

Siuslaw News
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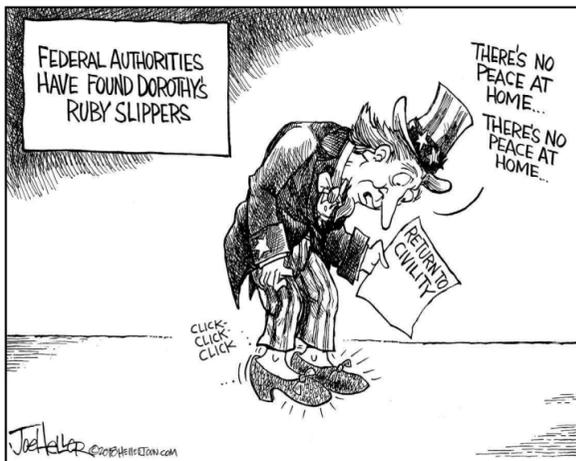
Opinion

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)



LETTERS



WHILE ROME BURNS

Robert Samuelson, writing in the *Washington Post* last Monday morning, made a serious point on a subject that is being completely ignored amid the juvenile prattle permeating our current political discourse. His point centers on how we, as a nation, consistently opt for the immediate payoff rather than for any future security.

He nails it.

We do not want to hear bad news, and any politician who

suggests anything less than a rosy outlook is soon looking for other employment. Thus, in a case where dire warnings may be warranted, our leaders believe they have no choice but to either ignore or distort the reality.

And you know what? *Both* sides have become expert at this. Take for example the reality that, if we do not come to our senses about the federal deficit, we are very likely to encounter — sooner or later — an economic situation that will make the “great recession” seem as very good times.

The deficit is going to hit \$1 trillion (a thousand billion or a million million, however you want to count it) and we are going merrily along with both the Democrats and the Republicans pretending everything is just dandy; “Deficits aren’t that big a deal, debt actually helps the economy in some ways.”

Yeah, right!

As Samuelson pointed out, to close this deficit by raising taxes would require a 30 percent *increase* across the board. Or, we would have to *decrease* federal spending by 25 percent.

This is real; it is not going away.

We either grow up, put aside some of our sillier grievances, significantly cut spending and substantially raise taxes — or we are going down.

Find me a politician that will address this issue directly, honestly, from an informed position, and I will vote for that person. I don’t care what party she or he might be from.

—Jimmie Zinn
Florence

Change is an inevitable and necessary part of growth

(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.*)

Considering the past few articles regarding Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR) and Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD), I feel the need to provide some reinforced clarification on a few of the topics reported.

First, SVFR has a balanced budget and is not short of money. Additionally, we will not need to borrow \$500,000.

What was stated during board meetings is that, because SVFR is waiting to receive the reimbursement of grant and wildland fire response money owed to us, we might need to use a line of credit until that money arrives.

July through November is the leanest time of the year for us because we receive no tax revenue until mid-November. We rely on what is left in the bank from the previous year until tax money arrives.

We accounted for this in our budget, but some of the money we were relying on is money that will be reimbursed. Unfortunately, we have very little control on when we receive reimbursements, despite our best efforts.

During the Aug. 30 special joint meeting of the two boards, the office manager reported that after continued work, SVFR’s end of year financial status appears to be much stronger than earlier predicted. If the fire district does need to utilize

a line of credit, it will be no more than \$300,000 dollars and will be a temporary measure until reimbursements arrive.

We experienced a similar situation last year when the Lane County worker strike

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Jim Langborg
Chief Director of SVFR/WLAD

extended the time before we began to receive tax revenue.

The other area I want to clarify is that there is no uncertainty regarding the continuation of the IGA between the two districts because of the financial status of the fire district or by me accepting another position.

As stated above, the fire district has no money issues. The fact that I have accepted another position will not affect the IGA because both districts have a strong team in place and clear set of goals identified in their strategic plans.

Additionally, both districts have a strong group on their boards of directors who provide excellent oversight and care deeply about service to our community.

As with every position in both districts, the job of the Chief/Director is important, but work will not stop because it is temporarily vacant or filled with an interim person.

The formation of the IGA Committee was intended to strengthen the IGA by ensuring both districts have an equal

voice when making decisions that affect both organizations.

This is not to say that either of the districts have been unfairly represented, because they haven’t. Fortunately, the two boards have worked very well together over the past two-and-half years and the creation of the IGA Committee is the next logical step in working together.

The IGA Committee Charter outlines the responsibilities of the committee and clarifies its purpose. The committee has been meeting and working on the charter for two months. Both the charter and its work have been discussed at several board meetings.

Finally, I want to ensure that in no way do I or other members of the administrative team believe that people who served in financial management positions for either district in the past did not do good work. With the help of a consultant, we have learned that the financial management tools and techniques used in the past do not meet the needs of today.

Our struggle has been realizing this. As a result, we have updated our tools and are using techniques that meet our current needs. People who have served in these positions worked very hard and provided valuable service to our community. In fact, we would not be where we are today had it not been for the work and dedication of those people.

Like any growing organization, we must occasionally change some of the things we do.

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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.

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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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