

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.

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Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

James Rand
Jenna Bartlett
Ned Hickson
Erik Chalhouh

Susan Gutierrez
Cathy Dietz
Ron Annis
Jeremy Gentry

Oregon Group Publisher 541-265 8571
Publisher, ext. 318
Editor, ext. 313
Consulting Editor 831-761-7353
Email: echalhouh@register-pajaronian.com
Marketing Director, ext. 326
Office Supervisor, ext. 312
Production Supervisor
Press Manager

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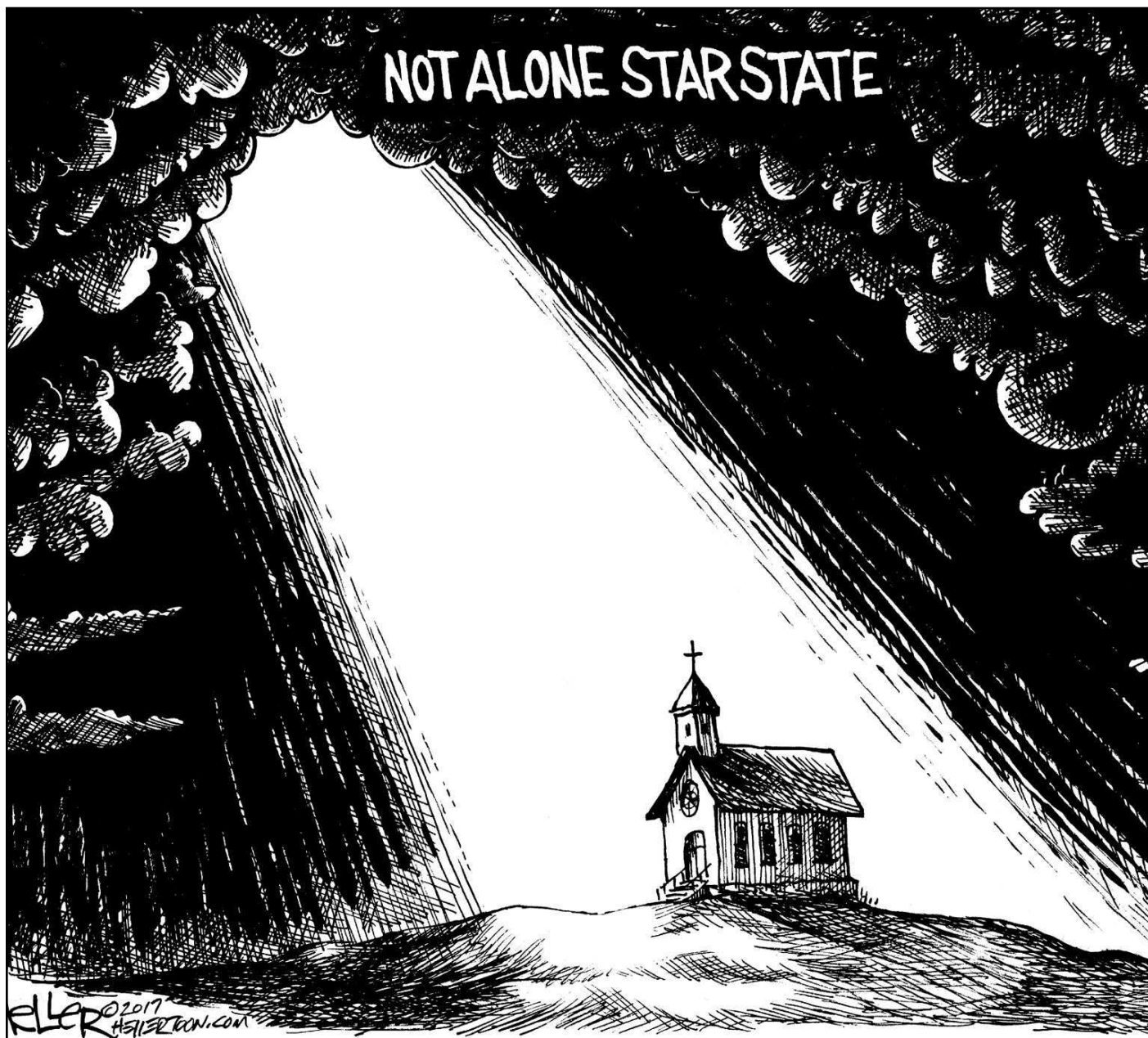
Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.

Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$76; 6-month in-county, \$52; 10-weeks subscription, \$23; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$99; 6-month out-of-county, \$65; 10-weeks subscription, \$29; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$125; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$71.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
Website and E-Edition: TheSiuslawNews.com



LETTERS

BETTER STUDY ON GUN REGULATION NEEDED

It's been 30 days since the horrifying mass shooting in Las Vegas.

Each time thoughts and prayers are offered.

Each time people cry out for change.

Each time it is "too soon" to talk about crafting even the simplest legislation that might prevent gun fatalities.

The pushback is always the same: Criminals don't follow the law; Guns don't kill people; Second Amendment rights; Don't punish the law abiding; Enforce the laws we have.

So here we are, not one step closer to even defining the particulars that could move us towards legislation that would reduce gun violence. Our current gun laws have had such influence from the gun lobby that even those that were hard-fought do not really have the teeth to provide the protection the majority of citizens — who are not even gun owners — desire.

For instance, the "bump stock" used in Las Vegas, and other converters, are only illegal if you actually have them in the area of the gun. If you have a semi-auto gun and a converter in the same house — or worse have the converter installed — you've committed a crime.

But if you keep the converters in a different location it's perfectly legal.

What kind of logic was used in creating that law?

Then there are the waiting periods which are different in every state. Even when the Brady Bill was enacted, it still allowed states to substitute background checks in place of the waiting period. As a result, we still had no consistency at a national level.

Another example are those who think anyone experiencing domestic violence is automatically protected with laws at the federal level; except the lawmakers strangely exempted boyfriends and stalkers.

Some states do manage to listen to the larger group of citizens who support complete background checks, bump stock bans, waiting periods and other sensible gun restrictions.

Others states do not.

Recent letters to the editor come down starkly on opposite sides of the gun debate. With this hodge-podge of legislation at the federal and state level, it makes it impossible to know what will work in the US.

That is why the most common sense

first-step at this point is to repeal the Dickey Amendment and fund the Centers for Disease Control to thoroughly study gun fatalities, gun legislation and prevention strategies.

It is clear that only empirical data will lead to irrefutable solutions that will be agreeable to all.

— Sandy Todd
Florence

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR WITH GUN LAWS

If waiting periods had an effect, one should expect to see similar drops in age brackets outside the 14-24 range. There are no significant changes from the 40 year slope.

The Brady Law went into effect Feb 28, 1994. Homicides for ages 14-17 remained unchanged for 1994, beginning a steep decline in 1995 that continued until 2000, when the rate flattened.

The 18-24 age bracket peaked in 1991, dropped in 1992, peaked again 1993, dropped about 50 percent of the 1993 drop in 1994, then further dropped in 1995 — continuing to decline until 1999, when the rate flattened.

There is simply too much noise in the data to make the claim that waiting periods are effective. There are myriad other factors which have an effect: economics, enforcement, urbanization, demographics, climate, etc. (See the FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System.)

Other than the extra violent decade between 1990-2000, knives, blunt objects and other methods account for around 40 percent of homicides (FBI Homicides by Weapon Type 1976-2004).

Restricting firearm access did not increase homicides by these alternate methods as one might reasonably expect. In fact, homicides by these alternate methods began to decline well before the implementation of the Brady Law.

A 2000 study found that the implementation of the Brady Act was associated with "reductions in the firearm suicide rate for persons aged 55 years or older but not with reductions in homicide rates or overall suicide rates." (Ludwig, Jens "Homicide and Suicide Rates Associated With Implementation of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act" by Ludwig, Jens, Aug. 2, 2000.)

Expecting Congress to do anything worthwhile is a pipe dream.

The Weimar Republic passed gun control laws to keep guns out of the hands of the Nazis. When the Nazis took power, they used those same laws to disarm their opponents.

Regarding power, one would do well to remember:

"Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

— Mao Zedong

Be careful what you wish for.

You just may get it.

— Ian Eales
Florence

ARE TURKEYS

REALLY A NECESSITY?

It would be nice to have Thanksgiving dinner among family and friends. However, I have an issue with Food Share wanting additional donations so it can give away 400 turkeys while, meanwhile, local residents just received their property tax statements and noticed an increase in taxes.

Plus, there are all the other usual expenses which seem to be increasing as well.

With the setbacks of donations from the local corporate entities (Safeway, Three Rivers Casino), why not just use the available monies to stock the pantry for the upcoming winter season instead of spending it on turkeys?

There are other Thanksgiving dinner alternatives, such as the well-advertised Florence Kiwanis Community Free Thanksgiving dinner. I say this because the Siuslaw News article (Florence Food Share In Crisis, Nov. 4) leads me to believe donations are drying up.

If that's the case, maybe Food Share needs to prioritize its resources to survive. This is the unfortunate risk of depending on donations to support the basic needs of some of our local population.

— Virginia Reynolds
Florence

WE'LL MISS WESLEY

Wesley Voht brightened our lives with his observations of the natural beauty "Upriver."

Many times, he taught us about an animal or plant we wanted to know. He took us back to our roots in nature and then gently — and with a unique humility — tried to lead us to our better selves.

We will miss him.

— Jim and Jane Pittenger
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.

Send letters to:
nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

WHERE TO WRITE

Pres. Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414
FAX: 202-456-2461
TTY/TDD Comments:
202-456-6213
www.whitehouse.gov

Gov. Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court St.
Salem, Ore. 97301-4047
Governor's Citizens' Rep.
Message Line:
503-378-4582
www.oregon.gov/gov

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office
Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
541-431-0229
www.wyden.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office
Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753/FAX: 202-228-3997
541-465-6750
www.merkley.senate.gov

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio
(4th Dist.)
2134 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6416
541-269-2609
541-465-6732
www.defazio.house.gov

State Sen. Arnie Roblan
(Dist. 5)
900 Court St. NE - S-417
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1705
FAX: 503-986-1080
Email: Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us

State Rep. Caddy McKeown
(Dist. 9)
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1409
Email: rep.caddymckeown@state.or.us

West Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich
125 E. Eighth St.
Eugene, OR 97401
541-682-4203
FAX: 541-682-4616
Email:
Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us