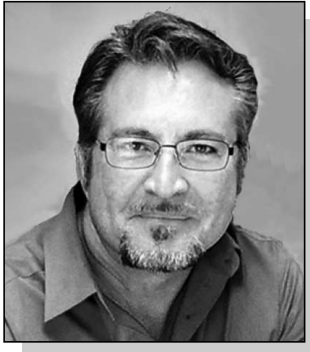


**Siuslaw News**  
P.O. Box 10  
Florence, OR 97439

# Opinion



## My favorite teacher? The one who flunked me

*furios and frustrated rage* over losing his car keys...")

I, on the other hand, fleshed out 15 to 20 pages of handwritten storyline, usually with the last five to six pages devoid of vocabulary words.

I got good grades but, as you can probably imagine, was rarely asked to read my stories in class due to the time constraints of a 45-minute period.

Throughout that semester, I noticed strange red marks on my pages with comments like "incomplete sentence," "check spelling," "punctuation needs work."

As a result, I'd get "A+" for content and creativity but "D" for mechanics.

My thinking was, *Who cares about mechanics when the story is so great?*

Mrs. Fillers did.

As we headed into the second semester, she took me aside and told me that raw talent wasn't enough, and that I needed to learn the tools of writing if I wanted to get seri-

ous. She described my writing as something similar to chain-saw sculpture: Creative and interesting, but it would never be Michaelangelo unless I learned the tools needed to smooth the edges into something seamless.

Emerson...

...Blah, blah, blah.

When the final grades were given, I went from having a crush on my teacher to being crushed by her and the "F" on my report card — something I had never received before.

### From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

I listened carefully to her advice and then, like any teenager, disregarded everything except that part about having "raw talent."

Surely that was enough.

However, in the weeks ahead I realized it wasn't nearly enough in the eyes of Mrs. Fillers. I began to fail miserably on my assignments, which had shifted from creativity to the analysis of writing pros and recognizing the mechanics and devices used by writers like Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Hemingway,

Siuslaw, I was enrolled in College Prep English once again. For our first assignment, Mr. Danielson asked us to write an essay titled "At My House."

We were given no further instruction other than it being due the following day. When I turned in my five-page essay, I felt I was off to a good start with a teacher who would surely overlook the petty details of mechanics and grammar in favor of creativity.

When he handed back our assignments, he had written the following comment:

"A+ for enthusiasm/D+ for mechanics. What are you trying to say with your essay?"

It seemed there was no escaping what I eventually came to realize were the demands of engaged teachers unwilling to bend at the expense of a student's potential.

Mr. Danielson taught me about essay format and the need to have a logical beginning, middle and end — and

that energy and enthusiasm are wasted if they aren't given a direction that readers can follow.

He remains one of my favorite and most influential teachers. But I also know, if not for Mrs. Fillers' willingness to teach me an even more important lesson about writing, I may not have recognized what Mr. Danielson had to offer me.

During National Teachers Appreciation Week (April 8-12), I hope you'll join me in recognizing the educators in our community whose influence in our lives go well beyond our time in the classroom.

And Mrs. Fillers, if you somehow ever read this...

Thank you for the "F" that changed everything.

*Write Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com or P.O. Box 10, Florence, Ore. 97439.*

## LETTERS

### HONORING JOSE'S MEMORY

Thank you to the Florence community for its support at the Jose Dela Mora Memorial Scholarship Taco Feed.

The event raised over \$3,500 and will be funding three scholarships for \$1,000 each to students who share the love of wrestling or art, as our son did.

A special thank you to Cross Road Assembly Church and Pastor Edwards, for their support of this event, and also to Coach Neil Wartnik for honoring Jose's memory by administering this scholarship.

What a wonderful community we live in.

—Jose and Rosa Dela Mora  
Florence

### DON'T OVERLOOK LOCAL ELECTIONS

Wow! What an incredible candidates forum on May 3. Florence is fortunate that so many thoughtful people have stepped forward to offer their guidance towards a better future for Florence.

It is necessary, too, because there appear to be several issues that we're facing.

What concerns me most is what seems to be a reluctance among citizens to talk about the direction we want our community to go. I still haven't decided on some of my votes, but it makes it hard when folks clam up when you try to dig into the meat of a problem.

For instance, I am still baffled at what is going on with the fire and ambulance districts.

Do most people even know there are conflicts there? Are funds being allocated fairly? Are we looking at a corporate model that cuts staff, which is also people's livelihoods in Florence? Or do we really need to look forward and modernize the operations of our community's safety services as our town continues to grow?

These are big questions.

There is also the Port of Siuslaw. Is the Port Manager really that difficult to work with? I've never met him, so I don't know.

Is there some problem with boardwalk maintenance? Is anyone really considering putting condos along the boardwalk? Will we turn a quiet port where we take our kids on walks along the docks into a commercial fleet that will be dangerous for kids and possibly pollute the water?

Or do we just want a few more tuna, crab and salmon fishers to sell from their boats and attract more tourists?

I think some commissioners need to clarify their plans and put some dollar figures to them.

Luckily, the other elections aren't quite as contentious. For Lane Community College, we have a choice between a woman with an impeccable background and experience, and an Oregon resident who has experienced our community college system firsthand.

On our local school board, the biggest difference seems to be between Jesse Chapman and Suzanne Mann-Heintz. This seems one of ideology, most specifically the possibility of a charter school under Chapman and one of restoring previous funding under Mann-Heintz.

Regardless of what one believes our future should look like, the most important thing is that we talk about it together.

Though I may disagree with Mr. Chapman, I would never want his voice silenced in school board meetings. His passion for our kids is obvious. As we move towards the May 16 election, let's start talking — and listening. That way, when the election is over, no matter the outcome, we really will all win because we know our voices will continue to matter.

— Sandy Todd  
Florence

### FACE OF FLORENCE

I read the article in Siuslaw News (May 6) announcing a seminar May 9 at LCC in Florence, where the college was introducing foreign and immigrant students to the community along with highlighting their stories.

In the article, Dean Russ Pierson referenced the recent ICE arrests as part of the reason for the gathering.

Pierson indicated two of the people arrested by ICE had been part of the LCC immigrant and international community at the college.

I planned to attend because I'm sure there would be some interesting stories the students have to tell. I support immigrants and people who legally come to this country to live, work or attend school.

They are an immense benefit to the nation; no argument there.

But I believe Dean Pierson misses a crucial point. Florence is a welcoming town, as are its people. But we also live in a nation where the rule of law prevails. A person residing in the U.S. illegally may be a wonderful, hardworking resident. They may have even settled in and have a family.

But we have federal immigration law that determines who can be here, what steps must be taken to visit or stay here and who will not be allowed to remain.

Some people have worked long and hard to live here legally.

Over the years we (voters) have allowed administrations to neglect immigration and Visa enforcement. People have taken advantage of that situation and now the problem has come home to roost and, I feel, snowballed into a monster.

Despite Attorney General Jeff Sessions essentially telling Congress "If you don't like the immigration laws, change them," Congress has not acted.

So we have the laws that are on the books. Oregon and other jurisdictions have not helped by making people think they are secure and can stay despite federal law. That is actually a disservice to immigrants in general, and especially those immigrants who have taken the steps to be here legally.

So, I hope it will be a productive and informational meeting.

But it won't keep ICE away and it won't help people here illegally.

Only Congress can do that, not Lane Community College.

— Dave Peck  
Florence

### SUPPORT MANN-HEINTZ

I am writing to share the many reasons I am voting for Suzanne Mann-Heintz for position 6 of the Siuslaw School District Board of Directors.

I have been privileged to know her for several years and have come to deeply respect her

dedication to education and her community.

She was a teacher for many years and even now as a current school board member finds time to volunteer to work hands-on with students in the classroom.

I attended the recent candidates forum held at the Florence Events Center. When asked her feeling on what she felt our district's policy should be on students who may not have legal citizen status, her reply was that the district only looks at a child's birth certificate to determine the child's exact age and what grade they should be placed in.

To me, that is how it should always be.

As a board member, I think she will continue to strive to make sure that every student is treated with respect and given the best education possible in a safe environment.

I will be voting for Suzanne Mann-Heintz.

— Maureen Miltenberger  
Florence

### FOR TIPLER, STONELAKE AND HICKSON

On April 27, I attended the regular board meeting of the Western Lane Ambulance District with the intent of making a short statement regarding the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) during the public comment portion of the agenda.

Part way into my statement, Chief Jim Langborg started interrupting me.

Consequently, it took me twice as long as necessary to finish reading my 3-minute statement.

It seems to me that the WLAD members have a decision to make. Will the board meetings be conducted and lead by the board president, with information about day-to-day operations provided by the chief?

Or will the chief be conducting the meetings with the board president and other members chiming in?

Continually interrupting and talking over others is a tactic I've seen used by bullies.

I've had it with bullies.

Because of that, I will be casting my votes for Marvin Tipler and Ned Hickson for the fire board, and Anne Stonelake for the WLAD board.

— Lea Patten  
Florence

### 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.

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