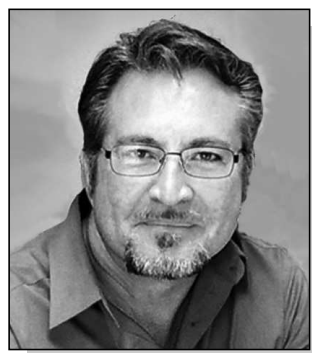


**Siuslaw News**  
**P.O. Box 10**  
**Florence, OR 97439**

# 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.



## Old battlefields of racism run deeper than the Deep South

having come from Oregon, I felt a certain kinship to The South's identity as a rebel.

Yet at the same time, I found it hard to walk the thin line between recognizing The South's undeniable history while overlooking the shadows of racism intertwined with it.

Last week's senseless murders of two Good Samaritans in Portland who were trying to defend a pair of teenage African-American girls — one of whom was wearing Muslim attire — served as a reminder that the battlefields of racism run deeper than the Deep South.

In the mid 1800s, when the Oregon territory was larger than Texas and included portions of five western states, the "Lash Law" of 1844 decreed that any black

person, free or slave, could be whipped twice a year until he or she left the territory. Eventually, a law was passed simply prohibiting "black people" from living in the territory altogether.

By the 1970s, hate groups like the Aryan Nations had followed suit, jackbooting themselves into areas of Oregon to spread their message of racial purity and the notion of establishing a

Joseph Christian on that Portland Metro Train wasn't the result of a concerted campaign of hate. It didn't stem from organized recruitment.

It erupted from within a vein running just beneath the surface of our society, pulsed by an ever-increasing exposure to suspicion, mistrust and blame offered up as the "new normal" through media — social and otherwise.

Christian expressed his rage against immigrants, Saudi Arabia, liberals, blacks, Muslims and a myriad of stereotypical targets of hate cherry-picked from an endless buffet of extremist ideologies available on the Internet.

Ricky John Best, Taliesin Myrddin Namakai Meche and Micah Fletcher repre-

sented a different kind of ideology when they stood up against Christian, in defense of two strangers who were being threatened by hate.

Best and Meche each died from stab wounds inflicted by Christian.

As we polarize ourselves and choose sides to be aligned with, we can't risk forgetting the thing that defines us as Americans:

The strength that comes from our unity rather than our division.

It's the kind of kinship that I want to have as an Oregonian and believe in as an American.

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

### From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

It was a climate that harkened extremists, racists and socialists to establish communities throughout the Pacific Northwest, along with an Oregon Legislature in the 1920s which, rife with Ku Klux Klan members, passed legislation that forbade Japanese immigrants from owning or leasing land.

white utopian society known as "Cascadia."

At a time when increased scrutiny of each other is slowly approaching that of the McCarthy era, the shadows cast by Oregon's early history of racism are also slowly creeping over the lessons of our past.

The attack by Jeremy

### LETTERS

#### STREET PAVING PROJECT IS TOP NOTCH

Having spent several years as a county paving inspector in California, I recognize a beautiful paving job when I see one. The recent paving of our roads is absolutely excellent.

Thanks to our Public Works Department staff, and especially to the outstanding job done by their inspectors.

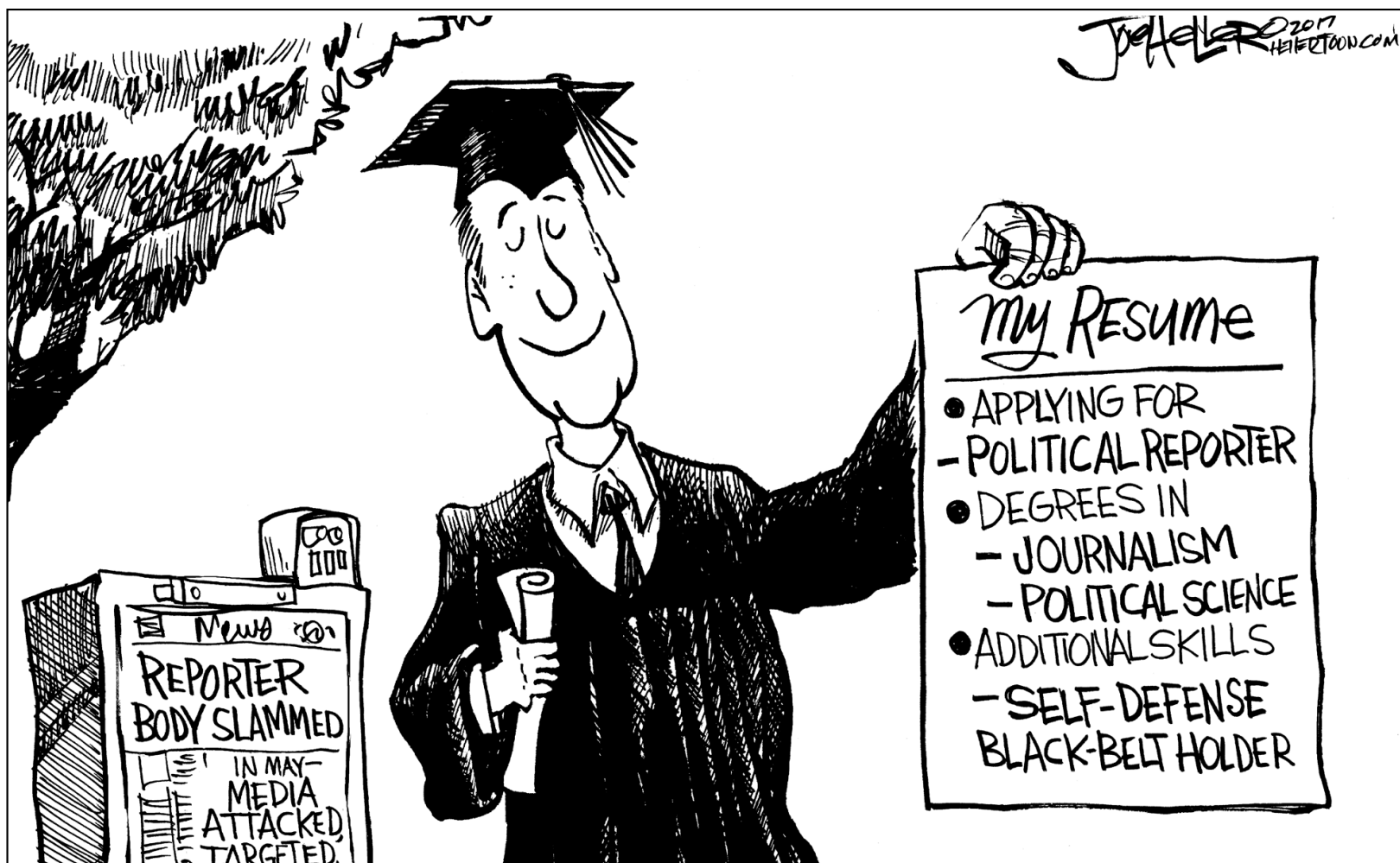
— Bill Craig  
 Florence

#### LABELING ONLY PERPETUATES DIVISION

It has been disturbing to read some of the letters directed towards Florence citizens. It has gotten so bad that people are being maligned because they attend speaking engagements and write newspaper columns.

What's really baffling to me is the outrage expressed at those who simply state the details of policy that many Republicans in the House voted for.

For example, the health care proposal passed by the House on May 4 threatens to end Medicaid expansion along with many subsidies for working families, the disabled, the homeless



## 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

and even veterans.

President Trump ran a campaign on these cuts and on increasing military spending. I don't understand why some are offended by others who merely point out the possible consequences of these policies.

Ultimately, labeling opponents of Mr. Trump's policies as "anti-patriotic" or "anti-American" does little but perpetuate the animosity dividing our country.

I believe Florence residents will continue to stand for fair budgets that protect our security, but also for the environment, education, seniors, working families and health care for everyone.

— Sandy Todd  
 Florence

#### LET'S WORK TOGETHER WITHOUT THE BULLYING

I admit that I was the one who was booed at Sen. Wyden's Town Hall. Not only booed, but called a liar and yelled at.

I simply said that Donald Trump had won the

popular vote in Florence. It is the truth and can be found at Lane County Elections.

The Florence area precincts are 4500 (Dunes City), 4601 (town) and 702 (north and east). Within those precincts, Trump won by 3+ percent.

There were some votes for other candidates as well.

So, I don't know what all the hate was about. But in a time when Florence is continuing to pull together for the good of Malakai Kirk and other caring community priorities, I think we will work together better if we don't let this kind of bullying get between us.

— Sherry Harvey  
 Florence

#### FIND COMMON GROUND WITHIN OUR DIVISIONS

I attended the David Barsamian lecture (May 19). I feel Barsamian's was an accurate review of government spending lavishly on weapons and Pentagon expenditures while cutting social

services across the board.

Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, disability benefits, Meals on Wheels, mental health and housing expenditures all are now funded below need and severe cuts are expected with the House's new healthcare proposal.

Evidence of that here in Florence can already be seen in growth of social service agencies attempting to fill the gaps with limited funds, staff and volunteers.

One of the "wedges" suggested in the lecture was for each of us to cease separating ourselves from others who have a difference of opinion. We can and must begin to speak with each other and find our common ground, which likely has to do with what we see as the future of the next generations.

As for Socialism and Karl Marx, there was some enthusiasm for both, which I'm sure must have sounded alien to someone not accustomed to such thoughts.

— Mary Lehman  
 Florence

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