year's musical production of "The Pirates of Penzance" by the Last Resort Players at the FEC and I wanted to share my reaction to this high quality, amusing, joyful and creative interpretation of this popular comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan.

There was not a single stand-out performer but all the duets were especially well executed and pleasing. The chorus performers were fully competent and the various soloists were all effective and amusing.

Some of the principal singers had very excellent voices for musical theatre and no player was worse than very good.

Even the orchestra, though small, was

tuneful and well practiced.

It would be my hope that I am the only one in town surprised to find this cultural treasure in a small beach town.

For those like me who haven't pursued the dramatic offerings of Florence, who are reluctant to take the time or who are too frugal to realize the value of this type of joyful experience, it's time to wake up and enjoy!

We are so lucky to have such gifted artists of all kinds here.

Well done, Last Resort Players!

Crystal Clark
 Florence

Florence makes a difference

The Salvation Army — Western Lane

County is very thankful for the outpouring of support we received for the Red Kettle Campaign in 2015. In fact, the nearly \$17,000 raised was two and a half times the national average per capita.

Well done!

In fact, it impressed one donor so much that she matched this amount in January, thus making it five times the national average.

We are going to do our best to meet last year's amazing success. To do this, we will need twice the number of bell ringing volunteers and many large donations to make it happen.

On Monday, Nov. 14, we urge everyone who can to donate to a favorite local charities and send a note of encouragement, too.

Tell them you appreciate their work to help those who are less fortunate.

Maybe even offer to volunteer or donate items they may need.

Also on "Make a Difference Monday," you can enjoy breakfast at Darling's Marina and Resort in Dunes City, lunch at Pop's Smokehouse in Mapleton and dinner at the Siuslaw Riverside Restaurant on Bay Street, where your \$15 includes a meal and beverage.

Bring friends and family plus cans of food for the local food share programs.

For more information or to volunteer, call 1-800-481-3280.

Bill Olson
 Florence

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Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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DEADLINES:

Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.
Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$71; 10-weeks subscription, \$18; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$94; 10-weeks subscription, \$24; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$120; Out of United States — 1-year subscription, \$200; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
 Website and E-Edition: www.TheSiuslawNews.com

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