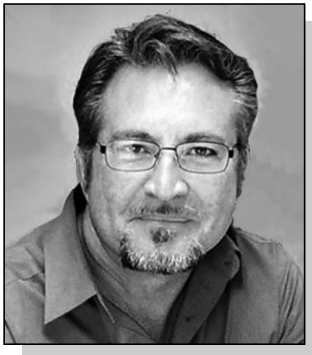


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion



The need for a little more community ‘craziness’

carnival rides late Wednesday night signaled the beginning of four days of craziness that transforms our quiet community of about 8,000 into a beautiful example of controlled chaos shared by upwards of 20,000.

For those four days I always marvel at how our community transforms into an unlikely concoction of flower enthusiasts, bikers and tourists, all co-mingling over beers, art, carnival rides, fast cars, bacon-wrapped hot dogs and cotton candy.

I’ve described it to others as Sturgis meets Mardi Gras, with a little Rose Festival thrown in — except better since we have rhododendrons.

After returning to Florence in 1996, I spent the next 20 years living in Old Town across from the Port of Siuslaw boardwalk. We grew accustomed to the arrival of the Davis Carnival during Rhody Days and living so close that we could practically high-five riders on the Tilt-o-Whirl without leaving the couch.

The banging together of

This was the first year we haven’t lived in Old Town during Rhody Days. It was also the first year I saw the festival as something more than just a few days of much-needed craziness after a win-

ciate how, with each passing block, the crowds grew more diverse.

Baseball-capped Korean War veterans talking with bikers whose leathers were stitched with Vietnam War

this annual bit of “craziness” wasn’t so crazy. In fact, it was the kind of sanity we could use a little more of nowadays. It was an example of how easily we can find a connection with others, no matter how different, when we’re given an opportunity — or the right circumstance — to do so.

In the case of our annual Rhododendron Festival, when the carnival rides go up people’s guards come down. Whether a biker or banker, policeman or pirate, there is an unspoken agreement and genuine interest in having that shared experience together — and an understanding that it wouldn’t work any other way.

Under normal circumstances, these same people would likely pass each other without a word, assuming they would even be in the same vicinity.

But it’s everyone’s willingness to participate in that little bit of “crazy” that becomes a common thread we all share for a few days each year.

Now that it’s over, I have to wonder:
 Which days are crazier?

From the Editor’s Desk

NED HICKSON

ter of cabin fever.

Having the opportunity to travel the few miles from our home on the outskirts of town to the heart of the festival was like seeing it for the first time each day. It gave me a chance to step back and truly appre-

veteran patches; young families posing with owners of classic cars built decades before they were born; “Captain Jack Sparrow” sharing a laugh with an out-of-town policeman.

I watched, realizing that

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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.

Send letters to:
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LETTERS

REMEMBER WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES

Memorial Day is coming. It is a day for all of us who survived war to remember those who didn’t. Yes, we enjoy picnics and social gatherings as symbols of freedom, but it is still a day to remember those who gave their lives.

It should not be a day to peddle whatever you may be selling, so please do not disrespect me or any of the other men and women who offered their lives for our freedoms.

I don’t want your mattresses, trucks, cars furniture or widgets. Out of respect, the least you can do is limit advertising to the institutional.

I have other priorities for this holiday.

— Charles Walker
 Florence

HAD MY EYES OPENED

Last Wednesday’s Siuslaw News (May 17) had an announcement regarding Alternative Radio talk show host David Barsamia giving a talk in the Bromley Room at the Siuslaw Public Library on Friday (May 19) covering the environment and several other subjects that were of interest to me. I attended and the



room was full with probably 80 or so folks. Almost half had white hair, both male and female, with maybe a dozen or so folks were under the age of 50.

There was a beautiful American flag standing at the head of the room but nobody called for a pledge to the flag at the beginning of the meeting, which is done quite often.

I sat there for more than an hour, listening to the speaker. Instead of hearing and learning about the environment and the other subjects, I was bombarded with how terrible our country is; how the Defense Department and Pentagon are destroying America by taking all the money away from social programs; how Socialism is best for America; how capitalism is the very worst thing for America; how if Bernie Sanders had been the Democrat

Party nominee instead of Hillary Clinton, he would have “mopped the floor with Trump.”

When he said that, and several other times mentioned Karl Marx, the room burst out with loud applause and hand clapping. On several occasions the speaker punched the air with a closed fist much to the crowd’s delight, stating how the group had to appeal to minorities and make wedges.

On and on he went regarding how bad our country is and what they must do to correct it. So I found out it wasn’t the meeting I thought I was attending but rather more of a Socialist rally right here in Florence.

And who was the sponsor of the this event? Local radio station KXCR, who lists itself as a community radio station.

I’m glad I attended the meeting, even if I

didn’t learning anything regarding the environment. At least I had my eyes opened on another subject.

— Tony Cavarno
 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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Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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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.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
 Website and E-Edition: www.TheSiuslawNews.com

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