

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.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)

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Siuslaw News

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Rhody Days: Defining Florence as truly and utterly unique

a sleepy coastal town for three days each year.

However, being a little older (fine, a lot older) and wiser, I've come to realize and

contrasts that exist simultaneously and harmoniously for the next 72 hours is a wonderful reminder of how our differences don't necessarily

tion that distinguishes us as the second-largest floral parade on the West Coast, next to the annual Rose Parade.

And yes, it allows and encourages us to participate in traditions that remind us of our community's history as well as give us reason to pause and celebrate the present.

But, perhaps just as importantly, it also serves as a reminder of how, under the right circumstances and a mutual understanding of why we've come here, we can revel in the shared experience of what makes each of us different.

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From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

Admittedly, I wasn't sure what to make of my first Rhody Days experience back in 1981. I was 15 then and a recent transplant from the Los Angeles area. Naturally, I was used to being around large crowds of people. And thanks to an older brother who had been a member of the Hell's Angels, I was used to being around bikers.

But rhododendrons? I didn't understand what that was all about. Or how a simple flower could be the catalyst for drawing hundreds of bikers and thousands of others to what was essentially

deeply appreciate that strange juxtaposition that, for a few days each year, defines Florence as truly and utterly unique.

Harley riders and baby strollers; screaming carnival rides and quiet appreciation of art and fauna; late-night elephant ears and fine dining; shiny hot rods and backroad beaters; bands rocking the house and those dancing to their own beat — the many

have to divide us.

There's a photo on my wall in the office taken a few years ago. In it, a woman biker clad in leather and tattoos is hugging a clown. She is beaming, utterly unable to hide her excitement over that hug. Her expression is a mixture of elation and whimsy, with a touch of childhood dream mixed in.

To me, it represents what the Rhododendron Festival is all about. Sure, it's a celebra-

LETTERS

WE WILL PREVAIL

"We the people are the rightful masters of both congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who would pervert the Constitution."

—Abraham Lincoln

We the people, the patriots, will fight back. We are a republic of the Constitution and of laws.

Take heart.

We will prevail being led by President Donald J. Trump.

—Pamela Richardson
Florence

DON'T MINIMIZE DEATH OF MILLIONS

Ian Eales' Letter to the Editor ("Far Left Is Debasing Good Americans," May 16) is filled with inaccuracies and questionable statistics.

His letter goes on to make the offensive and ludicrous comparison that NRA members are suffering the same vilification as did the Jews under Hitler.

Really?

NRA members are not being forced into concentration camps and slave labor and starved to death. Nor are they being tattooed or sent on death marches or crammed shoulder-to-shoulder in livestock cars and taken to be gassed to death.

To compare the Jews to NRA members is to minimize the deaths of millions.

I have no doubt that the majority of the NRA members are good and loyal Americans. I do vilify the leaders of the NRA, who speak with hate and fear. They use fear to keep their members, while spending millions to buy the silence of members of Congress and the president, and to prevent passage of sensible gun laws.

Lastly, the letter contains this sentence: "The corrupt media parroted a madman's ravings, even though they knew better."

I found myself pondering whether

he was referring to Hitler or President Trump and Fox News?

—Marybeth Marengo
Florence

OBSERVE THE SPEED LIMIT

As we approach June and school being out for the summer, I have some definite concerns. I live on Mitchell Loop Road, less than two miles south of the bridge. Even though we live just a few minutes from town, Mitchell Loop is more like a "country lane" than the two-lane marked roads that most drivers are familiar with. In fact, Mitchell Loop Road dead-ends at the Girl Scout Camp and Cleawox Lake. Definitely a rural road.

Although we have a fenced in yard to keep Ernie, our Golden Retriever, safe and off the road, most folks out here don't. We have dogs, cats and many kids who live out here. The kids ride scooters, skate boards, play with balls and walk back and forth from one friend's house to another.

There are young kids playing in the road, especially on weekends, holidays and during summer vacation.

The posted speed is clearly marked as 25 mph less about 500 feet after turning onto Mitchell Loop.

My concern is that the biggest offenders who definitely go much faster than the posted speed are the people we love most to see driving up our driveways: The package delivery trucks. Keep in mind that the big gravel trucks and small cars are also guilty of driving that road much too fast.

So I'm asking ... no pleading with all drivers, especially of delivery vehicles, to slow down and observe posted speeds everywhere. They are there for a good reason. It would be awful to hit someone's dog or cat, but much worse if you hit someone's child; the outcome could result in a child's death.

Could you live with that? Is it really

worth the minute or two you might save by speeding?

Let's all of us enjoy the upcoming summer vacation months, as well as the weekends and after school, and drive whatever the posted speed is on any road.

Hopefully it will prevent a horrific accident.

—Gail Katz Hanson
Florence

DO SOMETHING TO KEEP

FAMILIES TOGETHER

I know that many people who fought in World War II have died and a lot of us have forgotten what they were fighting for, or are too young to really have ever known.

They were fighting against something like this: The separation of children from their parents and the institutionalization of both.

At Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Dachau, three of Hitler's more infamous concentration camps, family members were routinely separated from each other and atrocities perpetrated against both groups. A common fate, slaughter en masse, awaited most, whether by the gas chamber, being shot over an open pit grave or simply being shoved in and buried alive.

Now I hear that our president, as part of his policy towards people fleeing to our country, is planning to separate the children from the parents and house the children at military bases. We as a nation, if for no other reason than to honor those World War II veterans who liberated the camps but cannot speak for themselves anymore, have got to do something to stop this policy from ever being implemented.

While I'm not sure what we should do, I do know we need to start the conversation.

—Ivy Meadow
Florence

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