

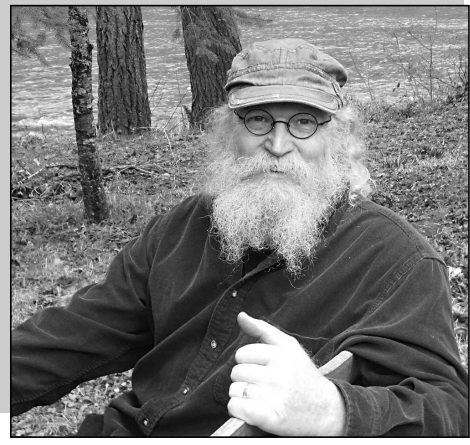
Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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



Just what does it matter?

WESLEY VOTH
 For the Siuslaw News

always thought light triggered their movements, but apparently not. Meanwhile, band-tailed pigeons are back earlier than ever; does this mean, I wonder, changes in Baja California where they spend their winters?

Who owns the wildlife? Or, maybe, who protects it? The answer to this is important as part of the larger political questions being hotly debated at the moment. In the U.S., the simple legal answer to the first question is that the state in which the wildlife resides holds title to that wildlife as part of the public trust. In the case of most migratory wildlife or marine mammals, the federal government takes on the role. Some species get a little trickier, like wolves. And there are species with special status because it has been determined by a court that they are endangered. The idea is that it breaks public trust to allow the altering of habitat to such an extent that a particular species disappears forever, or from a place where it has always lived.

States tend to divide wildlife into game or furbearing versus all of the rest, and manage

hunting, fishing and trapping funded by licenses and fees. "All of the rest" has proved a little harder to both fund and manage.

There are also animals considered vermin or nuisance, and different states handle those things differently. So, it is The People's wildlife, one way or another. I like the sound of "The People's wolves" but hold at the same time that they are wild and laws unto themselves. They will never survive if public lands become private, if the other native plant and animal communities on those public lands are compromised, if the consequences for killing one of The People's wolves is not sufficiently severe. If the animals belong to us, it is our responsibility to care for them and the habitat they need to survive. If we do that adequately in every place, there is hope for the earth and The People's place on it.

Part of the current political argument is over just who The People are, and what is the nature of The People's government. Something I thought was well established is that it's The People's air and water, and that's why the EPA was created — to police its quality.

Regulations that are in danger of being bypassed, thwarted, reduced and undone are The People's regulations. To protect our inter-

ests. It is part of being a nation of laws.

I have been to some of the Florence ORganizes meetings, these building on the enthusiasm and energy of the Women's March and the causes supporters are for. At one meeting, we divided up according to the issues we each were most passionate about. One woman's simple explanation about why her focus was the environment I found particularly moving: "If we don't save the earth, nothing else matters."

She added that she was doing this for her children and grandchildren. Another woman said nothing, but wore a tee-shirt that read "Water is Life."

I have those same words on the cover of my computer, where I see them every day, but also in a different language — the one first spoken here. Water is Life in the Siuslaw language is chii taiyuu. How to pronounce these words I have not yet learned, but I hope to.

The words aren't new, or intended as a slogan. They are old and as central a tenet to understanding the earth as God is Love is to grasping the Christian faith. And so they are a needed reminder of what is at the heart of each respectively.

LETTERS

INDIVIDUAL DECISION

Reading the three-part article about the Oregon Death with Dignity Act (Feb. 15, 22 and March 1), I am a bit confused. If I have a First Directive, am I required to be of sound mind and have a doctor tell me that I have only six months to live so I can sign the required documents before I want to die?

I understand that I have (illegal) options with The Final Exit and Hemlock Society, but there are other options. For example, I can grow a hemlock plant and eat the berries and leaves, purchase cyanide online or turn my pistol on myself.

Seems like the ODDA needs to revise the law and exclude any religious or social bias. It is an individual's decision and not a society's.

Win Jolley
 Florence

BE A 'FRIEND'

When it came time for my wife and me to find a place for retirement, one of the main reasons we selected Florence was the beautiful Florence Events Center. Over the past nearly 19 years, we have enjoyed many hours at this fine facility both as event attendees as well as performers.

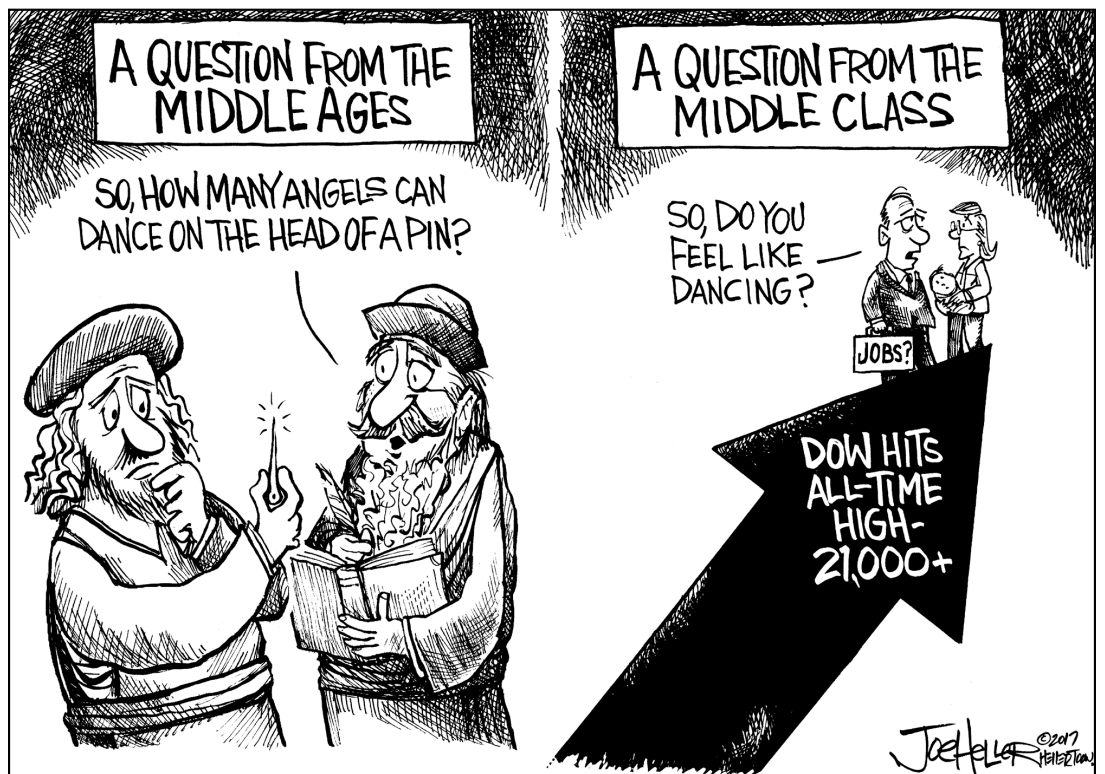
When I became aware of the volunteer-based Friends of the Florence Events Center (FFEC), I joined up to help this organization, which does so many things in keeping the FEC running smoothly with just the barest of paid support staff. Besides providing volunteer labor for everything from ushering events to putting down the dance floors as they did for last Sunday's SEA presentation, the FFEC provides a very valuable service in providing the FEC with much-needed funds.

Recently, the facility has added two new digital projectors and screens for the flat floor and just completed the project to install another digital projector and large stage screen in the theater. Planning is underway to improve the sound system. Also in the planning stage is the replacement of the energy inefficient incandescent stage lighting with state-of-the-art and environmentally-friendly LED lighting.

All of this, of course, takes money — lots of money. The FFEC raises funds for these projects in a number of ways, the most recent being the very successful "Dancing with Sea Lions."

Other fundraising events underwritten by the FFEC include the popular indoor garage sales, the Festival of Books and the Winter Music Festival among others.

To make this money requires volunteers willing to do event planning/coordination, provide communications and serve on various committees. Over the past couple of years, the number



of volunteers to provide this support has dropped steadily.

Attendance at the monthly FFEC meetings is comprised of the same six or seven volunteers, plus FEC staff members. This is not sufficient to enable the FFEC to adequately plan on continuing some of these events.

In short: we need help. Webster's Dictionary defines a friend as "one attached to another by affection or esteem." I need friends. You need friends. The FEC needs friends.

Consider becoming a Friend of the Florence Events Center and outwardly demonstrate your affection and appreciation for what this facility continues to bring to our community. FFEC brochures are available in the lobby or stop at the box office and ask for Kevin or Jennifer. They will be more than happy to talk to you.

Kenneth Janowski
 Florence

TRACKING THE RUSSIAN BEAR

"Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections," a 25-page unclassified summary of the highly sensitive report, (New York Times, Jan. 6, 2017), details how the CIA,

NSA and the FBI concluded the Russians were involved to some degree in the 2016 U.S. election for the purpose of electing Donald Trump as president.

On March 1, the New York Times reported "American allies, including the British and the Dutch, had provided information describing meetings in European cities between Russian officials — and others close to Russian president Vladimir Putin — and associates of President-elect Donald Trump..." (from the article: "Obama Administration Rushed to Preserve Intelligence of Russian Election Hacking.")

The intervention of an authoritarian foreign power in U.S. elections is not a partisan issue. It is not simply a political issue.

It is a national security issue of the gravest import.

Those in Congress, whether Republican or Democrat, must put patriotism first and appoint an Independent Counsel to investigate this dangerous corruption of our electoral process.

Russia's efforts to help elect its chosen candidate threaten the very foundation of our democracy.

Rosalie Wells
 Florence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. 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, argumentative and anonymous letters or poetry will not be published.

POLITICAL/ELECTION LETTERS:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large. The newspaper does not publish partisan letters that promote or endorse local political candidates based solely on their record, reputation and qualifications; this constitutes paid political advertising.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes. This also constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any such letter.

The newspaper is particularly sensitive to organized "letter-writing campaigns." The newspaper reserves the right to reject any such letter.

Write to: editor@thesiuslawnews.com

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