

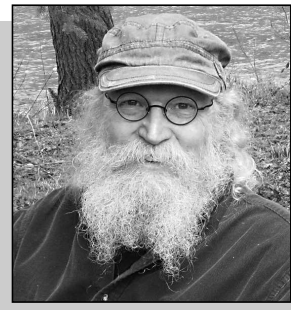
**Siuslaw News**  
P.O. Box 10  
Florence, OR 97439

# 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.

## VIEW FROM UPRIVER



## Stop the silence

WESLEY VOTH  
For the Siuslaw News

The point of the project has been to restore the meandering shape of the stream, re-plant native trees and vegetation that hold soil, lower temperatures through increased shade from leaves that also enrich the soil, and, lastly, to place large logs crisscrossing the flood plain to slow water and create pools and ponds to rear juvenile Coho.

We saw an abundance of wildlife, especially waterfowl and three kinds of hawks, the tracks of many mammals, and herds of insects from dragonflies to Sulphur butterflies to midges.

It has only been through hard work and cooperation on many levels and between multiple resources that this transformation to repair previous, ongoing damage has come to fruition — the end result being something everyone can share and appreciate.

As much as I'd like to spend more time talking about local coastal Coho habitat restoration, I can't

help but recognize the parallel to what has been an ongoing and damaging culture of intimidation among many men in power.

I must finally — as a male — say something about men raping, harassing and abusing women, and the ways in which men have made use of money, position, power, intimidation, the legal system, culture, religion and politics to dominate, shame, silence and abuse their vicinities.

I have been too silent, somehow thinking it enough to live by a code where such is unacceptable in myself, my son and people under my watch as a social worker and teacher.

But being disgusted by it is not enough; my distancing myself from it in my own life has not benefitted anyone much at all.

A history of this behavior should be sufficient reason not to elect such men to office, but we did with both Bill Clinton and Donald Trump, and have allowed the confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court of Clarence Thomas.

Harassment and abuse of

women and others should be sufficient cause to remove men from office.

But we typically don't.

It seems very late in the day now in destroying the career or legacy of some, such as Bill Cosby, Bill O'Reilly and Harvey Weinstein, or a few notable athletes who have served jail time. But too many have been able to use their wealth and position to ensure the silence of their victims to assure they aren't held accountable in any meaningful way.

And each time, their behavior gives tacit approval and permission to all of the little, everyday bullies and abusers who similarly never have to acknowledge or learn what a consensual act or relationship looks like.

I join those who insist — no, demand — that this change.

Only through hard work and cooperation on many levels within our society and culture can we repair and transform what has been an ongoing culture of abuse into something better that we can all share.

## LETTERS

### HEAD START ALSO HAS

#### A STAR RATING

It was wonderful to read in the Siuslaw News (Sept. 30) that ABC preschool has achieved Oregon's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) four-star quality rating.

The newspaper press release indicates this is a "first" for a Florence preschool.

I would like to point out that Florence's Head Start preschool has had a five-start rating (QRIS) since March 21, 2016. Head Start in Florence is a certified center with the State of Oregon adhering to strict guidelines and qualifications to ensure a well rounded preschool program is offered to children ages three to five.

Head Start is also a nonprofit, federally and state funded preschool program offered to 38 children and their families in Florence and Mapleton areas.

"Head Start of Lane County is ensuring that our youngest children have a solid foundation for life."

—Bonnie Cole  
AM Head Teacher  
Florence

### REMEMBER THAT ANIMALS

#### ARE THE REAL POINT

While it is true that the Board of Directors of the Oregon Coast Humane Society is currently experiencing a "rough patch" regarding its management and decision-making, I think it is important for all of us in the community to look at not just the board and its actions, but the OCHS as a whole.

The OCHS's paramount concern is the *animals* and the dedicated staff and volunteers who do the real work of caring for them.

In the Saturday, Oct. 21, edition of the Siuslaw News, yet another person wrote to say that they are pulling their support from the OCHS because they are disappointed with its Board of Directors.

My question to people of this mindset is: How does withholding money for food, medicine, medical care, staff, training and cleaning supplies from the animals punish the board?

The answer is: It doesn't.

It only punishes the animals by

making it more difficult to provide for their needs, and consequently stymies the OCHS's efforts to provide a safe haven for all abandoned and unwanted animals.

Quite frankly, the narrow and short-sighted viewpoint taken by an awful lot of people in the Florence area is an insult and slap in the face to volunteers and donors, like myself and my husband, who in spite of the beleaguered state of the OCHS Board of Directors would never dream of withholding our time and support from the animals.

As Ghandi said, "The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

It doesn't say much about our community if so many people are willing turn their back on the 100 or so animals at the shelter (who are at our mercy) in order to punish five human board members.

Don't get me wrong. Until the current audit of OCHS financials is complete, my husband and I are not sending our monthly donation in cash. However, instead of arbitrarily pulling our donation, we spend each month's donation money on food, medicine and/or cleaning supplies and donate these items directly to the staff so that they can be used solely for the benefit of the animals in the shelter's care.

We still get the tax write-off, and are secure in the knowledge that our donation money is well spent.

It's a solution rather than retribution.

So many positive things have been accomplished at the OCHS in the past couple of years. It is unfortunate that the community at large seems so disinterested in hearing about the good things, preferring to dwell on the nasty campaign of rumor, invective and ill-will floated onto social media by a small, mean-spirited group of negative attention seekers.

Without doubt, the issues recently raised regarding OCHS and its board of directors need to be scrutinized — if only to put all these unfounded allegations to rest. In the meantime, we would all do well to remember — first and foremost — the humane society should always be about the *animals*.

—Mary Conley  
Florence

### OPTION LEVY BENEFITS

#### MORE THAN SCHOOLS

Although there is just one ballot measure for local residents to decide on by Nov. 7, it is a vital one to our community. The local option levy renewal proposes to maintain the existing levy supporting the Siuslaw School District for five more years, beginning in 2019-20.

It is not a tax increase, but a renewal of an existing levy applied to local property values. It would raise over \$5 million during the 5-year time period, allowing our schools to maintain existing levels of current programs while helping the district to meet a few of the anticipated needs in the coming years.

As a daily volunteer in the Siuslaw High School ASPIRE program, I see first-hand the critical needs for funding on all levels of education in our community. Our students, teachers, administrators and staff members rely on every available dollar. Even at current levels of funding, there are shortages and unmet needs throughout its district.

Without the levy renewal, vital programs would be cut and the unmet needs of our students and teachers would become significantly more severe.

Our children need and deserve our support to fulfill their goals and become contributing members of society.

Furthermore, support for the local levy renewal will benefit the entire community. Good schools help to attract businesses and professionals to the area, increasing available services for all of us. I would especially like to see well-funded schools that will attract doctors and nurses who are raising school-age children.

In so doing, we are likely to attract more medical personnel to fill our serious shortage only if we can offer a vibrant community with excellent schools.

I hope that every voter will recognize the importance of the Nov. 7 ballot and vote in favor of the local option levy for our schools.

—Robert Orr  
Dunes City

See **MORE LETTERS** 5A

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## Siuslaw News

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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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