

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

# Opinion



## The biggest part of democracy is that it starts small

Before putting the final touches on today's edition, we did something we haven't done in eight years. At the bottom of this page is a small section with the heading "Where to Write." In it are the addresses of your representatives at the federal, state and county levels.

At the top of the list is our nation's President, which has been updated to reflect yesterday's inauguration of Donald J. Trump.

The peaceful transition of government has officially been achieved for the 45th time since George Washington took the first — and very same

— Oath of Office some 227 years ago. At the time, Washington remarked that it wasn't his inauguration that would be the most significant. He recognized one of the first and most important tests of Democracy would be the peaceful transition of power — something that had never been achieved in human history in such a way or on such a grand scale.

Eight years later, when Washington handed over the presidency to the newly-elected John Adams in 1797, it was proof that the "grand experiment" of Democracy was more than a notion; it was a reality.

But, more importantly, it was an example of how a nation of people could participate in a process of discussion, debate and even disagreement but still emerge unified as Americans thanks to

a shared belief in our nation's Constitution and what it represents.

However, yesterday morning as I sat listening to coverage of the inauguration taking place in our nation's capitol, I was struck by the notion of

How every voice counts. How voting is a part of that voice.

And how participation is important.

Grace and her classmates already understand — and have participated in — the

racy isn't in Washington D.C. It beats within the hearts of Americans of all ages through their faith in, understanding of and commitment to the ideals we share as a nation.

Those ideals don't begin in grandeur within the halls of the Capitol Building. Instead, they start small, with citizens and communities willing to voice those ideals to their elected officials at the city, county, state and, eventually, federal level.

It's important to remember that the biggest part of democracy is that it starts small. It's not a large rock being lobbed into the center of a lake; it's the ripple effect caused by Americans willing to take the time to toss enough small pebbles into the same lake.

For that reason, those who supported President Trump have a right to be happy; those who didn't support him have a right to be unhappy.

But as Americans, we have a much more important right, which is to be active participants in our democracy now and in the years ahead.

Yesterday, while our nation participated in another peaceful transition of power in the aftermath of one of the most polarizing elections in American history, a small group of students some 2,883 miles away here in Florence were participating in their own version of the democratic process — and beginning their own ripple effect by embracing the ideals that have served us well for nearly 230 years.

Ideals that live on in the hearts of small pebbles like Grace Dotson.

*Write Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com or P.O. Box 10, Florence, Ore. 97439.*

### From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

another inauguration taking place almost simultaneously just a few miles away at Siuslaw Elementary School.

As President Trump addressed the American people promising a new direction, a "return to greatness" and more accountability in government, 8-year-old Grace Dotson stood before her third-grade constituents and spoke about the basic principles that make a Democracy.

fundamentals of a working and successful Democracy.

Like President Trump, an Oath of Office was administered to President Dotson. It was done so without the level of fanfare taking place in our nation's capitol.

No crowd control. No military bands.

No live coverage on media platforms around the world.

Because of this, we often forget that the heart of democ-

### LETTERS

#### SIMPLE LOGIC

My wife and I are writing to voice our opposition to having a marijuana operation at the subject location. This location is in near proximity to the Siuslaw School District's school bus barn, Alternative School classroom, high school football and track fields, and grounds of the elementary and middle schools.

Although approved by state legislation, existing federal law still provides penalties for possession, sale and cultivation of marijuana and marijuana paraphernalia.

Even if the proposed change of permit is technically legal given Oregon Land Use and Florence City codes as they apply to location of marijuana businesses, if this Change of Use is authorized, it will set a precedent.

We do not think Florence's community development department should allow for the possible proliferation of marijuana operations in close proximity to school grounds and facilities.

Simple logic would dictate that we keep marijuana operations away from our schools and children.

In the best interest of our city, schools and

children, the proposed facility should be located at greater distance away from our school grounds.

*Ray and Marilyn Ebert  
 Florence*

#### WONDERFUL WORDS

Thank you so very much for the Saturday, Jan. 14, edition of Siuslaw News. It drew tears from me for the memories it brought back, and of the wonderful words of Martin Luther King Jr.

Also, tears when I read editor Ned Hickson's very personal "Rufus Valentine" story.

The articles caused me to stop and think that, just maybe, if we as a people look within ourselves and take hold of that "hope" that Martin Luther King Jr. inspired, we can make the beautiful "Dream" come true.

Thank you also to our city's Mayor, Joe Henry, for his stand and words.

*Joni Glover Romano  
 Florence*

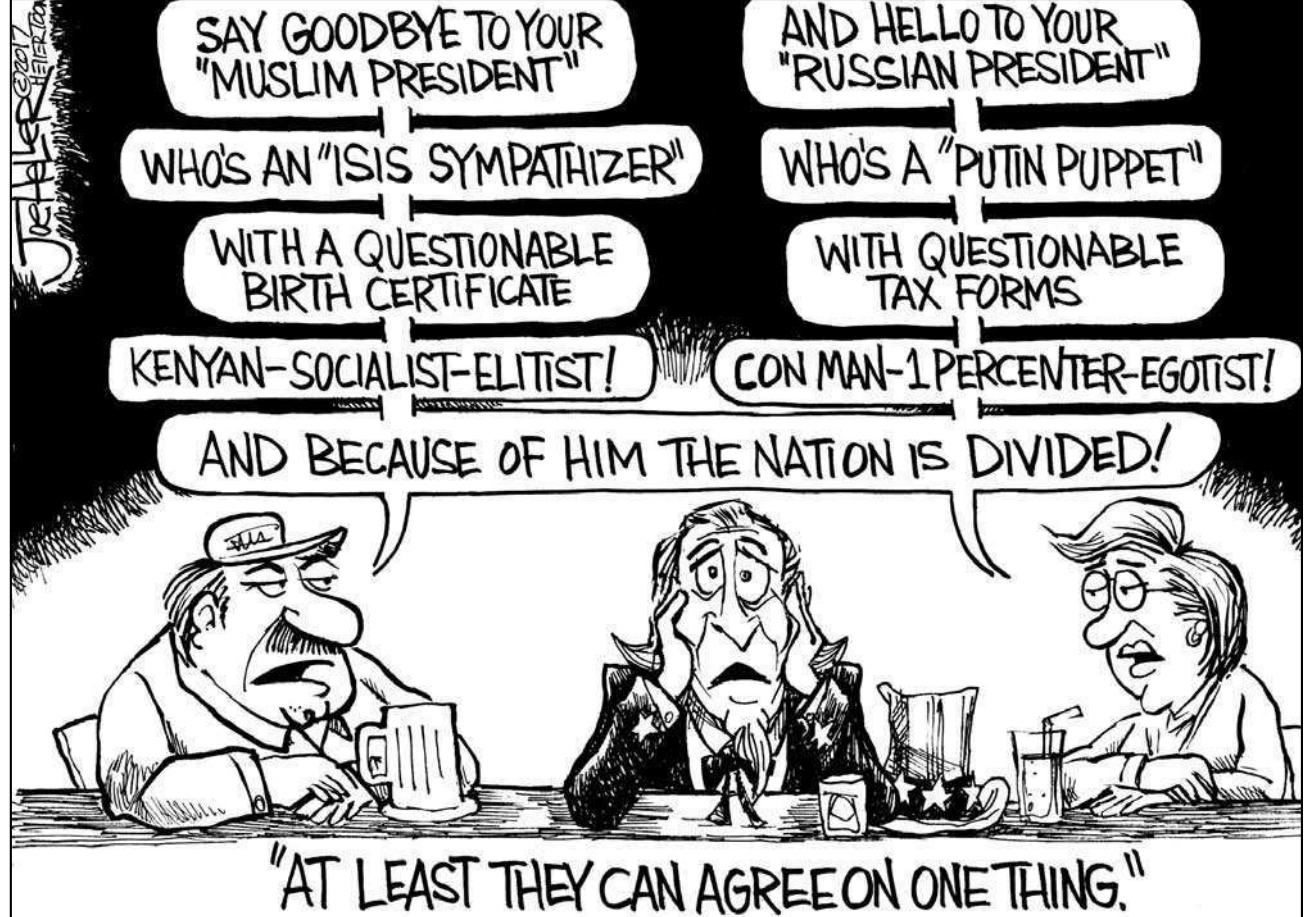
#### VALUE IN THE COMMON GOOD

It would be great to be guaranteed a "hate free" community, everywhere. Unfortunately an official proclamation is a collection of words unless, as Denise Straws remarked (Siuslaw News, Jan. 18), "we get behind it and with an attitude that 'we can do it.'"

And we must. It will require an open mind and honesty of heart.

If it means that public comments of disagreement are perceived as motivated by hate, we won't get there.

However, if we remain silent, as many of us have been for the past 40 years or so, we will only have ourselves to blame if the quality of our local air and water becomes unsafe; as our oceans become increasingly more toxic to the fish we depend on; when, unchecked, some of the food on the grocery store shelf becomes more of a threat to our health than it already is; if our taxes, intended for public education, are diverted to private and/or charter schools where



## 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:

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John Bartlett  
 Jenna Bartlett  
 Ned Hickson  
 Susan Gutierrez  
 Cathy Dietz  
 Ron Annis  
 Jeremy Gentry

Publisher, ext. 327  
 General Manager, ext. 318  
 Editor, ext. 313  
 Marketing Director, ext. 326  
 Office Supervisor, ext. 312  
 Production Supervisor  
 Press Manager

#### DEADLINES:

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Website and E-Edition: [www.TheSiuslawNews.com](http://www.TheSiuslawNews.com)

### WHERE TO WRITE

Pres. Donald Trump  
 The White House  
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20500  
 Comments: 202-456-1111  
 Switchboard: 202-456-1414  
 FAX: 202-456-2461  
 TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

Gov. Kate Brown  
 160 State Capitol  
 900 Court St.  
 Salem, OR 97301-4047  
 Governor's Citizens' Rep.  
 Message Line 503-378-4582  
[www.oregon.gov/gov](http://www.oregon.gov/gov)

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden  
 221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg  
 Washington, DC 20510

202-224-5244  
 541-431-0229  
[www.wyden.senate.gov](http://www.wyden.senate.gov)

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley  
 313 Hart Senate Office Bldg  
 Washington, DC 20510  
 202-224-3753/FAX: 202-228-3997  
 541-465-6750  
[www.merkley.senate.gov](http://www.merkley.senate.gov)

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (4th Dist.)  
 2134 Rayburn HOB  
 Washington, DC 20515  
 202-225-6416  
 541-269-2609/ 541-465-6732  
[www.defazio.house.gov](http://www.defazio.house.gov)

State Sen. Arnie Roblan (Dist. 5)  
 900 Court St. NE - S-417  
 Salem, OR 97301

503-986-1705  
 FAX: 503-986-1080  
 Email:  
[Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us](mailto:Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us)

State Rep. Caddy McKeown  
 (Dist. 9)  
 900 Court St. NE  
 Salem, OR 97301  
 503-986-1409  
 Email:  
[rep.caddymckeown@state.or.us](mailto:rep.caddymckeown@state.or.us)

West Lane County Commissioner  
 Jay Bozievich  
 125 E. Eighth St.  
 Eugene, OR 97401  
 541-682-4203  
 FAX: 541-682-4616  
 Email:  
[Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us](mailto:Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us)

**REMEMBERING RALPH**  
 I met Ralph Ingram in 1955 and never thought he would turn out to be such a good friend.  
 I will always remember the good times we had hunting together, which we did a lot.  
 Ralph was also a great neighbor, friend and man.  
 He was like a family member and will be missed every day.  
*Virgil Bechtold  
 Florence*

### The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.