

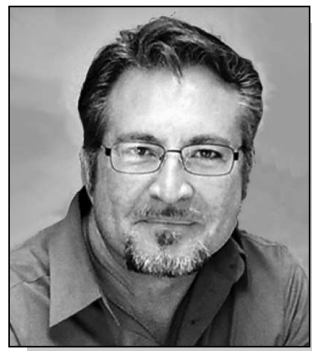
Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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.

On May 25, The Society of Professional Journalists announced the winners of its Excellence in Journalism contest for 2016. Winners were chosen from newsrooms consisting of 15 members or less (Siuslaw News has four) throughout Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho and Montana. Siuslaw News received second place for “Editorial & Commentary” for its combination of editorials The Importance of Accepting What Homelessness Isn’t (Dec. 21), Keeping Your Letters From Becoming a Murky Brew (Oct. 12) and The Danger of Forgetting Our Day of Infamy (Dec. 7). Given that Monday was Memorial Day, below is one of the winning editorials, which pertains to the importance of never forgetting those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom ...



The danger of forgetting our ‘Day of Infamy’

ation have come to experiencing war first-hand.

As a child, I was only peripherally aware of the Vietnam War and even less so of the Korean War, which ended before I was born.

Yet, as the last shot was being fired in Vietnam, I already knew what Pearl Harbor was.

I knew how, on Dec. 7, 1941, a quiet Sunday morning was transformed into a fiery nightmare by Japanese planes that claimed the lives of more than 2,400 servicemen.

I knew about the USS Arizona, and how in less than nine minutes more than 1,000 men became entombed in the wreckage that now rests like a

shadow below the harbor’s surface.

I also knew it was a morning filled with as many acts of heroism and sacrifice as there were moments of the horrific. Over the years, images in text books, commemorative issues

surface each year — much like the slowly recurring “black tears” of oil that still bubble to the surface from the USS Arizona — serve as a reminder of the ultimate price demanded by a world at war.

In an age when many of our

the sacrifices of the past are in danger of becoming diluted by pre-packaged valor and conditioned gaming responses.

Admittedly, my friends and I spent countless summer days of our youth as soldiers rescuing our platoon and driving the Nazis out of our backyards. The difference between then and now is that, as kids, we were drawing from those text books, commemorative magazine articles and movies that dug such deep grooves in our memories.

Without knowing it, we were reinforcing our own understanding of war based on what we knew of history — and in particular the sacrifices made by soldiers at places like

Pearl Harbor and the beaches of Normandy.

Today, the knowledge of those sacrifices — and the lessons learned from them — aren’t digging nearly as deep a groove in the minds of our children as they once did.

As they say, history forgotten is a history bound to repeat itself.

Unless we take the time to ensure that each generation understands what our “Day of Infamy” truly means, the black tears slowly surfacing from the USS Arizona will be for more than the servicemen who came to rest within it.

Write Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com.

I was nine years old the last time our nation fired a shot while openly declaring war with another nation. And while we have certainly spent the majority of the last few decades fighting abroad and sacrificing the lives of our young men and women in places like Kuwait, Qatar, Baghdad and Syria, the horrific attacks of Sept. 11 are the closest that many of my gener-

From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

from publications like Time magazine and stories captured in movies impressed upon me the virtues of valor.

At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, those images and the stories that

youth entertain themselves with gaming systems that center around killing enemies with everything from grenades and knives to sniper fire and IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices), lessons learned from

LETTERS

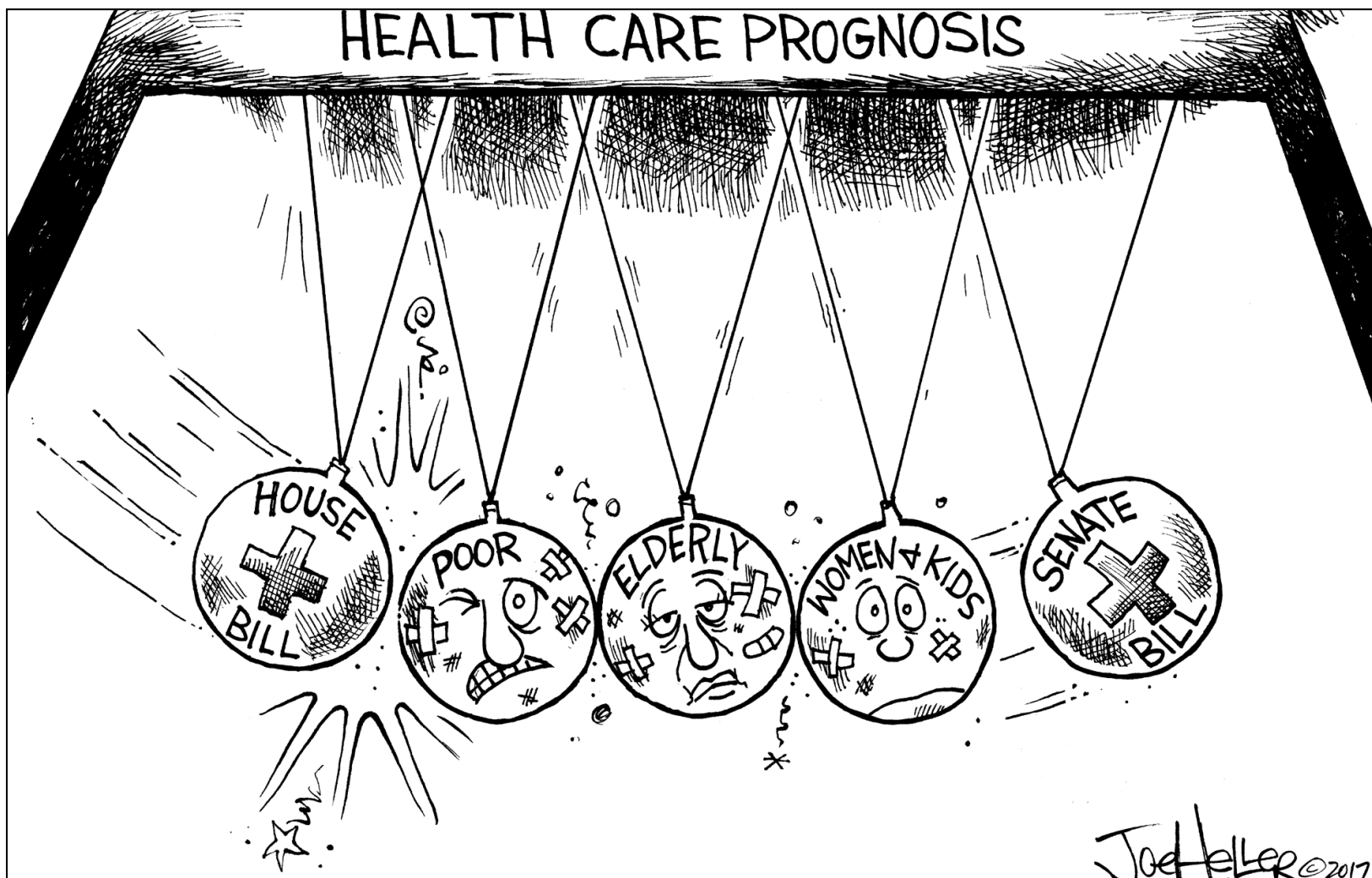
MAKE SUMMER SAFE FOR YOUNG CYCLISTS

Thursday, May 25, was “Ride Your Bike to School Day” at Siuslaw Elementary School. One hundred thirty-six of the school’s 650 students rode bikes or scooters to school and an uncounted number of others walked to school.

Activities for the day included exercises in bike, scooter and pedestrian safety. Western Lane Ambulance District visited the day before and gave helmets to students that didn’t have them. Volunteers were stationed on Highway 101 to increase student safety.

Kudos to all who helped make the day successful.

As I watched all these eager young faces looking forward to the added freedom and array of activities summer affords, it occurred to me that people my age (I’ll be 70 in July) might not realize that summer vacation begins June 14 — and that all of us need to be cognizant and cautious as these precious children move about our



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:
 nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

community in greater numbers.

Slow down.
 Watch carefully.
 Give them space.
 Expect the unexpected.
 Please make this summer a safe one.

— Suzanne Mann-Heintz
 Siuslaw School Board
 Florence

DO WHAT I SAY AND THE WORLD WILL BE BETTER

I am shocked and appalled that there are people, let alone the media, in this community who do not share my personal political view.

This must stop at once.
 There is no doubt in my mind that if everyone would just be quiet and do what I say, it would

be a much better world.

For now, I will continue screaming at my television.

— Edward Gunderson
 Florence

REASON FOR THE SIGN

There is an explanation to Mr Gray’s question (May 27) about “political signs on municipal traffic posts.”

He refers to the sign at the intersection of Highway 126 and Highway 101 that reads “Florence Area Democrats.” It has been there for several years. However, it is not a stand-alone sign.

The ODOT Adopt-a-Highway sign is usually located right above, but was unfortunately blown off during a recent windstorm, and will

be replaced as soon as possible.

The same signs can be seen at the two mile marker when driving west. The Florence Area Democrats have been picking up roadside trash for the state’s Adopt-a-Highway program four times a year for the past 15 years, and its members are proud to be helping keep our town and river community beautiful.

By the way, over the years the group has noticed that plastics and styrofoam are a large part of the roadside trash that does not decompose quickly, and often ends up in the river and eventually in the ocean or along the beaches.

Perhaps we could all use fewer of these items?

— Karin Radtke
 Florence Area Democrats
 Adopt-a-Highway Coordinator

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