

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

IGNORE CAMPAIGN ADS, LISTEN TO CANDIDATES

Florence area voters who didn't hear the KCST Our Town Candidates Forum Wednesday (May 3) or the rebroadcast Thursday should watch the video online at www.SiuslawNews.com.

During the second and third hours, host Bob Sneddon skillfully questioned candidates in the most controversial races — for ambulance district, fire/rescue, and port commission boards — and revealed substantive dramas not mentioned in campaign ads or endorsements.

Board decisions to dismiss the current fire chief without cause, then re-hire him before combining fire and ambulance administrations, have created factions in both operations.

Reducing administrative redundancy has apparently saved money, but candidates dispute how much; Position 2 candidate Marvin Tipler questioned how a \$300,000 annual savings will push the fire/rescue budget from black to red by 2020.

It's complicated and contentious.

Port commission candidates advocate either to expand traditional port development, such as boat building and dry dock facilities, or to introduce diversified business enterprises and possible sell-off of properties to put the port on solid financial feet.

During discussions of those two different visions, David Swinney dropped what I considered to be a bombshell by saying the Port Commission signed over control of port property to its manager.

These intrigues reveal underlying issues that need to be addressed. For example, how can a port commission function if it surrenders its checks and balances on administrative power?

I suggest voters ignore campaign ads and



endorsements, watch the video coverage and listen to what candidates actually say — then decide how to vote. Except for one race, deciding won't be easy for me.

All candidates bring valuable experience and perspectives with them. No matter who wins, it wouldn't hurt for more of us to attend board meetings and speak up when things don't make sense.

—Rollin Olson
 Florence

HOW CAN THE EDITOR ASSURE TRANSPARENCY?

Given the very contentious nature of the issues involved in the impending election for positions on the Fire Board and the public interest in having an independent and unbiased press report on those matters, I must question the propriety of the editor of the Siuslaw News running for this — or any other — elective office in Florence.

While I would not suggest that Mr. Hickson would use his position to directly influence the election, I have to wonder how, if elected, he will be able to, without bias, report on and edit other's reports concerning the controversial issues with which he will be directly involved?

A quick bit of research led me to the website of The Society of Professional Journalists. What follows is the first paragraph on that page:

"The SPJ Ethics Committee gets a significant number of questions about whether journalists should engage in political activity. The simplest answer is "No." Don't do it. Don't get involved. Don't contribute money, don't work in a campaign, don't lobby, and especially, don't run for office yourself."

It seems to me this is sound advice.

—Jimmie Zinn
 Florence

(Note: In the April 22 issue of Siuslaw News, Publisher John Bartlett and I stated, in an editorial to the community, the steps that have been taken to assure transparency and continued unbiased coverage of SVFR and WLAD during

this election, and will continue if Ned Hickson is elected to the board.

I'd also like to point out that Hickson has never reported on SVFR or WLAD, and each story covering those beats is now being reviewed by our features editor and an independent editor from a separate newspaper.

In the end, regardless of who is elected, our primary objective is, and will continue to be, maintaining our journalistic integrity.

—Jenna Bartlett
 General Manager

SMEAR TACTICS DON'T PLAY WELL IN FLORENCE

I was shocked to receive a piece of mass-mailed, negative advertising regarding Port of Siuslaw candidate Bill Fleenor here in our small and generally friendly town.

The mailing contained no traceable information about who sent it; when I tried googling the return address "Coastal Committee for Ethics and Integrity," literally nothing came up.

Same thing when I tried to discover who obtained the bulk mail permit used, or who owned the P.O. Box in Eugene that the mailing allegedly came from. I do believe that it cost a pretty penny to mail out this slick piece of mail.

I am not writing to comment on Mr. Fleenor's qualifications for public office. If someone has legitimate concerns, let that person tell us his or her name, and publicly state those objections.

The use of smear tactics doesn't play well in Florence. And the creepy mailing is making me re-think my vote — but not in the way "The Coastal Committee for Ethics and Integrity" intended.

—Judy Plumery
 Florence

RE-ELECT SUZANNE MANN-HEINTZ

I have spent 51 years in public education. I have been a teacher, administrator and board member.

During my career, it has been my good fortune to work with many people who have devoted

their lives to helping and teaching children. Suzanne Mann-Heintz ranks at the top of that group.

After 35 years as a classroom teacher, she retired but continues to volunteer her time and energy to benefit children. In addition to serving on the Siuslaw School Board of Directors, she was an integral part of establishing the Siuslaw Education Foundation that provides much needed grants to schools and teachers.

She is also active with the Florence Free Lunch Program, Senior Health Insurance Benefits, KXCR, Florence Area Community Coalition, ASPIRE program, and the Child Abuse Prevention Project.

I am confident she will continue to represent "An open mind, a listening ear, a collaborative spirit and a caring heart" for all of the Florence community.

I will vote to re-elect Suzanne Mann-Heintz to the Siuslaw School Board.

—Bill McDougale
 Siuslaw School District Board Member
 Florence

WHO HAS CONFLICTS?

I find it hard to believe that the Siuslaw News would print Jay Nefcy's letter, "Port is an Embarrassment" (April 26), which was contained inaccuracies about the current Port of Siuslaw Board of Commissioners and, I believe, was written just to discredit political opponents.

What Mr. Nefcy left out of his opinion piece is that he, along with Port Commission candidates Bill Fleenor and Shayne Burnem, are corporate partners in Pacific Landings, LLC.

I believe that conflict of interest was the reason that Mr. Fleenor previously chose to step down from the Port of Siuslaw Commission, but only after he and then-Port Manager Bob Forsythe lobbied for the state to change what businesses can be allowed on Port properties.

To me, it looks like the conflict still exists.

—Michelle Culwell
 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

WHERE TO WRITE

Pres. Donald Trump The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 20500 Comments: 202-456-1111 Switchboard: 202-456-1414 FAX: 202-456-2461 TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213 www.whitehouse.gov	202-224-5244 541-431-0229 www.wyden.senate.gov	503-986-1705 FAX: 503-986-1080 Email: Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us
Gov. Kate Brown 160 State Capitol 900 Court St. Salem, OR 97301-4047 Governor's Citizens' Rep. Message Line 503-378-4582 www.oregon.gov/gov	U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley 313 Hart Senate Office Bldg Washington, DC 20510 202-224-3753/FAX: 202-228-3997 541-465-6750 www.merkley.senate.gov	State Rep. Caddy McKeown (Dist. 9) 900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1409 Email: rep.caddymckeown@state.or.us
U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden 221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg Washington, DC 20510	U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (4th Dist.) 2134 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-6416 541-269-2609/ 541-465-6732 www.defazio.house.gov	West Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich 125 E. Eighth St. Eugene, OR 97401 541-682-4203 FAX: 541-682-4616 Email: Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us
State Sen. Arnie Roblan (Dist. 5) 900 Court St. NE - S-417 Salem, OR 97301		

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DEADLINES:

Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.
 Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$71; 10-weeks subscription, \$18; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$94; 10-weeks subscription, \$24; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$120; Out of United States — 1-year subscription, \$200; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

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