

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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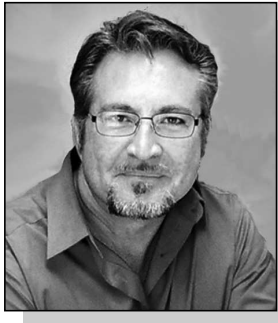
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What will it take to assure coastal living as a community?

and Washington to declare a state of emergency — a designation usually reserved for a natural disaster.

Here in the Siuslaw region, while we prepare for the inevitable earthquake and tsunami predicted to occur sometime in the next 50 years, we are experiencing our own crisis related to a

ness in our region. We've spoken with city officials, nonprofit organizations, businesses, volunteer programs, realtors, property managers and average citizens to not only understand the scope on a local level, but gain some perspective on what some of the solutions are — and why it's so critical to implement

abuse remain because they can't afford a place on their own — even when children are involved.

In the weeks ahead, we will explore the many aspects of this crisis to identify the problems, some of the potential solutions and, most importantly, what it will take to implement those solutions.

Topics will include the challenges of creating living-wage jobs, economic development, affordable housing, the local work force, and the short- and long-term impacts of local programs like Helping Hands, Food Share, Siuslaw Outreach Services and others that rely heavily on volunteers and donations.

We hope you will join us each Wednesday over the next seven weeks, beginning today with Part 1 of "Is Coastal Living In Jeopardy?" as we identify the issues we face together as members of the Siuslaw region.

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From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

lack of housing and living-wage jobs. Except, unlike a natural disaster, it's not looming in the unforeseeable future.

It's here.

The question is what to do about it.

In the months spent preparing for our eight-week series "Is Coastal Living In Jeopardy?" we looked into the common denominator creating the unhealthy symbiotic relationship between low-wage jobs and homeless-

them to assure the future of our coastal region.

We were shocked to learn about how many of those who we see working two and three jobs around town retire to their cars each night because they can't afford the average \$750 to \$950 rent for an apartment; the elderly in our community who sell donated items in yard sales to supplement their Social Security in order to pay their utilities; how some of those in situations of domestic

LETTERS

WONDERFUL COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF VETS

Though it rained on our parade, a great many patriotic members of our wonderful community lined the route to honor all veterans. Parade participants thanked those who braved the elements as several distributed flags.

Oregon Dunes Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is grateful to Dan Lofy for the use of his trailer that allowed several members to ride this year, and to Oregon Coast Military Museum board member Tom Benedict, who skillfully towed the trailer.

Two Coos Bay DAR Chapter members joined the fun, one of whom portrayed Betsy Ross and delivered flags and copies of the Flag Code. We also enjoyed the company of a Yaquina Chapter member, whose husband is currently serving in the Air Force.

Siuslaw Elementary School students wrote heartwarming notes to veterans that were distributed along the way by Shannon and Kaylee Graham, Carrie West McNeil and her daughters.

Seeing our community join together to acknowledge the sacrifices of those who served to protect our freedoms is worthy of our remembrance and support.

—Jacquie Beveridge
Florence

ADDRESS THE REAL ISSUE OF GUN VIOLENCE

Recently, 26 innocent people were killed in Texas by a mentally ill man who never should have legally been able to buy a gun. The killing spree was stopped by a good citizen with a gun — and if someone in the church had been armed, maybe many more lives would have been saved.

The United States has many laws pertaining to guns, but they are only as good as the people that enforce them. In this case, the U.S. Air Force dropped the ball and didn't report the shooter's court martial, which would have banned him from buying a gun.

Semi-automatic rifles were first sold in this country in 1885 and have been used by hunters, target shooters and sportsmen since that time. An assault weapon is, by definition, a selective fire weapon that can be switched from semi automatic to full automatic; assault weapons are used

by the military and cannot be sold to the general public.

What the Texas shooter had was an AR-15 style rifle, which is semi-automatic. In spite of what you may hear on TV, the AR in this instance stands for ArmaLite Rifle, after the company that developed it in the 1950s. This is just an updated version of the semi-automatic rifle, first introduced in 1885, that is easier to clean, lighter and more versatile.

It isn't an "assault" rifle. There are millions of these rifles in the hands of private citizens in the U.S. and it is the best-selling rifle in use today.

Keep in mind anyone who buys a gun today has to register the gun at the time of purchase. Nothing is given to the person buying the gun that would prove that the gun has been registered, so requiring a gun owner to prove registration prior to purchasing ammunition is not possible.

It is estimated that there are over 360 million registered guns in the U.S., so for the federal government to provide proof to every gun owner would be very costly. It seems to me that the best course of action is to keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them.

There are laws in effect to stop that from happening but they are ineffective if people with mental health problems or who are involved in criminal activity are not reported. Let's not blame the gun or the millions of good people in our country who own and enjoy them on the actions of a few deranged people.

—Tom Wilson
Florence

PROUD OF FLORENCE

I am so proud of Florence and Western Lane County. Once again, this time in downpours of rain, our community turned out to support our veterans in the annual parade held in Old Town.

I am especially proud of Janet Van Thies, a new volunteer to The Salvation Army-Western Lane County. Janet lost her brother this year, who was a successful graduate of the Men's Rehabilitation Program many years ago in Long Beach, Calif. In his memory, she marched carrying our Home Front War Relief banner.

She got soaked and declined a rain coat so people could see her bright red Salvation Army Volunteer T-shirt.

Wonderfully, a man standing on the edge of the street jumped in alongside Janet to help carry the banner.

He put on an extra volunteer T-shirt and promptly got soaked, too.

People like this define the character of Florence and western Lane County, as do the many who stood alongside the streets and waved flags for our veterans. We all got soaked in the love and respect shown to men and women who have served our nation in times of conflict and peace to assure we at home are more safe and more secure because of their sacrifices.

What a wonderful way to show others the value of their service.

Thank you!

—Bill Olson
Salvation Army-Western Lane
County
Florence

BUDDY POPPY DRIVE A SUCCESS FOR VETS

I want to thank our local Fred Meyer store for allowing us to be in its north entrance for two days over Veterans Day weekend, and a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to our annual Buddy Poppy Drive.

It was our most successful drive since I became a member.

The Auxiliary to the VFW Post 3232 — which is open to men and women — has a mission to help veterans in many ways, from physical and mental health, to housing and hospital care.

Holidays can be a depressing time without something special for them, and all the auxiliaries in Oregon contribute to helping veterans in homes or hospitals have as close to a normal holiday season as possible.

We also help support the annual Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy essay writing contest at local schools.

So for all of those who contributed this Veterans Day weekend, we thank you. All the money collected will be used to help our men and women who served their country, as well the young men and women who will one day be in our shoes.

—Beryl Foreman
President, Florence Auxiliary to
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 3232
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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