

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.

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Siuslaw News

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LETTERS

KUDOS TO OREGON

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

I have been a fan of Smokey Bear ever since I visited the forest in southern New Mexico where the original Smokey was found. This past Labor Day weekend, I was privileged to see Smokey at Harbor Vista Park along with the children and families who spent the three-day weekend at the park.

I wish to thank the team of firefighters from the Oregon Department of Forestry in Florence for bringing Smokey and one of their fire trucks. Smokey greeted all the children with hugs and lots of photos were taken by smiling parents.

The team leader, Tom, described the important role his department plays during this dangerous fire season, described fire prevention tactics and displayed his firefighting equipment. A big treat for the children was when a team member and Smokey helped children spray down a mock fire with water from a fire hose.

The event ended with children selecting mementos to take home.

I also want to thank Mike Stewart, the Park caretaker, for his thoughtful invitation to the ODF. This was a second event put on at the park this summer, the first being a presentation by Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue.

Mike has involved the Friends of Harbor Vista Park in these events and several local residents helped with greetings to the campers.

The event ended with everyone remembering Smokey's famous charge: "Only you can prevent wild fires."

—Michael Allen
Friends of Harbor Vista Park
Florence

WHAT I APPRECIATE IN A NEWSPAPER EDITOR

Do you know what I appreciate in a newspaper editor?

Accuracy and fairness, and adherence to facts. That is what I appreciate about Ned Hickson.

I was shocked to read about Pamela Richardson's declaration that he was unfair about calling the president's response to Charlottesville "ambiguous."

Although she may find support among the 28 percent of Americans who support the President's speech and actions, there are about 56 percent who disagree with them. Some of the prominent conservatives who were appalled at President Trump's response include Sen. Orrin Hatch, Sen. Cory Gardner, Sen. Marco Rubio, Sen. John McCain, Charles Krauthammer, Karl Rove ... should I go on?

Those are facts, *real* news, and I applaud Ned Hickson for connecting the dots that a majority of people plainly see.

I must assume Ms. Richardson supports who I believe is a deeply flawed man and incompetent President.

That is just an opinion — my opinion — based on the facts of his actions.

Ms. Richardson's analysis that Ned Hickson was unfair is *her* opinion — not a fact.

Having many prominent conservatives say that the President's response was insufficient is also fact. So our editor has tied his assertion to an idea, though not popular with you, that is based in factual consensus. And, by saying it was ambiguous, Ned Hickson was actually being diplomatic (It was called worse).

I'd like to add that Sen. Hatch tweeted that his brother did not fight Nazis in WWII so that their ideas would go unchallenged here at home.

Neither did my uncle Gilbert, who gave his life in the Push, KIA Nov 7, 1944, the Netherlands (104th, Timberwolves out of Camp Adair). He rests there in the American Cemetery at Margraten.

When our country asks our young men to lay down their lives to fight Nazis, their sacrifice should never be disrespected by not condemning Nazis and all they represent.

That's something I will never let anyone forget.

I feel it was remarkably underhanded to call for conservatives to think twice about advertising in the paper. A dishonorable threat, in my opinion, that smacks of intimidation and the stuff of bullies.

Personally, I think Ned Hickson leans to the right, to my consternation. But he is always fair and deals in facts.

That is what good editors do, to the consternation of bullies.

—Stephanie Spradling
Florence

ARPAIO PARDON AN ABUSE OF POWER

"Remember, I can do anything to anyone."

This was the precept by which Caligula ruled Rome in disregard of its governing institutions and traditions. In my opinion, it might well be the opening words of the Arpaio pardon.

Before my wife and I moved to Florence 15 years ago, Joe Arpaio, America's self-proclaimed "Toughest Sheriff," was our sheriff. He bragged about housing prisoners (mostly Hispanic) in Army surplus tents next to garbage dumps in Arizona's summer heat, dressing them in prison black and white stripes (and pink underwear) while sending them out to work in chain gangs, feeding them green bologna sandwiches and making racial profiling Standard Operating Procedure.

His "toughness" got him reelected five times, even though it cost Maricopa County taxpayers \$140 million in court judgments and legal fees, including \$6 million and \$8.25 million to the families of two men killed while in Arpaio's custody.

We moved back to Scottsdale eight months ago. Sheriff Joe had just been

voted out. But, he still faced federal charges for his refusal to enforce a 2011 court order to discontinue racial profiling practices. Two months ago, a federal judge found Arpaio guilty of criminal contempt of court.

Meanwhile, President Trump has insulted judges because of their ethnicity, disparaged their rulings, attempted to interfere with a federal investigation and tried to have the Justice Department drop Arpaio's prosecution.

However, the Arpaio pardon sets a new standard of disrespect for the courts and the rule of law.

Arpaio's pardon demeans the role and authority of the judiciary that, as chief executive, he is constitutionally bound to uphold.

Yes, the U.S. Constitution gives the president power to pardon people convicted of federal offenses, even an elected official who has violated people's constitutional rights.

But, it is an abuse of that power when the offense for which Arpaio was pardoned was being contemptuous of a federal judge's order.

President Trump's abuse is being contemptuous of the interdependence of separate but equal branches. It is an affront to every federal judge, whether nominated by a Republican or Democrat.

With his pardon, the President has essentially told us, "Remember, I can do anything to anyone."

—Arnold Buchman
Florence/Scottsdale

DISLIKE OF HATE MAKES ME EXTREMIST?

In response to the letter from Stephen Johnson (Sept. 2) about liberal extremism ("Liberal Extremism Destroying Our Fabric," Sept. 2), it is not acceptable for my neighbor, or anyone else, to suffer even one incident of hate — and sadly, it has not been only once. It is just wrong that in this country anyone would be subject to an ugly comment based on race or culture. This happens in school with bullying, racist jokes in social settings and many places where one may not feel safe with some hateful remark.

Way back in my mother's family is a grandfather, John Rolfe, who married Pocahontas. They had one son, Thomas Rolfe, in 1611.

My father's parents came from Istibna, Austria, which is now Poland. My father was born in Wyoming in 1915. On this side of my family I am only a second generation American.

So, I don't appreciate slurs against people who are different in any way by name or looks.

If my dislike of hate of any kind makes me an extremist liberal, than I would wear that badge with honor.

—Nancy Rickard
Florence

See **MORE LETTERS** 5A

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.

Send letters to:
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