

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.



Autism awareness can lower a few raised eyebrows

physical contact like a firm handshake.

“And whatever you do, don’t touse his hair,” she instructed with a squeeze of my hand. “He really doesn’t like that.”

Autism is a neurological developmental disability with symptoms generally appearing before age 3, impacting the development of the brain in areas of social interaction, communication skills and cognitive function.

It is the fastest-growing developmental disorder, affecting 1 in 68 children, and boys are four times more likely to have autism than girls.

While it is the fastest-growing, autism is also the least

funded and, therefore, least understood disorder. The spectrum of autism is wide ranging, from those who do not speak (40 percent) to others

of Florence. The mission of the Autism Rocks camp is a simple one: For four days, let those with autism and their families be who they are, free

labeled as being “bratty,” “undisciplined” or simply the result of bad parenting.

While our son, now 17, is well beyond that thanks to the support of teachers, students, family and programs that have given him the tools to understand his Asperger’s, getting there wasn’t easy — particularly in those public moments under the raised-brow stare of strangers.

Through the triumphs and disappointments over the last 10 years, we have always reinforced the message to our son that being autistic isn’t any different than being short or tall: Each provide challenges as well as advantages in life. Being willing to accept your-

self for who you are is the key to recognizing the difference.

Through my 17 years covering the communities of Florence and Mapleton, I’ve had the privilege of meeting many parents of children with autism, as well as adults living with autism.

As I mentioned, I didn’t know much about autism when my son and I met in 2006. Since then, we’ve learned a lot from each other through the journey we’ve shared — including what it means for a father and son to share a firm handshake.

I hope you’ll join me in recognizing National Autism Awareness Month now through April 30.

I knew very little about the autism spectrum back in 2006, when I met the young boy who would become my son. My wife and I had been dating for several months when we decided it was time to introduce each other to our children. She explained that he had Asperger’s Syndrome and likely wouldn’t make eye contact — and to not take it personally if he avoided any

From the Editor’s Desk

NED HICKSON

who not only speak but whose talents have impacted the world: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, James Joyce, Albert Einstein, Emily Dickinson, Thomas Jefferson and Dan Akroyd are just a few.

Each summer, our family participates in the four-day KindTree Autism Camp south

from stares, apology or judgment. That’s because oftentimes the symptoms of autism aren’t as apparent as other developmental disorders. As a result, children with autism having a difficult time in social settings — or in extreme cases having a full meltdown — are quickly

LETTERS

FOLLOW FEDERAL STATUTES

At the Monday Florence City Council meeting, the issue of Florence as a “sanctuary city” was discussed during public comment. The chambers were packed to overflowing with most in attendance against the sanctuary city concept of illegal immigrants with sanctuary from Federal officials.

At the end of the public comment nothing changed. Though it was good to discuss the issue, the status quo was preserved and Florence is part of a sanctuary state which the mayor and council are unfortunately upholding.

Mayor Henry should direct the council to follow federal statutes and increase public safety for Florence citizens.

I believe immigration law enforcement in the United States is a critical issue regarding

national sovereignty, particularly regarding our language, culture and borders.

The President has rightly said a country without borders is no longer a country. Recently, an executive order was signed, empowering local authorities to protect the public by helping to enforce legal vs. illegal immigration.

The Mayor and other city officials supported the idea that, according to Oregon State statute, President Trump’s order would be countermanded by the state and therefore become null and void.

Instead of making a definitive statement by quoting an ineffective and archaic law, why not lobby our local legislators and the state Attorney General to help change the law in the name of protecting the public?

It would be much better to be proactive on this issue without standing back and repeating a statute that needs changing.

Action is what is needed here in Florence and I hope that it will be action that the good citizenry of Florence receive.

God bless Florence and yes, God bless America.

Joel Marks
 Florence

NOT GLORIFYING WAR

As the President of Deeds of Valor, Inc. I feel that I need to respond to the presentation made by Nan Harvey at the April 3 City Council Meeting.

Deeds of Valor, Inc. was formed to establish a vehicle to do good deeds for veterans as well as the citizens of the greater Florence area. Our first project has been the creation of a Gateway/Park at the entrance to the Florence Municipal Airport. We have no intentions of “glorifying war” and deifying the brutal acts of war, but to honor our local veterans who have served our country with pride and dignity.

We will be naming the Gateway after a great American who most of the community know little about. Brigadier General Benjamin King was an unsung hero of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. His proud deeds and distinguished military record will be shared in a public display. Gen. King lived the last years of his life in Florence.

Florence is a military town with a large population of veterans. It is striving to be designated as a “Coast Guard Town,” a distinct honor for any city.

The park will honor all veterans, not just those associated with aviation. Gen. King is just a representative of all those proud veterans of the Florence area who have served their country. I personally and publicly invite Mrs. Harvey to meet with our board of directors and learn more about the mission and purpose of the Deeds of Valor, Inc. and possibly come to agreement that we all want to honor and respect those gallant men and women in our communi-

ty who have served our country’s Armed Forces throughout the years.

Sam Spayd
 President, Deeds of Valor, Inc.

ILLEGAL IS ILLEGAL

I along with maybe 45 to 50 other folks attended the Florence City Council meeting Monday night (April 3). Most were there to express their views regarding the possibility of the mayor and council members considering proclaiming the City of Florence to be a “sanctuary city.”

Out of the number attending, I think there were only two or three people proclaiming they would support such a move. The rest of the large group (with the mayor saying this was the biggest group he had seen in a long time) was totally against such a move.

Thousands of words could be uttered regarding the situation, mostly con but a few pro. But it can be summed up with very few words actually: Illegal aliens are just that — illegal. They are illegal by virtue of entering this country without proper permission.

The mayor and City Council have taken an oath to uphold the laws of this country, and the law says aliens here without proper authorization are here illegally.

Period. The Mayor and City Council have no choice but to follow the law and not proclaim Florence a “sanctuary city” should it be requested.

I also believe it would be a slap in the face to the large percentage of the military veterans living in Florence and the many others living in surrounding areas who have sworn to protect this country and uphold its laws.

I say again: The choice should be a very simple one.

Tony Cavarno
 Florence

WOMEN’S HISTORY

The front page article in the Wednesday, March 29, edition of Siuslaw News was greatly appreciated.

Mark Brennan’s sharing of the importance of Abigail Scott Duniway and her effort toward securing the right to vote for women in Oregon was perfect for celebrating Women’s History Month.

Abigail was a true pioneer who traveled over the Oregon Trail by wagontrain with her family in 1852, at the tender age of 17. Although she had very little formal schooling, she was a gifted writer and kept the family diary along the trail.

She married at 18, after becoming a teacher near present day Eola. Her significant role is commemorated by the Abigail Scott Duniway Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), in Stayton, Ore.

I hope all who saw the article will appreci-

ate the accomplishments of early feminists to help women gain equal footing in our society.

Jacquie Beveridge
 Oregon Dunes Chapter DAR
 Florence

HATE-FREE COMMUNITY

Saturday’s front page story by Jack Davis in the Siuslaw News (April 1) was a “must read.” That ICE officers came to Florence to round up residents for possible deportation illustrates the dangerous path our country is taking.

At least one person taken from his home had no criminal record, according to the story. Daniel Rendon was by all accounts a good neighbor, an employed worker and was studying to become more fluent in English.

Yet Bryan Wilcox [ICE Seattle office] said they were pursuing targeted criminals to promote public safety.

How does Mr. Rendon fit this profile? Any person with a criminal record, excluding entering the United States without documentation, can now expect the possibility of ICE action here in Oregon.

At the April 3 City Council meeting, several people voiced opinions about undocumented residents, ICE and “sanctuary cities.” One speaker called for a “hate-free community.”

What a moral and compassionate suggestion. But other speakers saw things differently and clearly were not of the mind to ascribe to such an idea. I have a sign in my front yard that states “In My America, Love Wins.”

Let’s hope that racism, fear and hate really do lose, and that love wins in America — and especially in Florence.

Judith Preisler
 Florence

SOFTEN BLOWS TO CLIMATE

Let’s quit bickering and come together to make changes that soften the blows from climate change while we still can. Our lives and livelihoods depend on it. Keeping our heads in the sand will not make climate change go away, no matter how much we pretend it will.

The Clean Energy Jobs Bill, S.B. 557, would cap the amount of carbon that large polluters are emitting, eventually lowering the cap each year. Thirty-five percent of that money would be reinvested into rural and low-income areas, communities of color and impacted workers traditionally left behind. It would support clean energy jobs training to create jobs in energy efficiency upgrades on homes and businesses, installing and designing solar and wind installations, expanding public transit and more.

It’s time we contact our state Representatives and get involved.

Robin Bloomgarden
 Eugene

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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