

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.

LETTERS

LOCAL LEVY RENEWAL BENEFITS EVERYONE

Our community, in the past, has recognized the value of supporting local schools and children by passing a school local option levy.

Twice.

This levy is up for renewal and it again has our wholehearted support. As a renewal levy, there is no additional cost to the taxpayer and, most importantly, all levy dollars go directly to local Siuslaw students to support the specific educational needs in our district.

The Siuslaw Local Option Levy brings roughly \$1 million dollars per year to the schools. It has allowed our district, through sound financial judgments by the Siuslaw School Board of Directors, to maintain small class sizes, keep electives, fund vocational programs and provide greater technology and safety to our students.

Our children in Florence are fortunate to have a community that supports them and values their future.

A “yes” vote for Measure 20-281 is also a vote for a stronger, vibrant community. Medical practitioners, professional workers and new businesses are attracted to communities with quality schools. As a result, our community as a whole reaps the benefit of this levy.

—Jim and Deena Mitchell
Florence

OPPORTUNITY MISSED AT INTERPRETIVE LOT

No doubt effort was made to do a good job, but I contend the Interpretive site on Bay Street has completely missed the mark of offering a significant opportunity of enriching our enjoyment of the Siuslaw River.

This is a two-fold issue, the first being it has introduced non-native estuary vegetation plantings that block the sidewalk and street views of the river and bridge — much like the gazebo lot now does.

The lot used to be an open view point; now it is a jungle of vegetation blocking the view of even the gazebo — a real shame.

Most importantly, the new interpretive lot fails to give a history of all the pilings (what they were for), which could have been explained with information gathered from our Pioneer Museum.

There is no mention of the bridge or ferry that used to cross the river there. There is no mention of the three businesses that sat on the pilings on the south east side ... etc., etc., etc.

It is really sad that such an opportunity was missed and that vegetation that does not normally grow in the estuary zone was planted. The interpretive info presented describes those non-estuary, man-introduced plantings.

I would offer that the vacant lot that occupied the site was, in fact, indicative of the estuary zone. I have a 34-acre parcel on the estuary (that at one time was occupied by native people), and I would offer that the plants depicted in the interpretive location are not indicative of estuary plant life and (salt marsh zones) along the river.

It is interesting, though, that should the private sector want to obstruct a valuable panoramic view, the city can make it extremely difficult for such a developer. I had thought the purchase of the vacant interpretive lot was in fact a way of preserving the “natural openness to the river.”

Guess I was wrong.

Additional effort to address and resolve the openness and historical values should be undertaken.

Justifying a mistake, however, would have to be put aside.

—Brian Cole
Florence

MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR STUDENTS

Each one of us has the power to make a difference.

On Nov. 7, we can make a difference with our voting power. I have worked in the Siuslaw schools since 1979 as an aide, a teacher, a substitute teacher and

a volunteer. I have experienced, firsthand, how much each vote matters.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of observing our students become writers, scientists, artists, musicians, mathematicians, athletes and leaders as they explored opportunities in the classroom and beyond, all because our community has voted for funding.

Currently, as an ASPIRE volunteer, I am inspired daily by students reaching for opportunities beyond high school. Voting to renew the Local Option Measure 20-281 on the Nov. 7 ballot will help our schools maintain academic classes, retain courses in music, art, shop and P.E., and provide extra-curricular activities that allow Siuslaw students to succeed and thrive.

At no additional cost to the taxpayer, the Local Option Measure 20-281 simply renews the current levy to maintain the stability of current programs throughout the 2019-24 school years.

—Karen Perry
Florence

REGULATION CAN REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

In a Letter to the Editor from Ian Eales (Oct. 18), he argued that regulations aren't the answer to gun violence.

I answer that regulations have reduced gun violence.

Here are two recent examples.

First, in a study motivated by the mass shooting in Newton, Conn. In 2012, Harvard professor Deepak Malhotra and two associates recently reported that handgun waiting periods reduce gun deaths.

The study published in the “Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences” on Oct. 16 found that waiting periods in 17 states prevented approximately 750 gun deaths each year in the United States.

If more states pass waiting period laws that delay acquisition of firearms by a few days, it stands to reason gun homicides will further go down across the country.

Secondly, public health scholars at Boston University found that states with minimum concealed carry licensing standards have 10.6 percent higher homicide rates than states with stricter standards. Their study published in the “American Journal of Public Health” on Oct. 19 revealed that states that require people to demonstrate good character and a real need to walk around armed have lower homicide rates.

Congressional Democrats have repeatedly called for more gun violence research.

Unfortunately, the Dickey Amendment of 1996 mandates that “none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may be used to advocate or promote gun control.”

A bill in Congress by Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) calls for the repeal of the Dickey amendment. I urge everyone to call their members of Congress and demand they support the repeal.

Sensible regulations derived from research will reduce gun violence.

—Michael Allen
Florence

APPRECIATION FOR ‘GOOD LIFE EXPO’

I want to express my appreciation to the Siuslaw News for presenting the Good Life Boomer and Senior Expo, and my thank to its sponsors, Roby's Furniture & Appliances, Hillside Retirement Community and PeaceHealth Peace Harbor.

For me, it was a five-hour escape from the insanity (not the rain) going on in the world outside the FEC doors. Thanks to three selfless prostate cancer survivors Tom Wilson, Gary Sanders and Dennis Hamilton, our Us TOO Florence booth was in great hands and I was free to “move about the cabin.”

With that freedom, I was able to chat with presenters in other booths, meet new PeaceHealth staff at their booth and observe what happens when people come together with a common goal of helping others. Yes, the weather outside was frightful, but the caring inside was

so delightful.

I left with my faith intact!

Here in Florence, we continue to look out for each other — meeting the needs of friends, neighbors and total strangers. It was a joy to watch it all taking place.

I hope others felt as refreshed as I did when leaving for home at the end of the day ... with that delicious BJ's ice cream melting in my tummy.

—Bob Horney
Florence

UPHOLD DUNE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Woahink Lake Association's mission is to promote the understanding, protection and thoughtful management of Woahink Lake and its watershed and ecosystem. As residents, when we see our neighbors and others attempting to do things contrary to our mission, we become very concerned.

The Dunes City Charter and Comprehensive Plan were carefully crafted to protect our lakes and environment so that all residents could enjoy our special part of the Oregon Coast.

We do not want anyone to circumvent our charter.

We are happy that the Dunes City Council has made its first strides to override what many agree are ill-conceived attempts by commercial marijuana growers to establish operations that would threaten Woahink Lake and its residential environment.

The recall of improperly submitted Land Use Compliance Statements (LUCS) is an important step to protecting our community. It was disheartening, however, to listen to the recording of the special council workshop and council members discussion of what to do with the LUCS (Wednesday, Oct. 11).

They seem to be concerned with any errors in preparation of the LUCS, not the underlying issue of compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and allowing commercial enterprises to be established in residential neighborhoods.

Not once did they talk about concern for marijuana grows potential to harm the waters of Woahink Lake with runoff of fertilizers, insecticides and other contaminants.

We believe the council needs to have another work session to concentrate on the issues of importance to Dunes City.

We now look to the Planning Commission and City Council to take such steps that will rectify the error, uphold our Comprehensive Plan, adhere to our Charter and assure all of the citizens of Dunes City that our environment and the waters of Woahink Lake will continue to be protected.

—Del Riesenhuber
President, Woahink Lake Association

CONTINUE SUPPORT OF 90BY30 PROJECT

What a wonderful article about the 90by30 Project (“A Part To Play,” Oct. 18). I have been aware of this program for some time, but it was explained so well in the article by Jared Anderson. The thing that really struck me was the statement about identifying those organizations that might be able to move this project [to reduce child abuse by 90 percent by 2030] along.

I am the president of the Pregnancy and Parenting Center (formerly Caring Pregnancy center) and we currently offer many of the educational classes that were spoken of in the article.

It is our aim to help parents learn to cope with many of the frustrations that come with being a parent. Just so that people know, our doors are open to both men and women. In fact, we have just begun a class for future fathers and current fathers about what it means to be a man and a father.

I commend all those who are working on the 90by30 project and want to encourage the newspaper to keep our population up to date on what is happening with it.

In the meantime, I hope people will remember that there is an organization that offers training on what it means to be a parent.

—Don Frerichs
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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