

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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Celebrating National Newspaper Week and the role of community newspapers

ally thriving compared to many of their large metro and national counterparts.

“Community papers are doing better than many large, daily papers because they provide news coverage about things that matter to their local community that would otherwise be overlooked without them,” said Al Cross, director of the Institute for Rural Journalism at the University

When I became editor here last September, I’d had the good fortune of working with three terrific editors over the past 19 years at Siuslaw News. And while each brought their own style and focus, there has been one important understanding that continues to define us as a community newspaper:

To our readers, we are not just *the* newspaper; we are *their* newspaper.

Siuslaw and Oregon Coast Humane Society, to marijuana grows and DACA over the last 12 months, our almost-daily story meetings are underscored by that notion of “If not us, then who?”

As we head into National Newspaper Week tomorrow (Oct. 1-7), we’ll be offering a few special features throughout the week, beginning with perspectives from reporters Mark Brennan (City) and Jared Anderson (Community), as well as Features Editor Chantelle Meyer on what being a reporter for a community newspaper means to them.

These will appear in a special expanded Opinion section along with your Letters to the Editor.

In his book “Community Journalism,” Bruce M. Kennedy wrote, “Reporters at smaller, non-daily papers tend to connect more with issues and people because they make more time to get to know them.”

As we celebrate National Newspaper Week, we hope to provide you with a chance to get to know your newspaper even better.

(Write to Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com.)

From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

of Kentucky.

In fact, the combined readership of those 7,500 non-daily newspapers is almost 20 million *more* than that of daily newspapers, with non-dailies tallying 65.5 million subscribers compared to 45.5 million daily-paper subscribers.

This is according to the National Newspaper Association (NNA), which also noted that 70 percent of those small non-dailies have a circulation of less than 15,000; Siuslaw News is among that smaller group, with a circulation of just over 6,000.

USC professor Judy Muller told the Stanford University Press that, while local journalism is about police blotters, obituaries, bake sales and club meetings, “The best community newspapers hold local governments and institutions accountable by covering meetings, asking questions and recognizing the good as well as the not-so-good because, if not them, then who?”

While we’ve received equal amounts of accolades and criticism regarding our coverage of controversial issues ranging from the Port

of Kentucky.

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LETTERS

ELECT VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE EAGER TO SERVE OCHS

I am really disheartened and ashamed of what the local Humane Society Board has done. To falsely build up community sympathy is the only reason I can find for Ed Gervais and his board at the Oregon Coast Humane Society to request police protection at their monthly meeting last week.

As a former member of the local Humane Society, I was at the meeting the month before and there was no reason for any of the few board members in attendance to fear for their safety, even though many in the audience were very upset with the management of the shelter animals and expressed their concerns on behalf of the animals.

No one threatened them with bodily harm, though many charges were thrown verbally at them. But I say again, no one threatened them with bodily harm nor did anyone express an attempt to do so.

It looks to me that whoever requested police protection most definitely did not like their feet being held to the fire and this was an attempt to persuade the unfamiliar local folks regarding the current situation at the shelter into making the majority of people at that meeting to appear like violent rowdies.

Many of my friends and former volunteer workers at the Thrift Store and up at the shelter feel a simple way to alleviate the current and on-going situation is to have new elections and replace some of the board members with other volunteers eager to serve.

Also I might add, many of the long-time volunteers at the Thrift store whole heartedly resented the hierarchy up at the shelter who rarely came down to the Thrift Store; when they did come down to make changes, they didn’t seem to be in the best interest of the store striving to raise money for the animals and their care.

The long-time experience of some volunteers serving in the store allowed them to understand what worked and what didn’t.

It is hard to beat successful experience, but apparently it’s easy to overlook.

— Tony Cavarno
Florence

WATER NEEDED FOR DRINKING, NOT SHOWERING

Regarding Ivy Meadow’s letter “New Buildings Need to be Better Prepared” (Sept. 27), in a small single-family home or apartment, as I lived in for many years, a bathroom with a roll-in shower would have no room for a sink or toilet.

All of them were up a flight or two of stairs.

Would I have to install an elevator and a generator to run it?

Or maybe a fuel tank requiring bi-weekly inspections and bi-monthly fuel replacement?

This kind of non-thinking, feel-good, over-regulation is another step on the road to a dystopian “THX-1138” or “Brazil” like future.

Backwoodsmen go days without a bath; frontline soldiers have gone many weeks, when a bucket with a punctured bottom feels heaven sent.

In a disaster, scarce water is reserved for drinking and cooking.

A shower is wasteful excess.

— Ian Eales
Florence

LCC SHOULDN’T IGNORE FEDERAL LAW

In the Sept. 27 edition of the Siuslaw News, I was browsing the monthly “School Zone” section and read an article on DACA by Russ Pierson, Dean of LCC-Florence.

In the article, he explains the effect of President Trump’s latest orders on DACA relating to students and comes out in support DACA.

I will be very happy when Congress codifies DACA into law, if that is the will of Congress, as that’s how laws are made in this country.

As it exists today, the DACA program may well be unconstitutional no matter how well intended it is. In fact, had President Trump not stopped the program, a number of states’ Attorneys General were going to sue in Federal Court for that very reason.

And that would be entirely correct, because if something is unconstitutionally implemented it must be confronted — well-meaning or not, just like President Trump’s immigration ban

was confronted in the courts.

Why?

Because allowing unconstitutional rulings, orders or even laws to exist because we like or dislike something will lead to the effective nullification of the Constitution itself.

Maybe today you won’t care about nullification because you agree with the particular agenda. But how about tomorrow when the government decides you can, for example, no longer assemble publicly because they are tired of hearing your message?

But what really bothers me in the Dean’s article is his statement on the adoption by the Lane County Community College Board of Education of policy referencing “... the protection of immigrant students” in June to clarify its intent to provide education to all students “... regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, immigration status, age, disability, gender or gender identity.”

All the categories are fine except one.

Is it really necessary for a local community college to implement a policy that essentially says it doesn’t care about federal law? Or that it will even ignore federal law?

It is essentially saying it will pick and choose which federal laws it supports and its staff will not have any part in enforcing — or even acknowledging — a federal law on immigration exists, even if violations come to its attention.

That’s what Dean Pierson is endorsing no matter how much he tries to sugarcoat it.

The Lane County Community Colleges and staff can have all the opinions they like.

That’s fine.

But they absolutely have no place endorsing illegal and criminal activity on the tax payers’ dime, which is what they are doing.

Nobody is asking them to become ICE agents. But they should not be above the law, either.

I hope everyone keeps this in mind next time elections come around.

— Dave Peck
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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