

**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.

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



## Will we succumb to our worst or best nature?

new medium had the potential to teach, educate and inspire — but that it would require us to ensure it would be used towards those ends.

"Otherwise," he said, "it is merely wires and lights in a box."

Over the course of the last

But things are different in this era of social media communalism. It's no small irony that, while we have become increasingly engaged in sharing our thoughts and experiences with more people than ever before, we have simultaneously come to accept that

We can leave comments and engage in the conversations of strangers without consequence or accountability.

It's an era of communication unlike any other, and the ultimate repercussions on our culture remain to be seen.

In the same way that Murrow expressed the need for us to have a willingness to use the medium of television to teach, educate and inspire, we need to ask ourselves what direction we will take with the evolution of social media.

Will we succumb to the worst of our nature or the best of it?

Will our smartphones and other digital devices be utilized to improve the way we communicate and broaden our understanding of each other and the world?

Or will they prove to be little more than micro chips and lights in an even smaller box?

Write to Ned Hickson at: [nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com](mailto:nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com)

### From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

few years, we've seen social media platforms such as Facebook and others succumbing to the worst — rather than the best — we have to offer as a society.

It's human nature to be drawn to things that disturb us. It's the reason we gawk at the scene of accidents; why there are more NCIS spin-offs than any other genre on TV; and why Greek mythology is full of cautionary tales that end in tragedy.

We find a certain comfort in recognizing when the mistakes of others have led to their misfortune — and how we can avoid making those same mistakes.

we are sharing those very things with people we will likely never meet.

Through that acceptance we are slowly laying the groundwork for the kind of social disconnect that we have begun to see with live streaming of disturbing events — and, perhaps even more disturbing, having them shared hundreds of thousands of times by others.

In a way, social media is promoting a culture of digital-aged peeping Toms, encouraging us to gawk through an endless array of partially open windows into the lives of others — many of whom we don't truly know.

### LETTERS

#### FLORENCE HAS WONDERFUL PEOPLE

I am writing this letter in hopes of telling the people of Florence, Ore., how wonderful they are.

My parents, Louis and Glenda Bouy, started visiting Florence at least 20 years ago and fell in love with the town while spending their summers there.

In May, they decided to go back for a short visit. On the first day there, my parents went to check into the Three Rivers Casino, where they had reserved a room. Unfortunately, my dad fell and broke his hip. This resulted in my dad having surgery at Peace Harbor Hospital.

You can imagine how difficult this was for my mom, alone and with no one to turn to. As soon as my mom called me, my husband and I got in our car and drove 17 hours straight to get there.

I just wanted to thank Peace Harbor Medical Center for its kindness and hospitality during this very difficult time.

The hospital, doctors, nurses, anesthesiologist, chaplain, therapists and staff, desk personnel, volunteers, even down to the cafeteria workers, were absolutely wonderful in the care of not only my dad, but my mom, my husband and myself.

They assured our every need was met and that we had food and drinks.

In visiting the ambulance personnel facility, all our concerns were addressed and we thanked them for helping my dad.

We visited the Chamber of Commerce, the Dollar Tree, Florence Pharmacy, Rite Aid, Fred Meyer's, various gas stations, etc. — and everywhere we went we were treated with kindness and care. I cannot express in words our appreciation and gratitude for the kindness we received during the week we stayed there.

We visited the tea house restaurant, Love Joy's. When we got to the restaurant they were actually closed but opened their doors to my mom and me.

They cooked us a lovely dinner, which included scones and tea. I want them to know their kindness touched us.

One of the managers at McDonald's also took extra care to ensure our orders were right as we are vegetarians. He insured our meal was correct as to how we ordered it and went out of his way to assist us.

One of the locals, Elsie, whom my parents have known for many years, heard about what had happened and came up to visit with my dad on more than one occasion.

She really brightened his day!  
Big thanks to her.

I know I am forgetting some people, but please, again: Thank You Florence, and to all of you who we encountered, for your kindness.

I wish we could bottle it and bring it back to Utah!

Thank you again,

Debbie and Mazen Alawneh  
Cinton, Utah

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## Siuslaw News

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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 partisanism 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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