

Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

VIEW FROM UPRIVER

We won't see the likes of these again

WESLEY VOTH
 For Siuslaw News

last and largest block of 150-year-old trees remaining in the Coast Range.

Part of the reason is that logging there has been largely halted due to environmental concerns, and now instead of providing revenue for schools has become a drain on state resources to manage. Those trees are part of the Elliott State Forest, about as far to the east and slightly north from Coos Bay as Mapleton is from Florence.

Although the legacies and issues involved are complicated, I believe it is in the greatest public good that those trees, and the golden eggs only they can produce, be kept alive and in public ownership.

Some 300,000 coastal forest acres, including most of what is now the 90,000-acre Elliott, burned in a huge fire within a decade of statehood. The forest regenerated naturally; half of the Elliott are the 150-year-old trees still left unlogged from that time, now the oldest and best preserved forest of such trees in Oregon's Coast Range.

Our state was originally created by a U.S. Congress arguing over whether slavery should be limited to places where it already existed, or should allow westward-moving citizens to be free to take all their portable property with them that they saw fit.

The compromise was a so-called Black Exclusionary Clause in our original constitution designed to keep out of Oregon all the people covered under that clause, slave or free.

That same Congress also granted the new state 3.4 million acres of range and forest lands to fund schools, to be managed by a State Land Board consisting of Oregon's governor, treasurer and secretary of state. For the vote on Oregon's 158th birthday, the three of these were all new to their positions and this board: Kate Brown, Tobias Read and Dennis Richardson.

A century and a half, and hundreds of land swaps and reconfigurations between our state and its counties and the federal government later, Oregon retains ownership of about one fifth of that original acreage, much of it in the form of six state forests. According to our state Blue Book in its section on the subject, "Revenues from these lands are dedicated to

the Common School Fund; a trust fund for kindergarten through grade 12 public schools. Distributions from the fund's earnings are sent twice a year to the state's 197 school districts. The State Land Board and the department also are charged with protecting public rights to use state-owned waterways for navigation, fishing, commerce and recreation."

Kate Brown, as chair of this three-member board, stated "It is clear to me that it is in the best interest of Oregonians to ensure public ownership of the Elliott State Forest. The importance of state-owned lands has increased as the future of federal public lands has come into question." She has argued for time to come up with a better solution, and tasked state land managers to keep working on a public option solution.

There will be another meeting of this board on May 9 (moved from April 11.) It is thought by many that the only chance to save these trees is to convince state treasurer Tobias Read to change his position and side with the governor.

I plan to be part of that effort.

For those who have the same concerns, I hope you'll join me.



Two disparate days of sunshine last weekend provided a nice contrast to the succession of drenching days that have contributed to the 100-plus inches of rain that have fallen in Mapleton since October. In the places where Pacific chorus frogs still breed, the sound now is, well... ribbiting. The first trilliums are awake, salmonberry blossoms and the flowers of flowering currant are magenta and coral pink, respectively — and I have heard the first robins sing their enthusiasm for what a wonderful place this will be to nest.

Back on Valentine's Day, Oregon marked 158 years as a state. One of the things that happened that day was that two of the three members of our State Land Board voted to sell the

LETTERS

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

In response to Donald Frerichs' Letter to the Editor (March 8), he stated "I suspect Mr. Eales knows little about teachers and public education." When I hire high school graduates who don't know that one-half and 50 percent are the same, I say the education system is failing.

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

He went on to say, "Never mind the considerable, widespread underfunding of schools..." when, in fact, Oregon spends 53 percent of its budget on education (Governor's Budget 2017-19).

The country is on the hook for a \$1 trillion in student loans (\$966 billion Current Debt, plus \$334 billion in Delinquent Debt.)

How much is enough?

We spend ever increasing amounts, make the education system larger and more complex and yet performance still declines.

I think Albert Einstein's "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results" applies here.

According to Mr. Frerichs, he began teaching in 1957, two years after Rudolf Flesch published "Why Johnny Can't Read."

In the ensuing 60 years, Johnny hasn't learned to spell or do his sums either.

Very sad.

Ian Eales
 Florence

NOT THE GOVERNOR'S URBAN BASE

Though I thought the point of Thursday's town hall meeting with Gov. Kate Brown was to get a feel for the climate and concerns of rural communities, it was my feeling — and that of many others in attendance — that the true feelings of the majority of Florence citizens weren't even close to being represented.

According to Lane County Elections, the three precincts making up our Florence and Dunes City areas cast their majority of votes for a Republican president, Republican Secretary of State, Republican State Treasurer and for Kate Brown's opponent, Republican Bud Pierce.

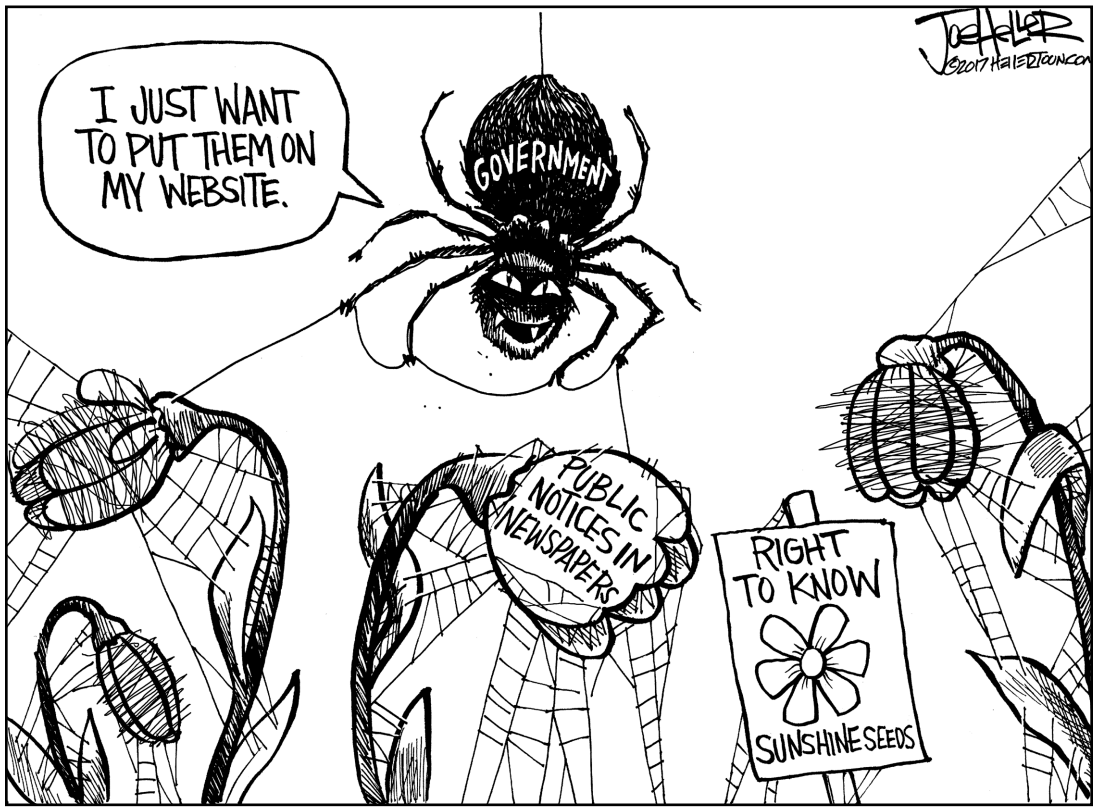
Since the meeting topics leaned to her agenda, it did not represent, nor "tally" the views, of the Florence majority.

It was implied that Florence' most pressing issues were saving the environment and being a sanctuary state.

Florence is truly "In motion" and bigger issues, like the crippling effects of the SJR3 tax increase on business and rental property, are of more interest.

But we were not called upon.

Gov. Brown must have felt that she was



speaking to her urban base when she referenced "those rich doctors and lawyers" in a statement.

She certainly did not say a single thing that made me feel she was making the lives of rural Oregonians better in any way — unless you are on PERS.

All in all, she apparently feels she has a mandate.

And she does, in Portland, Eugene and Astoria. However, in Florence and the other 80 percent of Oregon (based on precincts), she does not.

I guess we're on our own.

Sherry Harvey
 Florence

DEFLECTING TRUTH

Before Donald Trump became our president he was able to build a financial empire on just name recognition and was rewarded for this by people paying for his name to be placed on their buildings.

It's just like Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods making millions from endorsements.

Now, our President is being scrutinized by what he calls the "false" press, which questions him as they are obligated to do.

He replies in Tweets to reports he doesn't like, such as the ongoing investigation about ties with the Russians, and attempts to deflect the issue by accusing Barack Obama of wiretapping Trump Towers without any evidence.

Other times, he has Kellyanne Conway with her "Alternative Facts" say that microwave ovens have cameras that might be spying on us.

If that's the case, maybe we should all stick our heads in our microwave ovens and take selfies?

Win Jolley
 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.

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