

**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.

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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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**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](http://www.TheSiuslawNews.com)



## LETTERS

### STATUES REPRESENT 'GLORY DAYS' OF SLAVERY

After reading the letter "Erasing Symbolism Is Its Own Kind of Hatred" (Siuslaw News, Aug. 19), I felt compelled to respond.

The writer implies that the current controversy over removing Confederate statues is an attempt to, as he said, "Re-fashion history."

That is not the case.

Erecting those statues in the first place, however, did just that. They were commissioned to cast the failed Confederacy in a different light, or as the writer says, "...to re-fashion history in order to make it fit within a particular paradigmatic viewpoint."

The placement of most of those statues actually goes well beyond the desire to revise history; they were a reaction to efforts to change the lives of African-Americans in the South. The number of monuments surged each time those in power felt threatened by change: in the early 1900s when the NAACP was formed; after WWII when Black servicemen and women returned home after experiencing life with more freedom; and during the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and '60s.

The statues were placed by white politicians to remind the populace of the "glory days" of the Civil War. As they glamorized and immortalized those who fought for the continuation of slavery, they proclaimed the message that any move away from white supremacy would not be tolerated.

These monuments were created with public funds and placed in city squares, near county courthouses and in prominent spots beside state capitals. Imagine the propaganda value alone of such placement.

Imagine also the reality that the taxes of African-Americans were used to create shrines to those who fought for their continued enslavement.

Advocating for the removal of Confederate statues is not a "feel good mantra." It is a call to see those monuments for what they truly represent and to determine that we, as Americans, will no longer stand for that revisionist view of history.

—Lucinda Hughes  
Florence

### CLAIM TO FAME LACKS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The historical context is that Confederate monuments memorialize men whose claim to fame was taking up arms against the United States of America.

—Judy Kinsman  
Florence

### IT TAKES TWO TO FIGHT

As everyone knows there were riots in Charlottesville. However, it has amazed me how one-sided the reporting has been.

Let's get something straight: I have

no use for the KKK, white supremacists or any kind of racists, no matter the color of their skin.

Yes, all racists are not white.

That is a fact.

When the Black Lives Matter folks were calling for the killing of police and then police were killed by a black man, should that have been considered racist, a hate crime or terrorist act?

As President Trump said, he condemned all sides because the stupid white racists couldn't have a riot by themselves.

No, their needed to be more stupid people for that to happen. That's where groups like Black Lives Matter and the Antifa show up to make sure there was a fight.

Those were the folks in Berkeley, Calif., who tore the place up to ensure that they were the only ones to use their First Amendment rights.

It always takes two to fight. And by condemning one and not the other, you are saying freedom of speech is only a right if you agree with it.

There is a reason we have a Bill of Rights, which affords us freedoms no other country on this planet has. If we don't see and protect that, then we are doomed to lose.

The white nationalists racists had a permit to march — so let them march.

Don't cover it on TV.

And bury anything about it in the sports section of newspapers.

They are a very small and, in my opinion, insignificant bunch of idiots who will not be missed. The other set of idiots can be kept at bay by the police (that's their job).

Do that, and you only have one group of haters to worry about — and one does not a riot make.

It probably won't make the Sunday talk shows, but at least one young lady would still be alive.

—David T. Eckhardt  
Florence

### EDITORIAL UNFAIR TO PRESIDENT TRUMP

I met Ned Hickson when I first moved to Florence in 2001. I have always liked Ned and was pleased when he became editor of The Siuslaw News. However, since he has been editor I find that the newspaper has become increasingly more left-leaning.

In Ned's commentary ("Sign On Hwy 101 Shows That No Place Is Immune To Hate") in the Saturday, Aug. 19, edition, he spoke of a sign that a bigoted racist had put on highway 101. He linked that sign back to what he called President Trump's ambiguous statement of where blame should be placed in the Charlottesville protest.

I saw nothing ambiguous when President Trump said both sides shared the blame. To link the motivation for someone to place that awful sign on highway 101 back to our President is unfair and unfounded.

If I were a conservative business owner in Florence, I wouldn't use such a biased, left-leaning media source in which to advertise.

—Pamela Richardson  
Florence

### STATUES BELONG IN MUSEUMS, NOT TOWN SQUARES

This past Saturday, there were two Letters to the Editor: One defended Confederate monuments, and one defended President Trump.

Let me say first that I am not a member of Antifa or Black Lives Matter. However, I do agree with the position that the statues glorifying Confederates and the Confederate flag must be removed and put into a museum — not to change history but to be more *truthful* about our history.

The Confederate generals were members of the United States military before they denounced the U.S. and began fighting for the Confederacy. They were technically traitors of the young United States. They were not then — nor are they now — heroes.

They urged the Southern states to secede from the United States primarily because they wanted to preserve the slavery of black men and women.

The Confederacy lost the Civil War. We don't normally erect statues to traitors. The bulk of these monuments were put into place during the Jim Crow era of the early 1900s and during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

And they were put there to intimidate those fighting for civil rights.

The monuments to the Confederacy should be placed in a museum with an explanation of their history.

In contrast, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, while slave owners, are honored for their contributions in establishing this great nation and the Declaration of Independence.

The Confederates, by comparison, were trying to rip this nation apart.

I watched Donald Trump's press conference last Tuesday, when he equated the neo-Nazis and the KKK to the counter-protesters. Many older veterans who fought the Nazis in WWII would be horrified by those carrying the Nazi flag, in essence openly disrespecting our veterans.

To me, President Trump disrespected our WWII veterans by defending the indefensible neo-Nazis and their tiki-torch-carrying mob reminiscent of 1930s Germany and meant to intimidate counter-protesters.

Shame on anyone, including our President, for defending bigotry, hate and Nazis.

And shame on those who put a hate sign on the highway in Florence. Not in my town.

—Marybeth Marengo  
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 only be published at the discretion of the editor.

### 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.

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