

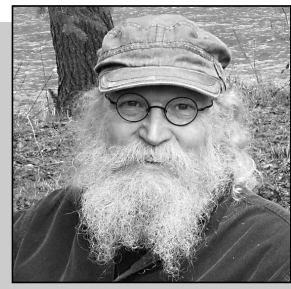
Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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.

VIEW FROM UPRIVER



Keep focus on American values

WESLEY VOTH
For the Siuslaw News

containing “the most potent and consequential words in American history.”

The passage came to represent a moral standard to which the United States should strive. This view was notably promoted by Abraham Lincoln, who considered the Declaration to be the foundation of his political philosophy and argued that it is a statement of principles through which the United States Constitution should be interpreted.

Although the next (3rd) sentence in our Declaration may be less known, it is the main point I’m making: “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

So from the beginning, we have insisted that the purpose of government is primarily to secure those rights, and our bitterest war was fought to make that Declaration enduring.

Lest there be any doubt, as in current debate regarding the cause of the Civil War being the fight to preserve the Union, the Declarations of Independence by each of the seceding states makes it clear in their first few

sentences that the issue of their leaving was slavery; there is nothing in them remotely echoing our original Declaration, or of moving the cause of liberty or human dignity forward.

Here are two examples that were typical for the group of seceding states.

Texas: “She [Texas] was received as a commonwealth holding, maintaining and protecting the institution known as negro slavery — the servitude of the African to the white race within her limits — a relation that had existed from the first settlement of her wilderness by the white race, and which her people intended should exist in all future time...”

And Georgia, the only one of the 13 original colonies to have an early law preventing slavery: “The people of Georgia having dissolved their political connection with the Government of the United States of America, and present to their Confederates and the world the causes which have led to the separation. For the last 10 years we have had numerous and serious causes of complaint against our non-slave-holding Confederate States with reference to the subject of African slavery. They have endeavored to weaken our security, to disturb our domestic peace and tranquility, and persistently

refused to comply with their express constitutional obligations to us in reference to that property [slaves].”

The truths we claimed as self evident have proved hard to live up to, although it has been the moral high ground justification for our greatest wars. We have to acknowledge our track record: we are a nation of immigrants whose title to this land came through war and the near genocide of its original inhabitants. Our fortunes came about in part through the enslavement of millions of Africans.

That legacy is at the heart of our problems as a nation. The cause and long bloody road of civil rights is making the “all” actually include all.

The rights claimed are human rights, belonging to humans regardless of any status subjugations, and it has been costly.

So, let arguments over the environment and foreign policy and the health and safety of our people stand aside for a moment, and let’s come together to declare that we will never back down on any progress made to date in the march toward freedom and dignity for all people.

We are, and America is, great only to the extent we secure and ensure those rights, and make good on those words.

LETTERS

GET OVER IT

It was reported recently someone placed a hateful sign out on the highway. Someone (one).

That means out of a population of 9,000, one person did something stupid — the rest of us took the kids to school, went to work and a bunch of us went fishing. I’ve observed that the Florence City Council is still being pestered to death with requests to make the city a “sanctuary city” and an “anti-hate city,” and to take other political positions.

They really have more important things to do.

Does anybody remember how many registered voters came out and voted last election?

Twenty-five percent.

Yep, the other 75 percent didn’t give a rip.

And you know what? Other than out of morbid curiosity, 75 percent probably don’t give a rip about a mean little sign, made by a mean little person, using a cheap little magic marker.

Or having Florence named a sanctuary city or anti-hate city.

Why? They got over it.

November came, 78 percent of us voted, Trump got elected and the vast majority of us went on with our lives.

Maybe it’s time to get on with your own.

—Jeff Ashmead
Florence

FLORENCE IS BETTER THAN THIS

Today, I learned that one of my neighbors picked up a pizza yesterday and on her way to her car a man in a truck yelled at her that she might be glad he didn’t run her over like what happened in Charlottesville, Va.

I can’t let this go without comment and I’m sure the man, and perhaps his son with him, likely won’t even read this or know just how terrible his stupid remarks were.

We cannot stay silent with this kind of hate.

I put the blame for this blatant hate right at the feet of our President, who did not condemn the people who killed a woman in Virginia and injured many

others. This President, who throughout his campaign urged supporters to kick protesters out and beat them up, now can’t control these monsters that have crawled out of the dark closets where they’ve hidden for years.

Florence is better than this.

—Nancy Rickard
Florence

STIRRING THE POT

Like others, I feel the need to comment on Ned Hickson’s editorial “Sign on Hwy 101...” (Aug. 19).

Why would someone who sees a sign like that call the editor of a newspaper and not the police? Maybe they wanted to turn it into a political issue in an attempt to advance a specific agenda? And why would Mr. Hickson feel compelled to write about it? Did he notify the police? Has he ever written about the “hate” at our local town hall meetings when people are being shouted down and called liars, as well as profanity being screamed to the point where their voice can’t be heard?

Where was his outrage then?

I think that Mr. Hickson has higher moral obligations to the community as both an editor and an elected official than to simply publish an editorial.

Mr. Hickson’s editorial starts out about “hate” and quickly becomes about his personal political views. I find his editorial disingenuous and asphyxiating. I can’t help question his ethics, morals and motivations for writing such a piece. But then, may I also remind the community that Mr. Hickson continues to hold political office despite it being against the Society of Professional Journalism’s ethics position — something that has been brought to his attention both publicly and privately numerous times.

And what about the recent surge in letters to the editor complaining about the “biased reporting” and the increasing use of “anonymous” resources by the newspaper in its reports.

I was in the audience during his “fake news” recognition event at City Lights Cinema and heard him expound on how to spot fake news. It is unfortunate that Mr. Hickson is engaged in many of the tactics he warned about. How conven-

ient to be a journalist, write things that hurt people, stand behind confidentiality, and deny the people you hurt their sixth amendment right of facing one’s accuser.

In my opinion, the Siuslaw News has been looking like an episode of “Gossip Girls” lately.

It’s a shame that the newspaper can’t seem to stop “stirring the pot” and be more objective and positive instead of adding fuel to the flames of hate — and pitting the citizens of Florence against each other.

Mr. Hickson’s editorial policy seems intended to inflame and divide us rather than bring us together as a community.

—Katie Prosser
Florence

BUILDING LEADERS OF TOMORROW

We would like to publicly recognize and thank the kids from the Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County who participated during the past two weeks in the Florence Air Academy.

Thirteen bright and engaging teens challenged us daily with their knowledge and interest in learning about aviation materials that included aeronautics, weather, map reading and many interviews with professionals from different areas of aviation.

During this two weeks they had the opportunity to fly radio controlled airplanes, drones and even got to take the controls of a real airplane as each of them flew on a cross country flight that we planned as a group.

It gives us both a sense of satisfaction and pride that the leaders of tomorrow are right here amongst us and their value and worth is evident when they are given the opportunity to question the unknown and discover the new and exciting possibilities that are available to them.

Yes, there is hope for the future. Thank you.

— T.F. “Sam” Spayd and
Terry Tomeny
Florence

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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 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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