

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.



Mueller investigation is about more than Trump and Clinton

system has become — regardless of which side of the aisle you're from — because of its dependency on campaign funding from special interests. In the 2004 general election, 95 percent of House races and

While legislators and their staff are prohibited by law from making fundraising calls from their offices, both Democrats and Republicans can utilize party-owned call centers within two blocks of

Democrats utilize the same banking operations that have become another cog in an out-of-control political machine.

While issues of collusion, manipulation, money laundering, false statements and conspiracy are being leveled, they are merely symptoms of a political plaque that has been building in the arteries of our government for decades — and now threatens the very heartbeat of our democracy.

Mueller's investigation could prove to be one of the most important in our nation's history, revealing a diagnosis of what we need to know rather than what we want to know.

Only then can we begin to address the kinds of reforms needed to assure that the heart of our political system beats for its people rather than its pocketbook.

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From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

91 percent of Senate races were won by candidates who spent the most on their campaigns.

This has only become more prevalent since 2010, when the Supreme Court's "Citizens United" decision began allowing unlimited spending by corporations, unions and individuals in elections — spawning Super PACS (Political Action Committees) that routinely raise millions of dollars for candidates by holding events hosted by special interests, lobbyists and others hoping to benefit from influencing future legislation.

Capitol Hill. This was documented in a "60 Minutes" report last April, when Florida Rep. David Jolly exposed "call centers" in the back rooms of his own party's headquarters where legislators and staff can make "cold calls" utilizing a script aimed at persuading individuals to donate.

According to Jolly, the goal is to procure \$18,000 a day.

"These are essentially sweat shop phone booths that compromise the dignity of the office," Jolly said in his interview.

Sure, he was a Republican, but without question

Even as the first layers are revealed from what will undoubtedly be an endless peeling back of Robert Mueller's investigative onion, it seems clear that both the Clinton and Trump camps will be left standing among its pungent aroma.

As I said months ago, regardless of how you feel about our current president, his election and subsequent controversies — while polarizing many Americans — has also forced us to engage with our government and its policies more than we have since the 1960s and 70s.

And that's a good thing.

In that same way, I also believe that the indictments Mueller handed down Monday are just the beginning of what I hope will force us to take a hard look at just how ineffective and corrupt our political

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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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LETTERS

GAZEBO PARK FAR FROM BEING A 'JUNGLE'

I am sitting in our apartment on the bayfront, looking at an old photo of "the gazebo lot" — as Brian Cole referred to it in his Letter to the Editor ((Oct. 25) — taken in the early 1970s.

In a word, a wasteland, strewn with litter, trash and metal parts that appear to be orphans from discarded refrigerators and stoves. Only brave souls ventured out beyond these impediments to glimpse the water.

Yes, a park normally has trees, bushes and, occasionally, a handsome-built gazebo. No, I don't think our "gazebo lot" can accurately be called "a jungle."

And yes, from the brick-lined plaza one can view the bay and gazebo. The Old Town Park Committee's volunteers trim the top growth of the plaza's shrubs on a regular basis to assure the view will not be obstructed.

However, we do admit you probably can't see the Siuslaw estuary from a fast-moving sports car traveling along Bay Street.

—R.W. Hogeland
Old Town Florence

LEARNING HOW TO PLAY THE INSURANCE GAME

About two years ago I had fallen on my left knee and then fell once again about six months later. I asked to have an MRI knowing that an X-ray does not really show anything.

An MRI was scheduled so I went to my local orthopedic surgeon to schedule the procedure, only to be informed that my insurance had denied the MRI.

Now after almost a year and a half, I have no strength in my left knee. I returned to my primary doctor last week for my bi-yearly checkup and mentioned my knee problem.

This is where learning to play the game comes in.

I was told I may have been rejected initially because of the hospital charge, even though I have Medicare and supplemental coverage. Hospitals charge anywhere from \$1,600 to \$2,600 for my procedure. However, if I went to an imaging center it would cost about \$600 and my insurance would cover it. I called Oregon Imaging Center in Eugene for an appointment and was told that everything would be covered. My doctor also said that individuals without insurance can go to an imaging center in Albany and, if they pay cash, can get an MRI for \$500.

I guess with healthcare you need to know what questions to ask in order to play the game.

—Win Jolley
Florence

MORE PEOPLE NEEDED IN FEC SEATS

The Florence Events Center auditorium filled with happy sounds Sunday, Oct. 29. Thirteen talented musicians, instrumental and vocal, known collectively as the Emerald City (Eugene) Jazz Kings, kept their audience entertained with familiar tunes such as "Button Up Your Overcoat," "Look for the Silver Lining," "Bye, Bye Blackbird" and others.

Most of the songs were produced by B. G. "Buddy" DeSylva, working with a

variety of other composers. They were written between 1921 and 1939; most were featured in Broadway musical shows or movies.

The musicians seemed to be having as much fun as their audience; one of the performers said so on stage.

The only down side was that there were too many empty seats in the auditorium. If you enjoy hearing songs that have stood the test of time, played live with enthusiasm and expertise, you would like the Jazz Kings. They will be in Florence three more times this season: December 13, at 7:30 p.m. for a Christmas show; Feb. 11, 2018, at 2 p.m.; and May 6, at 2 p.m.

The February show will be songs made famous by Bing Crosby; the May offering will be songs requested from fans by Feb. 11 in-person, by mail, or by internet at www.theshedd.org/YouAskedForItSongs.

Hope to see more of you at the concerts.

—Shirley Nelson
Florence

THANKS FOR THE SCARES, CROW

To all of the CROW kids and grown-ups, thanks so much for scaring the socks off of me in your haunted house. That took care of my heart check-up for another year.

Also, thanks to Alex Grady for his filmmaker's talents in producing that excellent introduction to terror.

CROW rocks!

—Lisa Readel
Florence