

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.

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

## July 4 holds remarkable coincidences for our nation

(Editor’s Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

Few dates in American history have been so profound.

On July 4, 1826, as the nation celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died. The loss of two of our first three Presidents, as well as two of its founding fathers, is one of the most remarkable coincidences in the history of the nation.

The two men are inextricably linked to the Revolution. Both were among the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, and Adams and Jefferson were on the Continental Congress’ Committee of Five to compose the document.

Both debated who should take the lead, and Adams finally persuaded Jefferson, claiming that a Virginian “ought to appear at the head of this business.” Adams also assessed himself as “obnoxious, suspected, and unpopular,” while adding that Jefferson “can write ten times better than I can.”

Jefferson then drafted the document.

Despite their mutual efforts for independence, Adams and Jefferson later became political rivals. The short-tempered, prickly Adams clashed with Jefferson’s laid-back approach, and Adams’ Federalist devotion was also at odds with Jefferson, who believed the states should have more power.

The two former friends met in the 1796 Presidential election, which became a mud-slinging affair of polarizing political views, largely on foreign affairs. The outcome, however, was razor-thin, as Adams edged Jefferson in electoral votes, 71-68.

As was custom in the day, the loser became the Vice-President, and Jefferson soon opposed Adams on a host of issues. Among them was the controversial Alien and Sedition Act of 1798, which induced Jefferson to forego Washington in favor of his Monticello home.

They again squared off in the 1800 Presidential election, and this time, Federalism vs. states’ rights was the dominant theme. The rematch was even more bitter than the 1796 campaign, and is considered one of the dirtiest elections in American history.

### GUEST VIEWPOINT By Tom Emery Historian

Jefferson tied Aaron Burr with 73 electoral votes, while Adams, with 65, went down in defeat.

Adams, stung by the loss, proceeded to reel off a succession of “midnight appointments” of Federalists to judicial offices and in his last hours in office, designed to leave his mark against Jefferson. He then slipped out of town early in the morning of the inauguration, choosing not to welcome the incoming President, as is tradition.

The relationship remained frigid for many years until intervention by a mutual friend, Benjamin Rush, a Philadelphia doctor who had also signed the Declaration. Though Adams was non-committal to Rush’s efforts, he took the initiative, and on Jan. 1, 1812, wrote a note with well-wishes to Jefferson.

On Jan. 21, Jefferson responded in kind, recalling when “we were fellow laborers in the same cause” of independence and extending “my sincere esteem for you ... I salute you with unchanged affections and

respect.”

Thus renewed a friendship of decades past, and Adams and Jefferson continued to send respectful, thoughtful letters to each other, a source of great mutual satisfaction.

Jefferson, who suffered from rheumatism and an enlarged prostate, was forced to decline an offer to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations that July 4 in Washington. By July 2, he was barely lucid, and died at Monticello around 12:50 p.m. on the Fourth.

At his Quincy, Mass., home, Adams had also declined an invitation to a 50th anniversary extravaganza in Boston due to poor health. Early on July 4, he lost consciousness. He recovered slightly near mid-day, and according to most accounts, his final words were some form of the words “Thomas Jefferson still survives.”

The irony is that Jefferson had just died, though modern researchers cite no proof that Adams made such an utterance.

He died around 6 p.m. that evening.

Incredibly, Adams and Jefferson were not the only early Presidents to die on July 4. Five years later in 1831, James Monroe passed away at age 73, marking the third of the first five chief executives to die on the date of the nation’s birth.

One President, Calvin Coolidge, was born on the Fourth of July holiday in 1872, though most historians rate him among the weakest of chief executives, unlike Adams and Jefferson.

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## LETTERS

**LEARN PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY AND FREEDOM**

Recently, Vickie Hymer wrote a good letter on civility in our political discourse (“What Is Happening To My America,” June 30). She recognized that our president is under a steady assault which is not good for the office of the presidency or the “republic” (not democracy) for which we stand.

I do not, however, believe the incivility is equal. Not when the White House press secretary is escorted out of a restaurant with the owner, ala 1960s intolerance when segregated lunch counters were the fashion of the day; not when a congresswoman is calling for “in your face” behavior with anyone in the president’s cabinet or association; not when the Attorney General of Florida and her boyfriend are harassed on four different occasions at a local movie theatre.

Vickie is correct in wanting civil discourse, but part of civility is knowledge and part of knowledge is truth. This nation was founded on a certain set principles contained in great books like the Federalist Papers.

It is essential that Americans learn principles of freedom and liberty to navigate the right path to responsible discourse. The political discourse should not be based solely on emotion or hatred and vitriol, which turn into hyperbole to make an uninformed point. In a political sense, the public needs to know the whys and wherefores of our founding documents: The Declaration of Independence and the our U.S. Constitution.

Without that bit of intelligence, we are basically, playing into our emotions, which leads to political demogoguery.

Vickie is correct on how we debate and talk to each other. But we must be careful to learn American history and why we are the most dynamic nation ever.

Without this knowledge we will quickly descend into the abyss of nations and kingdoms long forgotten.

God bless America.

—Joel Marks  
Florence

**RESPECTFUL PROTEST IS RIGHT OF ALL AMERICANS**

Like letter writer Vickie Hymer



“What Is Happening To My America,” June 30), I am also 75 years old. While I agree with her that our democracy gains nothing and loses much by incivility and that the office of the President of the United States demands our respect, I reserve the right to protest in a respectful manner.

The current president was elected without winning the popular vote, and was elected with the tampering of our election by Russia. He and his administration ignore civility through their policies, lies, ignorance and bullying.

I do not respect those trademarks of his presidency.

I will continue to protest and resist in a respectful manner and enthusiastically support candidates who share the values which uphold the true greatness of this country. This is not imposing my will on others — it is respectfully exercising my rights as a voting citizen.

—Judith Preisler  
Florence

**RESPECT MUST BE EARNED**

In regards to the letter “What Is Happening to my America?” (June 30), with all due respect: Respect is earned.

Period.

It also needs to be maintained on a daily basis, no matter what title some-

one possesses. How can anyone expect people to have respect for a person who is deliberately separating hard working mothers and fathers from their children and locking them up like criminals?

Many Americans, including myself, gave Donald Trump the benefit of the doubt when he was elected.

But unfortunately the “mob mentality” that has been witnessed is coming from the President himself.

And we should respect that?

—Denise Schilling  
Florence

**LIMBAUGH DOESN’T SPEAK IN FALSEHOODS**

In Win Jolley’s response to Ian Eales’ great letter “No Limit It Seems To Liberal Hypocrisy” (June 27), Mr. Jolley stated from the likes of Rush Limbaugh come false information.

I listen to Rush whenever I can and have for many years.

I don’t hear any falsehoods.

I would ask Mr. Jolley to state here and now at least three falsehoods Rush has voiced and back them up with irrefutable proof for all of us to see.

—Tony Cavarno  
Florence

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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.

Email letters to:  
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## WHERE TO WRITE

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