

**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



## Appreciating the fruit of hard work

WESLEY VOTH  
For the Siuslaw News

— and the only ultimate route south was to return north via Highway 199 to Grants Pass, then down by I-5. Neither of us had ever been down the Redwood Highway, as 199 is known, and even though it meant returning to Oregon, the drive through the redwoods and along the Smith River was worth it to see how the water remained intensely blue even on a stormy day.

We woke up in Weed, having spent the night in the rest stop there, and skies began to clear as the growing light revealed all but the top of snowy Shasta. By the time we reached Redding, the sun had risen and the skies were clear. Every reservoir full and river high, in places fields were flooded and looked like bays. Eventually, we were able to get off I-5 to 99 and then to a route more our pace. C-43.

Orchards and other forms of labor intensive agriculture like vineyards are in my DNA, and it was wonderful to see so many, both well-established and more recently planted: avocados, nuts, olives, peaches and plums and citrus.

The Reedley Exponent had editorials (and zero letters to the editor despite invitations) on highway taxes and conditions, an April 19 shooting spree in nearby Fresno, and articles about farm labor. But the many political signs were mostly about water allocation and money for storage capacity rather than high speed rail.

On much of our trip to date, there have been more trucks than cars on the road, and the many rail cars mostly carrying containers to be transferred to trucks.

And then we entered the freeway system that defines Los Angeles. What a metaphor for our current political times; just trying stay in a consistent center lane is impossible as they appear and disappear constantly, making the lane you're in suddenly the far right or the far left.

While staying with friends in Venice Beach who live part of the year in Mapleton, we saw their lovely gardens at their peak, with abundant honeybees and hummingbird moths noising about the blossoms. We walked along the canals where I spotted a juvenile halibut about 20 inches in length cruising through the shallow water. We took the metro with our friends into the city to participate in the Earth Day March for Science. What a witty and mixed crowd of thousands. There were people of all ages, gender, ethnic background and ways of identifying themselves.

Poignant signs abounded: "Supporting science supports everyone's future;" "Science of the people, by the people, for the people — Don't tamper with the People's science;" "Support America? How about make American science great again?" And "I'm with her" with an arrow pointing to a planet earth.

But the sign that struck me the most, especially in light of massive proposed budget cuts

to the National Institute of Health, was:

"Got polio? No? Me neither, thanks to science."

The massive investments we used to make in our public universities, such as the land grant universities in every state, and the teaching of math and science in our schools — investments that paid off for so many years — seem to be valued most by the people flocking from other parts of the world wanting to learn. Some of the people who wind up on the wrong side of our immigration laws are those who come to this country as students and find out that the science and health degrees they earn make them more qualified for jobs in those fields than U.S. citizens who didn't, for whatever reason.

A couple of nights ago, we stayed in Joshua Tree National Park. With a \$10 Senior Pass purchased recently at Cape Perpetua, it was free admission to the park and half off of the \$15 camping fee. What a wonderful time to be in the desert there; everything was blooming, from the Joshua Trees, yucca and agave, to the juniper, many types of cactus and flowers both great and small.

I was particularly taken by the red-orange Desert Mariposa Lily with its black throat, and the ocotillo or candle tree with its 10- to 30-foot tall spires tipped with red "flames."

Next, we'll turn the tables on successive children, with us showing up on their doorsteps — laundry in hand.

## LETTERS

### SUPPORT FOR SWINNEY

My candidate pick for Port Commissioner will be Dave Swinney. He and his wife Michelle have been business owners in Old Town Florence for many years. They also own what I feel is the most beautiful boat in our little boat basin; a tug.

His maritime law knowledge is vast and he has sailed the world. He's a responsible person and has developed his own ideas for port improvement projects.

I also believe he will help to bring harmony and progress to all port matters. I don't believe

any other candidate has observed the port area, wetlands and wildlife reserves as intensively as David Swinney.

Wende Jarman  
Florence

### TIPLER IS SECOND TO NONE

I moved to Florence in 1986 and, having been a volunteer firefighter in another town, knew the importance of having volunteers in the local fire department. I joined right away. He was already an active member and made it immediately obvious how serious he was about the welfare of the department, as well as the training and safety of its active members and volunteers.

He is a leader and has been involved in just about every function in the department, from leadership, training, daily operations, the design and purchasing of equipment, and more.

His endless hours given of his free time to the department demonstrates his dedication and devotion to Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue.

For 31 years, I have witnessed that he is absolutely second to none.

In my opinion, there is no one more qualified to be on the SVFR Board than Marvin Tipler.

Greg Saindon  
Florence

### FOR MEYER, DUMAN AND BUCKWALD

As president of the Port of Siuslaw Board of Commissioners, I have decided not to run again because of health concerns. I will be voting for Bill Meyer for Port of Siuslaw Commissioner Position 5 and incumbent Board commissioners Terry Duman and Mike Buckwald.

Meyer 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.

He 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.

Duman is a commercial construction contractor and a commercial fisherman. He brings a wealth of experience to the Port board. He is very knowledgeable in the operation of the port and I feel he wants to see an active and busy port.

Buckwald has brought his accounting experience to the aid of the port staff. With his help, the port staff can easily track profits and expenses and present them to the commission.

As president of The Port Commission, a Florence Rotarian and president of the Florence Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP), I

will be supporting Terry Duman for Port of Siuslaw Commissioner position 1, Mike Buckwald for Port of Siuslaw Commissioner position 3, and Bill Meyer for Port of Siuslaw Commissioner Position 5.

Ron Caputo  
Florence

### FARNSWORTH AND GREEN WILL ENSURE PROGRESS

We would like to share our concerns about the future of the Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue District with our voters and taxpayers. Two of us are current members of the Board of Directors, but are not running for re-election (John Scott and Lori Gates). Two of us previously served as members of the Board of Directors (Cindy Spinner and Rob Ward). We care deeply about the service and quality of our fire department.

Elections matter and votes matter. We do not want to see the events of the past repeated. We believe that Crystal Farnsworth and Ron Green are the only suitable candidates running for the Board of Directors. We do not believe that the opposing candidates would support the initiatives now in place that have created the positive direction in which the district is moving.

They have not reached out to Chief Jim Langborg or to the current Board of Directors to engage in the preparation necessary for making leadership decisions.

Chief Langborg was hired by our board to raise the level of training and expertise in the fire department. Nothing is more important to our community than a well-trained, fully staffed and motivated group of professionals and volunteers.

The Chief has done the job we hired him to do. Along with improved training opportunities and expectations, he has developed a strategic plan, bringing into the planning process major stakeholders including community leaders and firefighters. This form of comprehensive strategic planning was initiated by Chief Langborg, working with the Board of Directors.

The Chief has developed our Capital Budget and has organized his staff to take on the administrative responsibilities of the Western Lane Ambulance District.

This partnership will result in cost savings, operational improvements and a heightened level of service to the community. Through the use of grant money, the Chief has staffed a full-time recruiter and a full-time trainer for volunteers. The results have been dramatic. We now have close to 50 firefighters and volunteers, a very high number for our District.

In addition, we have just learned that we have been awarded a grant in the amount of \$760,000

for seismic improvements to our fire stations.

As voters and taxpayers, we all want and expect the best first responder operation possible. Our lives could depend on it.

For this reason, we urge support for Crystal Farnsworth and Ron Green to ensure that the fire and ambulance departments continue forward with the great progress already underway.

John Scott, President of SVFR Board;  
Lori Gates, SVFR board member;  
Rob Ward, past SVFR board member;  
Cindy Spinner, past SVFR board member

### ALLOWING DOGS COULD HELP PARK SAFETY

Regarding the ongoing concerns of alcohol and drug use at Miller Park, a positive step in providing additional watchful eyes on these activities could easily be brought about by allowing residents to walk their dogs in the park.

There are many dog owners in Florence who would love to be able to be in our city parks with their dogs, which would result in increased social interactions with all users of the park, in addition to more awareness of all activity within the park.

This seems to me to be an easily implemented step in the right direction.

Barbara Holler  
Florence

### GREAT PROGRAM TO ENGAGE STUDENTS

The Western Lane Community Foundation could not have found a better recipient to fund than Siuslaw Elementary School teacher Gina Halpin's fourth-grade class.

As a retired elementary and middle school educator, I read with appreciation of the inspired program in which her students delved into Lewis and Clark's famous expedition (Siuslaw News, April 26).

Great teaching demands hard work and careful planning to keep kids engaged and excited about learning. We hear so many complaints and woes about public education that it was most heartening to read of the obvious passion Halpin has for teaching and her students.

Hats off to WLCF, Siuslaw Elementary teacher Gina Halpin, and of course, the fourth-graders for their enthusiasm, diligence and success with this project.

I'm sure there are other examples of this quality education at our schools. The faculty and administration deserve our unfailing support.

Judith Preisler  
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, 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:

nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

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John Bartlett  
Publisher, ext. 327  
Jenna Bartlett  
Gen. Manager, ext. 318

Ned Hickson  
Editor, ext. 313  
Susan Gutierrez  
Marketing Director, ext. 326  
Cathy Dietz  
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