

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.

Wilbur Ternyik was a character with character

During my more than 30 years working as a journalist in Florence, I met a lot of memorable people — but none more so than Wilbur Ternyik, who died recently at the age of 92.

When I first moved here as a young Register-Guard reporter in 1970, it took little time to realize he was a mover and shaker, not only in the community but up and down the coast. He was a confidant of both former Gov. Tom McCall and Sen. Mark Hatfield.

In addition, he served long stints on the Florence City Council, both as mayor and councilman, and also the Port of Siuslaw Commission.

Perhaps his greatest achievement was heading the Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Commission, which ensured that coastal residents, rather than just politicians and bureaucrats on the other side of the Coast Range, would have a major influence on rules for how the coast would grow and evolve.

GUEST VIEWPOINT

BY LARRY BACON
FLORENCE RESIDENT, RETIRED JOURNALIST

But all that political and government stuff was only one facet of a complex man. He was a direct descendent of the Clatsop chief who greeted Lewis and Clark near the mouth of the Columbia River, and was proud of his Native American Heritage. According to Ternyik, when Lewis and Clark left the area they gave their Fort Clatsop to Ternyik's ancestor, Chief Coboway.

Therefore, Ternyik joked, maybe he still had some ownership rights.

Native American historian and collector of artifacts, stabilizer of sand dunes, battle-tested U.S. Marine, wetlands restoration expert, trapper, hunter, wildlife rehabilitation volunteer, spinner of yarns — Ternyik was all of those.

He had no problem rubbing shoulders with the rich and

powerful, but for years he met daily for coffee at the Oceanaire Cafe with a group of working stiffs to swap yarns and catch up with the local news.

To a young reporter, he seemed to enjoy sharing stories of times past — like the antics of the unofficial local militia, the Vine Maple Savages, or the times the local Chamber of Commerce would set up dunes tours for visiting bigwigs from the valley that included views of "Sand Dunes Sally" in the altogether while basking in the sand.

As a reporter, I sat for many hours in public meetings at which Wilbur presided, sometimes wearing a fringed Native American jacket and wielding a tomahawk for a gavel. It was one of his favorite artifacts, he said, and appropriate for public

meetings; it not only had a sharp blade but was constructed to double as a peace pipe.

He had the strength to keep deliberations on track and the humor to avoid acrimony.

Sure, Wilbur was a politician, but I don't think his public service was an ego trip for him. I got the feeling he really cared about the community and the coast, and enjoyed working to make things better.

After he backed away from state and local government, I would still see him and his wife, Joyce, once in awhile tending to the landscaping at the intersection of Highways 101 and 126 — getting their hands dirty and happy to do so.

That's the kind of folks they were.

Wilbur once lamented to me that all the characters he so admired in his long time at Florence were disappearing — special people that added the flavor and spice that helped make Florence unique.

Well, one more of them is gone now.

LETTERS

GLAD FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

I am hoping for an informative article about the Lane County Commissioners Forum held last Friday. I drove down there and saw that Kingwood was lined with parked cars.

As I walked toward the Class Act Theatre, a gal walking away said it was so crowded in the theater that there was standing room only.

Sure enough, it was packed, with people standing in the adjacent room and outside. I'm fairly short and didn't want to be packed in staring at someone's back so I left.

It's great that the Florence community is so politically involved.

—Button Watkins
Florence

WONDERFUL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

It is truly wonderful to live in a community that answers the call for help and inspires others to get involved.

Siuslaw Outreach Services (SOS) in Florence expanded its services to include helping pets of those in crisis with a little bit of food, thanks to the Sacred Animal Sanctuary and Loved Again Pets.

The Sacred Animal Sanctuary got things kicked off a few months ago with donating over 200 pounds of dog and cat food. This inspired Loved Again Pets to do the same.

When Loved Again Pets recently heard about the program, they generously donated over 100 pounds of dog food for the needy. As an SOS volunteer, I am so proud of our program where we are able to provide dog food to homeless, down on their luck, travelers or anyone that needs help taking care of their pets during troubled times.

Many people feed their pets first before feeding themselves. When we are able to hand these people a bag of food and a few treats, it is like Christmas.

Their faces light up knowing that their companion will have good food for a couple of days. The bond between dog and human is very precious.

We truly live in a caring community.
—Bonnie Compton
Volunteer at SOS

LAWS AREN'T CAST IN STONE — FOR A REASON

While ideally the courts are the arbiters of justice, we know that justice is not always served. And like many laws, many judges are imperfect. That's why we must challenge and change them. An unjust law that allows poisoning of people and environment must be challenged and changed.

An elected judge who repeatedly sides with timber industry cronies must be challenged and removed.

In response to Bill Gary's op-ed (Register-Guard, April 3) slamming Ann Kneeland, attorney for the Spray Ban advocates, it was Kneeland who held the moral high ground in court, as she chal-

lenged the status quo, by revealing how the law rewards big corporations over the people.

Did she attack the integrity of the system? Yes, she did. And we remain grateful to her for exposing the tired system that remains unbending when it is clearly, way past time to bend.

This is an object lesson, Good People. Laws are not cast in stone; our laws must be relevant and just. If not for the courageous challengers of the past, we would still have slavery, Jim Crow, women without the vote and many more examples of unjust laws that are now in the dustbin of history.

—Michelle Holman
Deadwood

APPLES AND ORANGES, GUNS AND KNIVES

Ian Eales' letter "Banning Does Not Work" (April 4) makes the all too frequently used comparison of apples to oranges. Homicides by knife are singular, almost always one assault leads to one death.

A 21 percent increase could mean a total of 21 extra people. A single assault with a gun, as we have recently seen, can result in dozens or even hundreds of deaths.

His letter ignores the enormously favorable results of gun restriction legislation in Australia.

Banning weapons *does* work.
—Bill Durst
Florence

REPEALING SECOND AMENDMENT IS NO ANSWER

In regard to repealing the Second Amendment, Chicago has the toughest gun laws in the country and the most deaths from guns. Their reasoning as to why the laws don't work is because the guns come across state lines illegally from neighboring states.

So if the Second Amendment is repealed, what is going to stop groups from getting weapons from across the U.S. border — along with all the drugs that cause more deaths in this country than guns?

—L.V. Furby
Florence

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DEBATE

I attended the debate for Lane County Commissioner on Friday, April 6, between our current Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich and candidate Nora Kent.

While it was a lively exchange with answers to the many questions from the audience, via the moderator, it became clear to me that Bozievich has an understanding of what the job requires to be our County Commissioner.

He has done the job so far with integrity and educated insight to the needs of all

the people in his jurisdiction. He has the experience to continue the job as commissioner.

Kent, I feel, doesn't have the experience with economics in the capacity the job of commissioner requires. Her appeal is to a small group of like-minded people, sympathetic to health care for all and homelessness.

I don't believe she has the capacity to understand that while we all want health care for all and adequate living conditions, it costs money.

Who is going to pay for the free stuff? Kent speaks much like Governor Kate Brown and, in my opinion, electing her to Lane County Commissioner would be a fiscal disaster for our county.

There is a saying, "If it's not broke, don't fix it."

Bozievich is doing a good job and I believe we need to keep him and get behind him with our support.

—Donna Dobson
Florence

DON'T THROW TRASH OUT THE WINDOW

I want to thank all of the Woahink Lake area citizens who participated in the litter clean-up on Canary and Clear Lake Roads on March 31.

As someone who is new to the area and runs on the roads circling the lake, I have been appalled by the amount of litter I have seen. Most of the litter appeared to have been thrown out automobile windows — fast food packaging, including candy wrappers, cardboard and plastic containers, lids and straws, as well as beer cans and bottles, mini alcoholic drink bottles, soda and energy drink cans, cigarette butts and packaging.

There was also evidence of trash being blown out of the back of vehicles: full garbage bags and various pieces of various things.

I am deeply saddened by this. I can remember when, in 1965, Lady Bird Johnson's Bill, The Highway Beautification Act, was passed. I was 13 years old. With the passage of this bill, Americans began to realize that casually littering roadsides was not acceptable. The children taught the parents to change their ways. Those same children are now senior citizens who have strived to pass on this anti-littering mentality to their offspring.

There has been a stigma against littering. So why are people still littering?

Lady Bird Johnson once said, "Ugliness is so grim. A little beauty, something that is lovely, I think, can help create harmony, which will lessen tensions." We definitely need to keep the area around Woahink Lake beautiful. And anything that can promote harmony and lessen tension in our daily lives is much needed. I implore those who use these roads to absorb those words of Lady Bird Johnson's and think before you throw the trash out the window.

—Patricia Briggs
Florence

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Jenna Bartlett
Ned Hickson
Erik Chalhouh

Susan Gutierrez
Cathy Dietz
Ron Annis
Jeremy Gentry

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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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.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or documented will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside the Siuslaw News 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@oregonlegislature.gov

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