

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.

LETTERS

SUPPORT BILL MEYER

I will be voting for Bill Meyer for Port of Siuslaw Commissioner Position 5. He has a background of public service as a board member for the Three Rivers School District in the Grants Pass Area.

He and his wife have lived here in Florence for the past 10 years. Meyer understands how an effective board is supposed to operate and has no preconceived agenda — I believe he just wants the Port of Siuslaw to be the best it can be and has the skill set to help guide the port in achieving that goal.

As a former mayor of both Florence and Dunes City, I encourage others to join me in voting for Bill Meyer for Port of Siuslaw Commissioner Position 5.

*Rob Ward
 Florence*

PORT IS AN EMBARRASSMENT

If it weren't such a serious matter, I would find it comical how the current Port of Siuslaw board "super majority" apparently manipulated the bidding process for its insurance agent of record.

Now the port is being asked to shell out thousands of dollars in damages. Here's a bit of history demonstrating how this came about:

In the 2013 special election, there were 4 seats up for election, which is very unusual, but was a result of a temporary appointee replacing Sally Owens, who decided to not run for election. In that election, Ron Caputo, Terry Duman and Jay Cable were all elected on a pro-commercial fishing platform, thus becoming the board majority — with Nancy Rickard elected on a more global economic development platform.

Then-commissioner Bill Fleenor was the only commissioner not up for re-election.



Subsequent to their election, the new board majority refused to take required training regarding board governance and other port-related activities.

Commissioner Fleenor resigned during the last part of his term to avoid a potential conflict of interest. At that point, David Huntington was appointed to the board to finish out Fleenor's term.

In essence, this created a 4-commissioner pro-commercial fishing "super board majority." Commissioner Cable resigned shortly after Fleenor's departure (for personal reasons) and the board then appointed Terry Duman's brother-in-law, Mike Buckwald, to succeed Cable.

This preserved a pro-commercial fishing majority.

The port has been losing money, with no real plan or hope in sight for a financial turnaround despite their campaign promises.

Instead of representing the people of the Port District's interest, I feel the super majority has been catering to its own self-interests by ignoring policies and rules affecting themselves and their friends. In addition, they have been appointing relatives to serve and further their own interests.

Now, finally, they have been caught red handed rigging the bidding process for a vital port service, resulting in the direct benefit to one port commissioner.

Unfortunately, this is what happens when power is consolidated in a very narrow-minded and focused special interest group.

On May 16, the people of the district have a chance to change the rigged system at the port by voting out incumbents Duman and Buckwald and electing a new slate of candidates to help turn our port away from hitting the shoals and sinking the ship.

I will be voting for Shayne Burnem, Frank Eisele and Bill Fleenor.

*Jay Nefcy
 Florence*

PET PARK NEEDS IMPROVEMENTS

Maybe not so much here on the coast because of the accessibility of so much wooded and beach acreage, but to cities like Eugene and Portland the local dog park is a godsend. To our

canine companions, a walk on the beach is like Disneyland.

For the rest of us, it's like training for a triathlon.

Singing Pines Dog Park is a perfect compromise — except that the abundance of rain this winter and spring has produced a mud hole right down the center of the park that never drains.

My dog loves mud; she's a Lab. However, this particular mud isn't great. In fact, it stinks.

Literally.

That's because, being in the middle of the park, dogs leave their mark in all sorts of ways in it. It resembles something more akin to a cesspool than a European mud bath as urine, feces and other bodily fluids have created a primordial sludge rather than mud.

There's no telling how the bacteria are paying for such luxury accommodations.

My question is why this hasn't been fixed? If funds are an issue, I've spoken with many of the regulars to the park and they agree that paying a reasonable monthly fee would be worth it if it meant keeping the park properly maintained.

Holding fundraisers are an option. Some have mentioned putting in agility equipment; jumps and weaves (this might require adding a little more space — if possible).

Though summer is coming, it's an issue that's going to return before we know it.

*Mark Elliott
 Mapleton*

ONE HAS TO WONDER

Florence wants to be a number one place to vacation. But when I read the police reports published in Siuslaw News I have to wonder why anyone would come here?

*Del Riesenhuber
 Dunes City*

FOR MUENZER ON LCC BOARD

Most people in Florence know that there is a branch campus of Lane Community College, located next to Siuslaw High School, that offers wonderful opportunities for young and old to take credit courses or community education classes.

Not so well known is that access to higher

education for young people in Oregon is starting to become more affordable because of the 2015 Oregon Promise Bill, supported by both State Senator Arnie Roblan and State Representative Caddy McKeown.

Students who qualify can attend a community college for only \$50 in tuition per term. Currently there are more than 300 students in this program at LCC.

Sharon Stiles, who recently retired from the LCC Board of Education, deserves our gratitude for her years of work on the board, and especially for her advocacy of the Florence campus and its programs.

She understood the importance of access to a community college in a town such as Florence, outside the Eugene urban area.

Fortunately, Melanie Muenzer has been appointed to fill the remaining few months of Stiles' term, and is hoping to continue in this position (LCC Board, Zone 1) after the May 16 Special Election. In my opinion, this could not be a better fit for continuity in representation of the Florence campus on the LCC Board. Among other things, Muenzer has worked as an appointee to the U.S. Department of Education to increase funding for career and technical education, student aid, and other programs supporting low-income students.

*Karin Radtke
 Yachats*

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We at Siuslaw News feel it is particularly important during this special election to be as unbiased and transparent as possible on our Opinion page. To that end, we have revised the "political letters" portion of our "Letters to the Editor" policy in an effort to improve clarity and consistency with our guidelines.

As always, feel free to email, call or stop in to our office with questions or concerns.

— Ned Hickson

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, or letters from outside our readership area will not be published.

POLITICAL/ELECTION LETTERS:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this 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 letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:
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