

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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Dark side and bright side to local housing

The Siuslaw News recently began a series to shine a light on the current housing crisis. It has generated a great deal of positive response. Many have stepped forward to offer help and suggestions to alleviate this issue.

However, a recent letter to the editor (“News Story Paints False Picture,” Nov. 25) sparked a bit of a debate on the issue. The response illustrates how some members of our community are misinformed and unaware of what many others in our community are experiencing, as well as throughout the State of Oregon.

The writer of that letter seems to want the Siuslaw News to only report on the positive things going on in our area. The writer also claimed there were unsubstantiated facts reported in Part I of “Is Coastal Living in Jeopardy?” (Nov. 15.)

Her letter cites the city of Florence’s website to dispute those numbers when, in fact, the numbers reflected in the article were inclusive of the greater Florence area (Dune City, Heceta and Mapleton) that contribute to our local economy.

The estimated numbers come from feasibility studies done in the past 10 years, Lane County, Dunes City, City of Florence and U.S. Census Bureau.

By the calculations of the letter writer, she reports nearly 60 percent of Florence residents are of retirement age. The relevancy of that is a lower number

of “work force” residents compared to communities of similar size.

Here are some substantiated documented statistics collected from Lane County, U.S. Census Bureau and the City of Florence to consider:

- 826 document homeless individuals living in our area,
- 2,956 unduplicated

Hands, Food Share, local churches and individuals helping the homeless with clothing, showers, tents, sleeping bags, motel stays and food.

There are many homeless individuals working during the day and sleeping in their vehicles at night.

Yes, I agree there are homeless individuals that choose to

to create workforce housing opportunities and encourage business development that is not dependant on seasonal tourism.

The reason, in part, for this housing crisis is that we have a high quality of life here. People drive through town and see we live in a community full of caring citizens. We have great facilities, wonderful events and an active Chamber of Commerce. We enjoy the arts, have good schools, experience a low crime rate and enjoy beauty all around us. We live in an area full of generous people who give of their time, talents and money to support their neighbor. We have organizations like SOS, Food Share, Helping Hands, Red Cross, Boys and Girls Club and others filled with amazing volunteers that provide help to those in need. We have active service clubs like Rotary, Kiwanis, Soroptimist, Lions and veteran clubs working hard to improve our community. I know I am leaving some out because we are so blessed with many caring groups and individuals in our community.

Because we have so many caring selfless individuals and groups out there, I am confident we can solve this issue. It is just going to take time to do it right and sustain long term.

To do so, we must be willing to both embrace the bright side while shedding light on those things that aren’t so bright.

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By **BOB TETER**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SIUSLAW OUTREACH SERVICES

Florence-area residents sought assistance with rent or utilities in 2016.

• \$32,588 average household gross income for the greater Florence area (or \$47,318 for Lane County).

In Part II of “Coastal Living in Jeopardy,” (Nov. 22), City Planning Director Wendy FarleyCampbell confirmed there is a housing issue at hand and many wage earners are only a paycheck away from homelessness.

Most recently, in Part III of the series (Nov. 29), local property managers and builders have confirmed that many are homeless due to no fault of their own, but rather because of a larger economic issue.

This is the case around much of the country.

It may be that some in our community do not see a problem because there are so many groups like SOS, Helping

be homeless.

Yes, there are homeless individuals who suffer from drug addiction. Oregon ranks second to last in the availability of drug and alcohol rehabilitation programming — but, that is another issue altogether.

There are many who are working, or want to work, but cannot obtain affordable housing as illustrated in Part III. There are also several seniors in our community whose sole income is Social Security and, as a result, cannot afford housing. The reasons and causes of homelessness are as vast as the number of those experiencing it.

Now for the brighter side...

The City of Florence has been taking action on this issue like never before. Mayor Joe Henry, members of the Florence City Council and their committees, as well as city staff, are aggressively working

LETTERS

DEMS WERE ON BOARD WITH REAGANOMICS

In response to Rand Dawson’s Letter to the Editor “Less is More” (Nov. 29):

For the entire Reagan presidency, the House of Representatives, which writes legislation, was Democratically controlled. At no time did the Republican-controlled Senate have a filibuster-proof majority.

Ergo, Democrats were on board with the crafting of what has become known as “Reaganomics.”

We can play silly numbers games all day long.

For example, Johnson signed the Revenue Act of 1964.

Tax rates were reduced.

Unemployment fell.

The economy expanded.

Revenue grew.

From legislation written by a democratically-controlled House and Senate that reduced taxes, grew the economy and raised government revenue.

The left-media never write about Johnsonomics, yet the same changes under a Republican president with a Democratically controlled House are

blamed for all manner of economic woes. As far as taking refuge in the 1990 proposed budget, the revenue “losses” are calculated on the size of the economy. It is a fool’s errand to assume that the economy would have sustained growth had the 1980 rates been in effect.

The economy was a yo-yo for the Carter years and the first two Reagan years. Had the economy contracted with the 1980 rates in effect, receipts would still have declined.

On page 1-15 of the FY1990 Budget of the U.S. Government., Reagan admonished “... we must continue our recent progress in reducing the Federal deficit,” while the national debt was a comparatively paltry 50 percent of the GDP.

How much better off might we be today had his sage advice been heeded?

—Jan Eales
Florence

WILL OREGONIANS BE STRONG?

The recent wildfires in Napa and Sonoma counties of northern California were devastating. Fire destroyed homes,

apartments and entire mobile home parks, as well as businesses both small and large.

Fires don’t discriminate. It will take years for families to rebuild — if they choose to do so — and for businesses to recover. People of all ages are out of work and without a home. I am amazed at how firefighters, first responders and utilities employees were able to keep the fires from burning all the way to the ocean.

Three large hospitals and many schools were saved. It was reported by a Napa County congressman that the fire traveled at up to 200 feet per second. The fires are believed to have been started by downed power lines in 70 mph winds.

Regardless of the cause, fires have no boundaries be it city, county or state lines, or ODF, BLM or USFS.

Come next fire season, if you think it won’t — or can’t — happen here, think again.

—Michal Fletcher
and Mark Owens
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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