

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

Without political civility, our nation is in peril

It is my sincere hope any reader of what follows is neither insulted nor angered by the expression of my sincere opinions.

Unfortunately, it seems to me such a reaction has become a near absolute in political discourse these days.

If one is questioned about an issue, it is considered an attack; if someone disagrees, they become the enemy; if you suggest that someone on the other side may have a good idea, you are a traitor.

These traits, exhibited so vociferously by our president and echoed in kind by his opposition, are clear examples of the break down in civil discourse that, if not corrected, will see no less than the destruction of this democracy.

I do not believe this to be any exaggeration. When we demand all or nothing, the end result will, in most situations, be *nothing*.

Consider our history.

From before the constitution was ratified through well over the next 200 years, we became the most successful and the most powerful nation on Earth.

By comparison to the rest of the world, our people prospered in a lifestyle unequalled in the history of humankind.

How did this come about?

I would suggest it was in the genius of the idea that a system of two-party gov-

retained civility.

The real key to our success? The process of issue, conflict, compromise and resolution. The party in power puts out its, perhaps over-the-top, plan or program. The opposition takes issue and proposes alternatives. Debate takes place

essed the purity of the truly righteous.

People have quit listening to any idea alien to their bias and vehemently attack anyone who questions their dogma.

What both sides seem to dream about most is single-party rule. Lip service is still given to the process of compromise but that is all it is. Instead, we conclude all will be great again, as soon as those other "fools" finally come to their senses and see it our way.

Until then?

Go pound salt.

God help us if either side ever achieves true one-party rule. If world history clearly illustrates a point, it is that any single-party system, whether on the left or right, inevitably leads to despotism.

We, pure of heart though we may be, are not immune.

I would suggest that unless we find a way to again become civil in our political systems, unless we return to an age of reasonable accommodation to the ideas of others, this country is in deep trouble.

ernment, with each party sometimes in power and sometimes providing the loyal opposition, could balance out the excesses inherent in the exercise of any absolute power.

We have had very liberal governments (Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt come to mind) and rigidly conservative administrations (Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush as examples).

Certainly, the political machinations were frequently rancorous, going clear back to the feuding of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Yet for the most part we

and it becomes clear neither side can prevail 100 percent — so eventually compromise is offered by both sides, the issue is settled and we move on.

Again, I must stress this system worked very well for over 200 years.

Then, somewhere in the past 20 years or so, we decided that compromise was a dirty word. Somehow it became synonymous with surrender.

All-or-nothing became the misguided imperative of both sides. At the same time, we decided that those from the other side were obviously of evil intent while we, on our side, pos-

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By JIMMIE ZINN
FLORENCE

LETTERS

VOICE YOUR OPINION ON HB 4135

The Oregon Advanced Directive law has not changed in 25 years. HB 4135 wants to change that. It proposes that the governor appoint a 13-person board to make sure the advanced directives of citizens, including those suffering from dementia, are followed.

As it is now, you can appoint someone to be your voice if you cannot. The sentence reads, "If you wish, the advance directive may include a directive to physicians to withhold or withdraw life sustaining procedures under certain circumstances."

The certain circumstances are:

You are close to death and life support would only postpone — not prevent — death;

Or you are permanently unconscious;

Or have an advanced progressive illness;

Or life support would not help your medical condition and would subject you to extraordinary suffering.

So in other words, you need to be *physically* failing, not mentally failing, to have your advance directive followed.

This does not protect the demented. No one gives them the choice if they want to live in that condition or not. I for one do not want to live in a memory care unit or live with life-sustaining measures if I was not mentally capable of making the choice at that time.

At present, HB 4135 is on the House of Representatives floor to be voted on. It is important you voice your opinion to your representative.

—Bruce Yelle
Florence

THIRD-GRADE MATH

The population of the United States, as of 2016, is 323 million people.

President Trump has just proposed a \$1 trillion *per year* program to improve our infrastructure such as roads, bridges, airports, etc.

That will cost nearly every man, woman and child \$3,230 each year.

That is only one program on top of our other basic costs to run the country.

This is only third-grade math.

— Albert Anderson
Florence

SAFETY IS IMPORTANT PART OF EDUCATION

Monday evening I attended the informational meeting at Siuslaw High School regarding the possibility of the school district pursuing a bond to finance the upgrading and/or new construction of the facilities, including the high school.

I went because I value education and I want, in every way possible, to show the young people in our community that we do care about and support them.

I went because, as a retired teacher who has visited and spent time in those facilities, I recognize that they are outdated, ineffective for 21st century learning and teaching, and are unsafe.

I went because I wanted to see the future of our community — our youth — embraced and supported.

I left the meeting feeling sad.

Not because there wasn't support for the proposals, but because I heard three thoughtful Siuslaw High School students, all female, asking multiple questions about safety.

"Will each room have a fire extinguisher, because the foam will disable a shooter and then it can be used to hit them?" asked one student.

"Will the exterior doors have automatic lockdown systems that can be triggered?" asked another.

"Will our classroom doors be stronger and safe, 'cuz the ones we have now are flimsy?" asked the third student.

I was heartbroken that these are the questions that our students have on their minds when they think about their high school (junior high, elementary) school day.

And then, on Valentine's Day, coming home after a lovely afternoon's drive along our beautiful Oregon Coast, I heard the news from Parkland, Fla. — another school shooting leaving 17 students and teachers dead, with more injured.

My sadness turned to anger.

And as my heart went out to those in Florida, my heart went out to our students who start the days with those very same worries accompanying them to school each day. Those worries become magnified each time there is another school shooting — we've had 18 shooting incidents at schools in the first 45 days of 2018 in America.

If we truly are a "City in Motion," that motion needs to support — 1,000

percent — our youth. Our residents need to support an upcoming bond measure should the district decide to move forward and place a measure on the November ballots.

It will let our students know that we have their backs. We can't, as a community, believe it will "never happen here."

That's what they thought in Parkland, Fla., Marshall County, Ky., Aztec, NM., Rancho Tehama, Calif., San Bernardino, Calif., Roseburg, Ore., Troutdale, Ore., Santa Monica, Calif., Newton, Conn., Oakland, Calif., Blacksburg, Va., and Littleton, Colo.

They were wrong.
Enough.

—Becky Goehring
Florence

THOUGHTS FROM AN OLD U.S. MARINE

As I sit here in my comfortable motorhome presently at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in southern California watching the Olympics, and in particular the downhill skiing routes these athletes are skiing down, I cannot help but wonder how many other Korean Veterans of the Korean War are looking at these hills as I am — and wondering if those were the hills we had to fight up and down back in the 1950s?

Without a doubt, most of the observers and all the participants have vague — if any — memory of the thousands of American young men who died over there while fighting to take those hills and then to hold them.

Just some thoughts from an old Marine reminiscing.

—Tony Cavarno
Florence

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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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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