

**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

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## LETTERS

### OCHS NEEDS OBJECTIVE EVALUATION

"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."

—Stephen Covey

I have been following the kerfuffle over the management and operation of the Oregon Coast Humane Society (OCHS) with interest and growing dismay.

While it is not possible for an outsider and relative newcomer to Florence to evaluate the charges and counter-charges involved, it is nonetheless clear that, in the interest of the animals, they need to be resolved forthwith.

If there are problems, they need to be fixed; if there are not, that needs to be affirmed and made known. Failure to do so in a timely manner risks allowing animals to suffer and will adversely affect recruitment and retention of volunteers, fundraising, the organization's ability to provide care for its innocent charges, and even its continued existence.

To a naive observer, the whole thing smacks of petty politics, power plays and personalities. Surely those who care enough about animals to have become involved with OCHS can find a way to rise above these extraneous quibbles and focus on the main thing: The well-being of creatures in need of food, adequate shelter, security and a chance for a loving, life-long home.

It appears, however, that there must first be a credible, objective, independent evaluation of OCHS's organization and operation to end the current school-yard arguments that generate heat but not light — and frustrate a solution.

A comprehensive, outside audit to provide a common understanding of the deficiencies and needs to be addressed, if any, could serve that end.

There are a number of large, experienced animal welfare organizations such as the Best Friends Animal Society that might provide an audit of the OCHS to end the bickering that now obviously thwarts its ability to concentrate on its only reason for being — the animals in its care.

For their sake, I sincerely hope that OCHS is not already too broken to consider that option.

—Dennis W. Dickinson  
Florence

### STANDING FIRMLY WITH ANIMAL SHELTER

I had the extreme displeasure of reading the Siuslaw News' "investigative" report on the Florence Humane Society today when it was brought to my attention by a friend who knows I volunteer there.

I don't subscribe to this newspaper, and after reading this article I have a really good reason to never buy it. At least you had the decency to label what you printed about the Florence Humane Society and its staff as "rumors" because in my opinion that is all they are.

I moved to Florence last September and started volunteering at the Florence

humane society on a weekly basis last October. I usually work with the kittens and the cats in cat adoption, but sometimes I take dogs for walks as well. I'm curious as to which volunteers were interviewed for this article. I certainly was not interviewed even though I happened to be in Cat Adoption the day your reporter showed up to "investigate." Not only did he not interview me, he did not even speak to me.

He spent approximately 5 minutes wandering through cat adoption and then left the area. News is supposed to be factual; that means you interview all volunteers, not a select few.

Bias, as displayed by your article, should be reserved for editorials.

Thanks to Lisa Pappas' remarks, people who might be motivated to donate to the shelter may choose not to do so after publication of this article. I can state through personal experience that I have never seen any staff member mistreat an animal.

Not even close.

I see a group of dedicated staff, mostly women, who truly care for — and have compassion for — the animals they look after. I have also not met any other volunteers who have mentioned any concerns for how the animals are treated.

Staff members scrupulously clean each animals' kennel (or cubby in the case of the cats); launder bedding; sweep and mop floors; wash dishes; feed, water and medicate those animals who require medication; soak, scrub and dry each litter box every day.

I assist with these duties when I volunteer.

The shelter staff and volunteers give the animals the love, care, medical treatment and attention that they desperately need.

As far as the size of the dog kennels, as a former volunteer at the Humane Society of Portland, I can personally attest to the fact that those animals at a much larger facility with much more funding have no more individual space than the dogs at the Florence shelter.

The floors there are also concrete because they are easier to clean and, as most people know, dogs are not litter-box trained.

In Portland, they only have a concrete run for exercise, not a grassy, fenced-in area to play in as the animals in Florence have.

And no animals are locked up all day. I stand firmly with the staff at the shelter.

— Diane Raven  
Florence

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In regard to Ms. Kinsman's letter "Claim to Fame Lacks Historical Context," (Aug. 23) one must view the actions of men in history in the context of their time and not via the prism of ours.

Florida's "Ordinance of Secession," the shortest (All states available at [www.civil-war.net/pages/ordinance\\_s\\_secession.asp](http://www.civil-war.net/pages/ordinance_s_secession.asp)), reads:

"We, the people of the State of Florida, in convention assembled, do solemnly ordain, publish and declare, that the State of Florida hereby withdraws herself from the confederacy of States existing under the name of the United States of America and from the existing Government of the said States;

And that all political connection between her and the Government of said States ought to be, and the same is hereby, totally annulled, and said Union of States dissolved;

And the State of Florida is hereby declared a sovereign and independent nation;

And that all ordinances heretofore adopted, in so far as they create or recognize said Union, are rescinded;

And all laws or parts of laws in force in this State, in so far as they recognize or assent to said Union, be, and they are hereby, repealed."

The issue of whether a State had a Right to Secede was just one issue over which the War of Northern Aggression, aka War Between the States, aka American Civil War, was fought. Scholars still argue the topic today. Note that there is no mention of slavery in Florida's Ordinance of Secession.

Only 4 of the 13 Confederate States of America [CSA] member states' Ordinance of Secession mention slavery.

From the CSA perspective, the United States of America invaded Virginia, a member State of the CSA, on July 21, 1861.

To be historically accurate, the soldiers of the Confederacy were Americans defending their State, families and lastly the new Federal union, The CSA, against foreign invaders.

The invasion was Lincoln's response to South Carolina expelling Union forces from Fort Sumter in April 1861 by force of arms; Lincoln's desire to preserve the Union at all costs may be argued to be the proximate cause of today's troubles.

Had the war not been fought, slavery, in all likelihood, would have died an economic death and the bitterness and rancor induced by Sherman and Grant's ruthless tactics and the later Reconstruction would have never existed. One can only speculate as to how that may have played out.

Jim Downs provides persuasive evidence in "Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction" that perhaps one quarter of Americans freed by the war died during and the years following from disease and starvation.

Others have reached similar estimates. It is a classic example of the Law of Unintended Consequences.

"Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement ... Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

— George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*.

— Ian Eales

## 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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