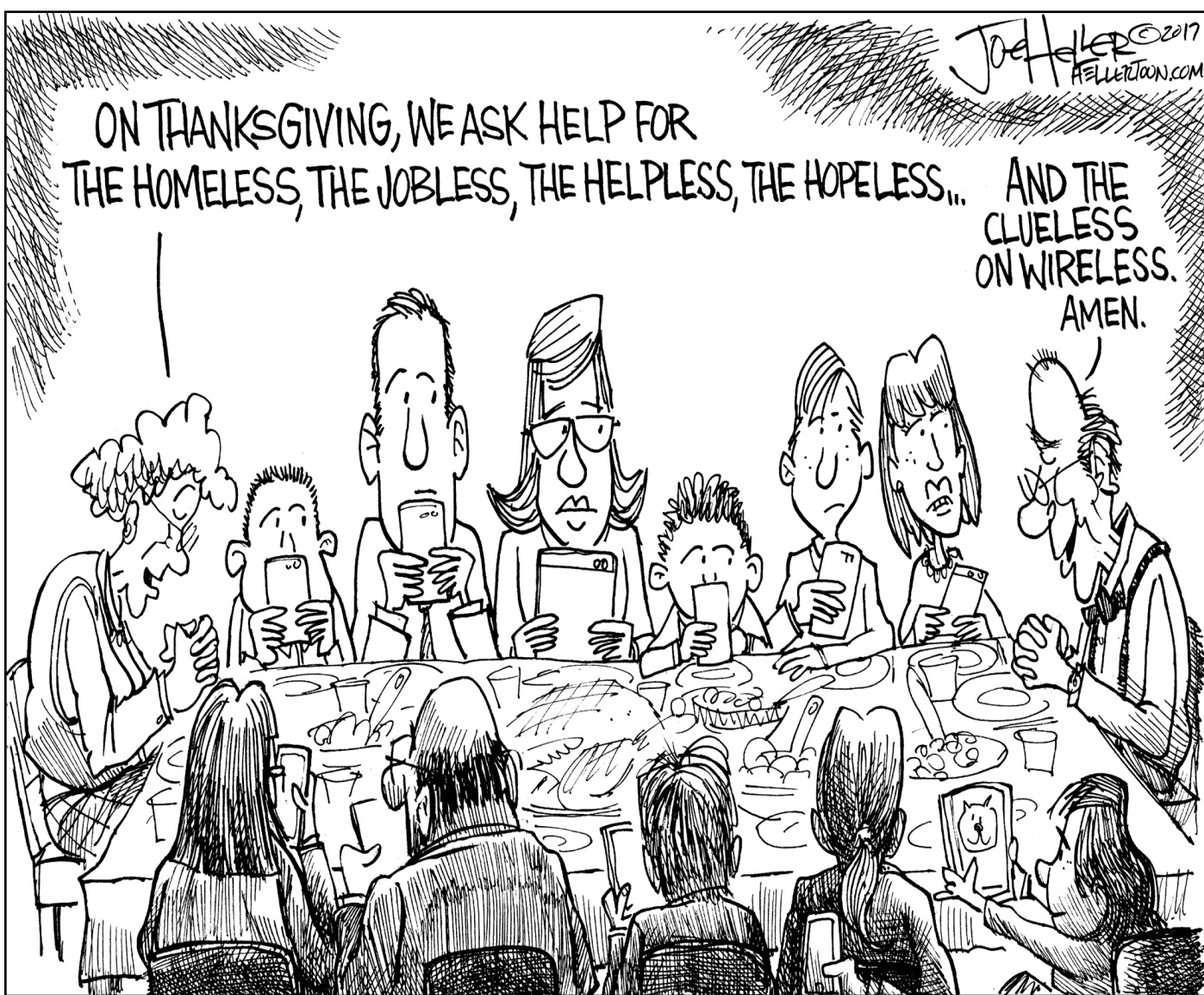


**Siuslaw News**  
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# Opinion

**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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## Thankfulness is the levity we need



often than not, we have come to instinctively reach for a blindfold when it comes to how we see each other and those around us.

It's a mindset that runs counter to the idea of being thankful because it narrows

analysis through news outlets, social media and notifications on phones, computers and tablets, our attention is constantly being diverted away from real interaction with each other and toward a nebulous relationship with

take time to gather around the table and talk about what we're thankful for in one another; the things that unite us in appreciation; and the common good that defines us as a family, community and ultimately as Americans.

I believe the trickle-down divisiveness around us can be diluted if we allow the ripple effect of thankfulness to provide some much-needed levity.

My best wishes and sincere thanks to our readers, letter writers and community for providing so many moments each day for which I am thankful.

Write Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson at [nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com](mailto:nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com) or P.O. Box 10, Florence, Ore. 97439.

### From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

our vision and eliminates the good that exists within our peripheral.

To put it plainly, it's hard to appreciate a sunset while facing east.

I'm no exception. And not just because I have a lousy sense of direction.

In today's constant barrage of information, opinion and

those we hardly know.

The result is a growing inability to live in "real" time and in those moments with one another that remind us of the things for which we are thankful.

As we enter into the holiday season, and especially the Thanksgiving holiday tomorrow, I hope we can all

### LETTERS

#### THE TIME TO ACT ON HOUSING IS NOW

Kudos to Jared Anderson and Siuslaw News for the exceptionally well-written article "Is Coastal Living in Jeopardy?" (Nov. 15). The article was well researched and its sources site and address a city in crisis.

The lack of affordable housing and the ramifications it could cause is unfortunately just recently coming to the attention of the citizens of the Florence community.

The Florence City Council recognizes that we have a housing issue. The amazing city staff, City Manager Erin Reynolds, City Recorder Kelli Weese and Planning Director Wendy Farley Campbell have been working incredibly hard to define the problem. In addition, the city has formed the HEOP committee and hired consultants to formulate solutions.

However this is only a beginning. The real work will come after the consultants finalize their study.

It is my understanding the HEOP Committee was formed as a response to the State of Oregon's requirement to update the City of Florence's Comprehensive Plan. Updating comprehensive plans and changing land use and zoning ordinances can be a long and frustrating endeavor. It requires a plethora of meetings both with the City Council and the Planning Commission and various subcommittees.

These meetings and hearings can easily go on for many months if not many years. Sadly, the City of Florence housing crisis doesn't have the luxury of time; it is here and it is happening now.

The City Council has to have the will

and the creativity to think outside that old box and make changes now. Change can be done by looking at reducing system development fees, reducing permit fees and expediting zoning variances, as well as pursuing relationships with various state, federal, county and private housing development organizations.

Our housing need is urgent, and I believe the actions of the City Council and superb city staff must be totally focused on the biggest challenge the City of Florence has ever faced.

—Eric D. Hauptman  
 Florence

#### GUN VIOLENCE IN U.S. VS. ISRAEL

In light of the gun violence we are experiencing over and over again here in the U.S., I took the time to check the facts and found what I already know — that gun violence in Israel is negligible.

And it is not because people in Israel are better or less violent, it is because of the culture and the enforcement of regulations.

Owning a gun in Israel is considered a great responsibility and a privilege. In a country where almost everyone serves in the army, and in which guns are associated with the country's endless battle to stay alive, the weapon culture that emerged is one of responsibility rather than rights like in the U.S.

Israel keeps a registry of all of its gun owners, who must pass a background check that considers criminal, physical and mental health records.

In addition, they must also take shooting courses at a licensed gun range and

provide a specific reason for needing a gun, like working in security or living in the settlements, where Israeli security is limited and the rate of attacks against Jews is higher.

If approved, Israeli gun owners must retake their license exam every three years.

So for anyone that thinks regulations are not effective, please think again.

—Liat Meller  
 Florence

#### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

In response to Dana Rodet's Letter to the Editor (Nov. 10):

I have lived on Mitchell Loop Road for 50 years, and I pick up all kinds of trash when I see it. I also pull Scotchbroom plants.

When I see trash in the ditch on Highway 101, next to our road, I pick it up, too.

When our kids were little, we used to go to Washington and they would ask why there was so much trash on the side of the road. I told them some parents do not teach their kids not to litter.

I took my kids and grandkids on "garbage patrols," so it upsets them to see trash thrown on the roadside.

We can't — and shouldn't — expect the county to do everything for us. There is an old saying, "monkey see, monkey do." Maybe the people who litter will think twice about throwing trash everywhere if more people would set a good example for them.

I hope Oregonians will take pride in their communities.

—Virgle Bechtold  
 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:  
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