

Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
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Opinion



Finding common ground in your phone calls

they aren't seeking excuses, or reasons as to why you couldn't meet their expectations.

- They want two things:
 1) Some form of resolution.
 2) To be heard.

My wait staff always knew I was willing to address issues at a table because I viewed every situation as an opportunity to build a relationship with a guest — the kind that reaches well beyond a meal and table service.

If you can turn a dissatisfied guest around, you build a certain kind of loyalty though that shared experience.

Did I always manage that feat?

Of course not.

But I always tried.

It's the same approach I

take to your phone calls as editor. Each is an opportunity to build a relationship which, in this case, reaches beyond Wednesday's and Saturday's newspaper pages.

This morning I got a call

indicator of intent.

John had some very good points that I took to heart. Though our viewpoints differed, we could agree that these kinds of conversations are important ones and a nec-

It was the kind of conversation that left us both feeling heard and, more importantly, resolved in the sense of understanding one another's perspective.

A short time later, I got a call from "Sharon," who wanted to let me know about a troubling trend involving the destruction of certain "adopt-a-highway" signs that seemed to be politically motivated.

Eventually, our conversation turned to our joint concern about how political affiliation has begun to supersede our affiliation as Americans, within its citizenry as well as within our government.

It was clear that we had supported different candidates this past November. However,

the common ground we shared about our nation's polarization went beyond election results.

Naturally, not every phone call ends that way, any more than I was able to exceed the expectations of every guest who ate at my restaurant.

But I also know that for every conversation that didn't take place, we both lost an opportunity.

I want to thank the "Johns" and "Sharons" out there who take the time to call and provide an opportunity to turn things around — and build relationships that reach beyond these newspaper pages.

Write Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

from "John," who wanted to know why we allowed one letter writer to use the phrase "admitted anti-Semite Stephen Bannon" on our Opinion page (Feb. 18). This led to a discussion about our differing points of view on whether guilt by association is or isn't a proper

essary part of our own system of checks and balances as a community — here in Florence and beyond.

It was through this discussion that we also found other common ground, quite literally in Atlanta, where we had both spent time.

LETTERS

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.

MOVE ON AND GOVERN

I watched Donald Trump's press conference on Thursday (Feb. 17) with a mix of horror and humiliation; horror that it was an hour-long diatribe against, and denigration of, the press when its reporting is at odds with the "alternative facts" offered by the President; and humiliation at his lack of understanding when it comes to basic Constitutional guarantees.

If the press calls him out on his misinformation, he calls them "dishonest" and "fake news." If he doesn't feel the questions are friendly, he tells reporters to "sit down and shut up."

He appears to want the press to only report his spin and alternative facts, which could just as easily be considered flat out lies. The approach borders on state-run media and propaganda, not unlike Putin in Russia.

President Trump continues to relive the election. It's time for him to move on and actually govern.

If we do not have a free press to act as a check on government, pursuant to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, then our democracy and our way of life is threatened.

*Marybeth Marengo
 Florence*

NOTICEABLE CHANGE

Two recent articles in the Siuslaw News — the piece on death with dignity (Feb. 15) and the ongoing article on the affordable care act (Feb. 4 and Feb. 15) — each represent a quite noticeable change in the editorial content of the newspaper and are most welcome.

While the "Snooze" has long provided interesting coverage of local events, there has been a paucity of more in-depth reporting on more challenging subjects and the move to provide such content greatly enhances the usefulness of the publication.

We do hope this trend continues.

*Jimmie Zinn
 Florence*

NURSES RULE

I am responding to the recent article in Siuslaw News about the nursing staff at our

local PeaceHealth Hospital (Feb. 18) wanting equal pay and better health benefits, as well as recruitment and retention of nurses — concerns that don't seem to be addressed or provided by at the corporate level.

I worked for 15 years as an interior architectural designer in the health-care field, working on projects large and small. Some included the Houston VA Hospital, Native Health Care Clinic in Chinle, Ariz., King Khalid Military City Hospital in Saudi Arabia and the original Stanford Children's Hospital.

I also worked for two years as a construction project manager at Stanford University Hospital. Designing a new hospital or doing a \$1 million-plus renovation, I have had to interface with everyone from hospital administrators, physicians, nursing staff and housekeeping.

I discovered two things.

First, it can be very political.

And second, nurses rule because they are the keepers.

Administration is a 9 to 5 job as are most physicians, unless they are surgeons. Nursing is a 24-hour job. I have experienced nurses working required 12-hour shifts and they are not paid hourly but are salaried.

Our nurses should be compensated with a guaranteed salary with overtime being paid over their agreed work hours, as well as comprehensive health benefits and paid vacation time.

How can we keep the present staff and then recruit and retain new nurses without these needed compensation and benefits?

In addition, my wife and I have lived in Florence for 17 years and I am now on my sixth doctor. Hopefully, PeaceHealth will attempt to recruit and retain doctors who want to practice here.

*Win Jolley
 Florence*

APPROPRIATE INDIGNATION

I am so grateful to have heard Arun Gandhi speak at LCC (Feb. 16), sponsored by the Lane Peace Center. His message of non-violence could not have been more relevant as a reasoned foundation for a call to action in response to current local, national and global realities.

It is now more important than ever that we empower local dialogue, non-violent action and authorize local law-making. That's because not only can we *not* count on the federal govern-

ment for help, but I feel the new administration is making life in our communities increasingly more difficult and dangerous.

By invigorating corporations to engage in environmentally destructive practices, by fueling racial tensions and dividing families by deporting individual members, by attacking labor unions, etc., the feds are begging for a response from "We, the People" at the local level — where we live.

Our indignation is obvious and appropriate. Community Rights Lane County will continue to challenge unjust laws that favor corporations by empowering local citizens to write and pass laws that protect our health, safety and welfare.

This is non-violent democracy in action.

We empower ourselves and our communities as we strive for social, economic, racial and environmental justice — because there is no justice when our government and our laws embolden corporations to put profits over people and planet.

*Michelle Holman
 Deadwood*

SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS

As I read about the accelerated and deeply troubling reports concerning the deportation of undocumented immigrants, I struggle with my own anger about this deplorable program.

It is personal to me because of the following story.

I was an administrator at the highly-respected and well-known prep school Viewpoint in

Calabasas, Calif., when two new students were enrolled in my division and began as middle schoolers the same September.

One was a very privileged child whose father was a boisterous television personality at the time and has since become President of the United States.

The other girl was the daughter of undocumented immigrants and who had earned a full scholarship to attend our school.

Her parents had left Peru seeking a better life for themselves and their daughter. They are college-educated and had moved legally to the United States, but their work visas expired when they lost their jobs after 9/11.

Both girls graduated and went on to attend fine universities (one again on a much-needed full scholarship) and have earned their degrees.

Today one appears on magazine covers and sat in the President's box at the Inauguration parade while the other, with her family, faces the real possibility of deportation.

She has spoken out eloquently on the deportation issue. She is strong and will not be silenced. And I fear for her and her family.

The good people of the United States need to join voices with hers and support our hard-working immigrants, including those who are undocumented.

It is an important opportunity for us to stand against what I feel is a disgraceful injustice ordered by the Trump administration.

*Judith Preisler
 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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