

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

# 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



## Not left, not right — but straight

WESLEY VOTH  
 For the Siuslaw News

swallow, the one that most often uses our nest boxes. Typically, they make it by the first day of spring. This year by that date, they were already exploring the boxes, thinking about being fruitful and multiplying. Sensibly, they plan their parenthood: first, choose a mate; then, build the nest when food is abundant; then, lay the eggs and incubate them.

If all goes well and the eggs hatch, they care for them with all their might. If all does not go well during incubation — conditions around the nest change, food becomes scarce or one of the parents dies — the nest is abandoned.

The wonderful pink or coast fawn lilies that seem to appear in fewer local places each year are now in bloom, prominent in one public place that I know of along Sweet Creek Falls trail, including a wonderful patch near a bench at the beginning and easiest part of path. Of all of the variations of fawn lilies I've seen, the ones around here are the most striking: large pointed green leaves with purple "fawn" blotches, a 6- to 8-inch swan-necked slender stem with a single hanging deep pink, six-tined flower — and then inside, deep yellow delicate parts.

The first of the big leaf maple edible blossoms are emerging on the limb tips of Mapleton's signature trees, and it won't be

long before the resurrection ferns and mosses on the trunks and branches of these beauties begin to brown before going into their shaded summer siestas beneath the deeply darkened leaf canopy.

Kim Stafford has published a small new collection entitled, "The Flavor of Unity: Post-Election Poems." In case you don't know Kim, he did a local oral history project here in 1975-76, interviewing such Mapleton old timers as Bill Karnowsky and Hazel and Charlie Camp, which are still available from our library.

According to Elizabeth Flock of PBS News Hour, Kim wrote this book to answer the question raised by the Inca Kola slogan: "What is the flavor of unity?" that he saw on the side of a truck.

Kim says, "What is it that really unifies people? For me it's something about home ground, the earth, our common treasure of wind and tree and grass and light and water.

"Because we are all earth citizens."

In the first common words of the Judeo-Christian scriptures, God creates the heavens and the earth. In successive days realms of habitation are created, in the sea, on the earth, and in the air. Creatures for each realm are created, and their food, and God sees that it is good. And tells these creatures to be fruitful and multiply. Last of all, humankind is created in God's image, to be caretakers of the earth

and its creatures. In the commonly understood summary of God's expectations for humankind, the first admonition is to love God with all of our heart, mind and soul (which I understand to at least mean do the work for which we were created), and the second admonition is to love our neighbor as we do ourselves.

If I seem to care more about the earth, or more about birds than I do people, that is actually the order of the commandments.

Destroying, or allowing the destruction of any habitat critical to one of God's creatures is a slap in God's face. Ultimately, when we take care of the earth, we take care of each other; the way in which we take care of the earth is the way we take care of each other.

*The flavor that makes us one cannot be bought or sold, does not belong to a country, cannot enrich the rich or be denied to the poor. The flavor that makes us one emanates from the earth... The flavor that makes us one we must feed to one another with songs, kind words, and human glances across the silent square.*

— From the title poem in "The Flavor of Unity"

For me, the natural rhythms of the seasons and the local heralds of the changes in light ground me to the earth, to what matters most, and connect me to the people who first lived here and noted such things.

And, connect me to the Creator.

It is a mystery to me how and why caring about the earth and the environment, clean air and water, has become more identified with "liberal" than "conservative" values; I learned these as Lesson 1, part of the first commandment, from my decidedly conservative forebearers.

The first swallows of the season showed up at our place this year on March 19, coincidentally the same date — St. Joseph's Day — that cliff swallows famously arrive each year at San Juan Capistrano in southern California. This year, as usual, the first of the five species that we commonly see here was the violet-green

### LETTERS

#### APPRECIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter (ECWS) program would like to thank the people of Florence for their overwhelming

support of our work this past winter.

Each time we opened there were donations of supplies, food and money to assure that we could be open and operating. Local businesses came to our aid, particularly Safeway, Grocery Outlet, Big Dog Donuts and Peace Harbor Hospital, which provided generous help through the winter.

In all, the shelters were open 22 nights and averaged 13 to 14 people per night. On the two coldest nights of the season, we had a total of 52 guests.

We would also like to thank Jennifer Weier for playing a magnificent concert as our spring fundraiser.

We are deeply appreciative of the support we have received and look forward to serving the Florence area next winter.

Greg Wood  
 ECWS board president  
 Florence

#### NO ONE SINGLED OUT

I was saddened to read in the March 25 edition of Siuslaw News that Florence City Councilman Priesler's motion to make Florence a "sanctuary city" was met with such resistance. You might believe that the designation would give thousands of dangerous criminals safe harbor, even right here in our own town.

But that is not true.

Local police will never let a criminal, regardless of immigration status, escape the "long arm of the law." In fact, upholding the precepts of a "sanctuary city" guarantees that local police will have the resources to investigate local crimes and arrest and jail the perpetrators, regardless of immigration status.

Oregon is not allowing criminals to hide in this state, flout the law and go unpunished. If you don't believe me, go up and ask any police officer and they will certainly tell you that if they see someone commit a crime, they will arrest them.

The right to be free in our person is one of the founding principles of our Constitution.

The right to live peacefully in our homes; the right to travel; the right to be presumed innocent as we go about the business of our day.

No one should be singled out for scrutiny based on their last name or color of their skin.

Standing up for this most basic principle of our Constitution should be something the city council and mayor are proud to do, especially in the face of unprecedented intimidation by the current administration.

Sandy Todd  
 Florence

#### INSIGHT INTO LIVES OF IMMIGRANTS

I believe that many people have a misunderstanding about what being a felon or criminal is when it comes to "illegal immigrants," or immigrants at all for that matter.

My intention isn't to start an argument with others, but maybe provide them with an insight into what it is to live as an immigrant in the U.S.

I am now a U.S. citizen and have the privilege to come out of the shadows to help speak for those who can't or are afraid to do so.

There are many things that people don't know about us and many believe that we are felons because we crossed the border illegally. Maybe we are. But aside from that, the majority of us try to follow the laws and have been doing so for many years.

I know I may not change the thinking and opinions of others, especially those who won't take a chance to listen.

But maybe some insight into the lives of immigrants — illegal as well as those who are now citizens — could offer some perspective.

Karla Sanders  
 Florence

#### STATE DEPARTMENT CUTS PUT AMERICANS AT RISK

I am in total agreement with everything in Marybeth Marengo's Letter to the Editor (Siuslaw News, March 22). I'd like to offer my perspective regarding what I feel is the gutting of the State Department.

My son (who was born and raised in the Florence area) and his wife both work in the State Department's Foreign Service. Every two to three years, they move to a different country and currently they live in Nairobi, Kenya, and work at the American Embassy.

For 12 years, they have faithfully and lovingly represented America all over the world; there is a good reason they are called diplomats.

This is especially true now as they find themselves in the position of having to explain the current controversies under the Trump Administration.

The State Department requires Foreign Service Employees to return to America for 30 days every two years. This August, they will return to the U.S. for four weeks with their two sons. When they return to their jobs, they will be moving to Brussels, Belgium, which will be their new post for the next two years.

However, because of the hiring freeze imposed on the State Department by the Trump Administration, my son will no longer be working for the actual State Department. Instead, to remain employed, he will be transferring to NATO. My daughter-in-law will no longer be employed as there is no position available for her.

After 12 dedicated years representing America overseas in various countries, she is now going to be unemployed. This is a direct result of President Trump's job freeze, which included cutting at least 31 percent of the State Department's budget. These people represent America — they represent us. Their jobs can have a direct effect on the safety of Americans traveling overseas.

I can tell you that, overseas, people are not just laughing at us; we are also making enemies. I pray not only for our country, but for all Americans who represent us overseas.

Gail Katz Hanson  
 Florence

#### LIFTING THE LAMP

The plaque on the statue of liberty reads: "Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she with silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe, free the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

— Emma Lazarus (1849-1887)

Most of the Latino families are not rich and are here to work, pay taxes and have a better life. I believe Emma Lazarus would agree.

Keith J. Walker  
 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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