

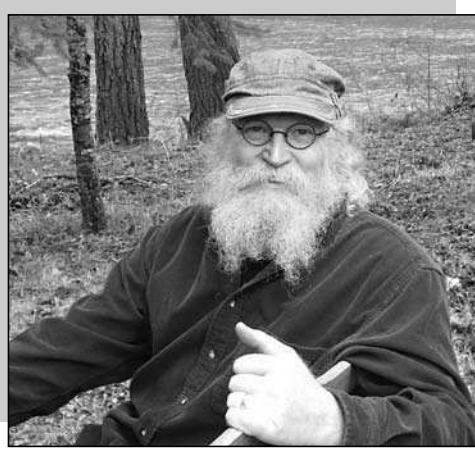
Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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.

VIEW FROM UPRIVER



WESLEY VOTH
For the Siuslaw News

More to democracy than elections

or bog lanterns begin to grace even some fairly disturbed ditches and swampy areas throughout this region.

Just like there's more to life than survival, there's more to democracy than elections. Most of the efforts to change policies or laws that I've made over the course of my life have been trying to get someone I voted for to do so, but I'm not going to stop now just because I voted for someone else or think it will fall on deaf ears. I am heartened by the numbers of women and supporters of women's rights marching, including those from this area, and want to hold Donald Trump to his promises to serve the people.

All of the people.

Including that record number of people EVER to march. All of the people including Muslims.

Draining the swamp is a bad political metaphor; it shows a poor understanding of, and contempt for, the natural world. But I get

the point. Donald Trump looks at Washington, D.C. and sees politicians who have gotten power and altered things in ways that are not to his, and he believes the American people in general, benefit.

I listened to his inauguration speech on the radio while at work, all 1,454 words, and then I have read them again and again, the text available on the internet. Some of those words I think were supposed to be reassuring; to unite. But taken as a whole, I found them chilling. Early in the speech he mentioned "The People" five times, but his most repeated term was "America" or "American;" at 33 times, this was an amazing 1-word-in-44.

I was equally puzzled by other things: "An education system 'flush with cash?'" Really?

Any mention of programs that actually provide security or care, and into which working class people like me have paid all our lives, was entirely missing. And his specific wording excluded me, and people I care about, at point after point.

I look at the people leaving D.C., and whether I have agreed with them or not, as a group they have been public servants who

were knowledgeable about the arenas in which they served. And I look at who Donald Trump is bringing in as fill, and I see the wealthiest of the wealthy — those who have benefitted most from the system the way it has been — and I'm supposed to trust them?

By and large they are not people who have been anyone's servant, let alone that of the public. Why shouldn't I fear that they will continue a system that shifts wealth to them, and the burdens of paying for anything further onto all those who work and actually pay taxes?

Since Donald Trump spoke about it, the religion in which I was raised read the whole Bible, which has a lot to say about wealth and the distribution of resources. Farmers during harvest were to leave some behind for those without to glean. And Jesus drove the money lenders out of the temple with a whip.

Jesus said it is harder for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; he also said a person cannot serve both God and money.

I believe it is similarly difficult to serve both wealth and The People. That is the true conflict of interest at stake here.

The darkest two months of this season's cycle are past, and leaves of spring-blooming non-native daffodils, crocuses, snowdrops and hyacinth are emerging. Varied thrushes are vocalizing more, and the elk herd here in Brickerville is back to trimming ivy — maybe an indication there is a lack of native forage.

Now that I'm clued in to what this looks like — the leaves missing from ivy encased tree trunks up to about eight feet — I've noticed it in other places up and down the coast. Skunk cabbage is poking up leaf spikes, and it won't be long before the bright golden marsh candles

LETTERS

THE EFFECTS OF OIL

It's disheartening that the Army Corps of Engineers has now halted the government's directive of an Environmental Impact Statement and is poised to allow an easement for the Dakota Access Pipeline to drill beneath the Missouri River.

In my opinion, the Standing Rock Sioux have a right to know the effects of an oil spill on their land and water source and defend sacred sites guaranteed by treaty.

It's apparent that the new administration is determined to represent the greed of the fossil fuel industry with complete disregard for human, sovereign indigenous and environmental rights.

I know many Americans view these pipelines as employment, although temporary.

However, it is time to divest from the fossil fuel industry and invest in clean energy jobs to protect the basic needs of humanity's clean water, air and land.

It's time to Stand up for the Standing Rock Sioux.

By Julie MacFarlane
Florence

DIVIDED HEARTS

In Ned Hickson's editorial, "Opposition for Opposition's Sake is a Big Mistake," he writes: "Americans are divided because their representatives in Congress have allowed themselves to become divided simply on the merits of which side of the aisle they happen to sit on."

While I agree with his assessment, I believe it to be only part of the story. Division in Washington begins between individuals, who then elect politicians who reflect and reinforce those divisions.

As Americans, we are at risk of losing touch with our common humanity. There is still far more that unites us than divides us: "For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal (JFK)."

Divisiveness in Washington begins in our hearts. And if we so choose, it can begin to end there.

Rosalie Wells
Florence

BEACH EROSION

I became concerned last summer noticing erosion of the public beach somewhat north of Driftwood Shores Motel. Last week I was totally appalled at the condition of the beach and "foredune" area here due to severe beach starvation.

Beach starvation occurs when it no longer receives adequate sand to replace that lost off shore to storm erosion. The beach is no longer in equilibrium. Along our coast, headlands stop the movement of sand between beaches, which

therefore draw from backshore dunes or cliffs to replace sand lost off-shore to erosion.

Erosion in this case was originally set in motion and accelerated by later expansion of the Siuslaw jetties. In Oregon, jetties impact the shore by creating erosion at a distance (here mostly north of the motel) and deposition adjacent to the jetty.

It is easy to see the deposition of sand and growth of multiple dunes in front of the large majority of homes closer to the North jetty.

This sand was eroded from the beach and former foredune in front of the Klahani subdivision. This erosion would not have had such dramatic, unfortunate consequences without the more recent development of shorefront homes along the eroding beach. The beach erosion has been severely exasperated by rip rap boulders placed to ostensibly protect these dwellings from storm erosion.

But beach starvation has already greatly reduced the width of the beach so that storm waves and even high tide are "trying" to access the area where homes have been built for replacement sand to bring the beach back into equilibrium.

In years past, sand from the beach was occasionally scooped up to replace the lost foredune. This was a poorly informed mistake at the time and would be a disaster now. Similar crude interventions would both further diminish the beach width and amplify storm impacts.

While there may be effective solutions to this problem, such as adding dredge sand off-shore and allowing summer waves to distribute it to the damaged beaches. Whatever mitigations are chosen, we must oppose similar development in other areas of high risk.

We can and should take a more reasonable informed approach in future decision making.

Leo Ellingson
Florence
Retired geologist

OBAMA'S REAL LEGACY

I have written to the editor several times over the political season. Nothing that I send is published. Yet I see, over and over again, "Letters to the Editor" demeaning our current President Donald Trump, calling him Orwellian or comparing him to Hitler simply because he loves America and wants to make it great again.

I want jobs to come back to our shores, and my kids to be able to support their families and to live in safety without fear of terrorism. In his eight years as president, what is President Obama's legacy?

In my opinion, he milked us dry with irresponsible spending on things like Air Force One, Air Force Two and Air Force Three (for Michelle and the family dog). Obama created the second-highest debt (\$5.9 trillion) in U.S. history, greatly weakened our military, and lost more than 1,000 seats in the federal and state government to the conservative party.

Trump is not a fluke. The overwhelming number of working Americans voted for him and the more than 1,000 other conservatives now in public office.

However, there are those that feel they should rise up against Trump and the federal government, treating him like a bully.

Trump was elected fair and square by citizens of the United States. Insurrection will be dealt with because the will of the people through the ballot box will stand.

Ralph Ray
Florence

BUM RAP

Regarding Ned Hickson's editorial "Opposition for Opposition's Sake is a Big Mistake" (Feb. 8), some congressional Democrats may talk of "opposing everything" Trump, but they have not.

No Senate Democrat has voted against every Trump cabinet nominee (NBC News). And Jeff Merkley, who got a bum rap in the editorial, voted for Mattis and Haley.

Further, the quoted statement in *Politico* that Merkley would filibuster "any and all Supreme Court Justice nominees Trump puts forward" omitted Merkley's primary position — opposing "any pick that is not Merrick Garland."

Merkley's promise to filibuster was not similar to Senate Republicans' outright refusal to consider Garland last year. Republicans defied their constitutional obligation to advise and consent on Obama's nominee.

"This is a stolen seat," Merkley told *Politico* (Jan. 30). "We will use every lever in our power to stop this."

That's not opposition for opposition's sake but a warranted check on Republican obstruction.

As the editorial advocates, Democrats have been scrutinizing cabinet nominees for their qualifications but also challenging those compromised by conflicts of interest.

Few of Trump's nominees have passed that test.

I don't see Democrats going into hearings with preconceived conclusions but with knowledge — like the rest of us have from press coverage — of the baggage most of Trump's nominees bring with them.

If Democrats persist in talking about opposing everything Trump, it's because he's handing them plenty of justification for it. Trump's bait-and-switch is evident. An anti-worker, anti-consumer, anti-average Joe and Jane administration controlled by a corporate/financial elite is taking shape.

Conflicts of interest are so many and administration actions and language so reckless that challenges are necessary, whether in Congress, the courts or in the press.

Rollin Olson
Florence

RESISTANCE IS BASED ON PRINCIPLE

Regarding Ned Hickson's editorial (Feb. 8), I agree, that being oppositional for the sake of being oppositional is counter-productive. This was accomplished by the Republicans while Barack Obama was president when, on day one and out of spite, Mitch McConnell made it clear that his goal was to make Obama a one-term president (he failed).

The next eight years were the least productive for Congress in decades. They got next to nothing done, and Republicans essentially stole the appointment of Supreme Court Justice Merrick Garland from Obama by refusing to even give the nominee a hearing.

That said, the current resistance by Democrats to appointees of Donald Trump is based on principles, not spite. Their resistance is a response to an authoritarian-style president who seems intent on destroying the U.S. Constitution and our democratic system of checks and balances.

It appears he has little, if any, understanding of either.

The Democrats are doing their job. They are representing the will of their constituents. Democrats are refusing to deal in alternative facts and the parallel universe of the current administration.

Democrats are not trying to delegitimize the current President. He does that nearly every day with his Tweet nonsense and his attempts to "gaslight" the American people.

He will take on American judges and the press, but he refuses to say a bad word about the barbarous and vicious dictator of Russia.

The vast majority of Trump's nominees are unqualified and/or inexperienced. In fact, several nominees have a goal that is in direct conflict with that of the agency they are seeking confirmation to lead.

Many Republicans are too afraid to stand up to Trump, even when they know he is wrong; the Democrats in Congress and all citizens who believe in freedom and democracy must resist.

Marybeth Marengo
Florence

GRATEFUL FOR ANONYMOUS ACTION

Recently, a check we had written to an individual for services rendered was lost.

We wanted to extend our thanks to the person who found the check in the Taco Bell parking lot and subsequently returned it to our bank.

We are grateful for the actions of this anonymous individual and will be sure to "pay it forward."

Judy and Tom Harrison
Florence