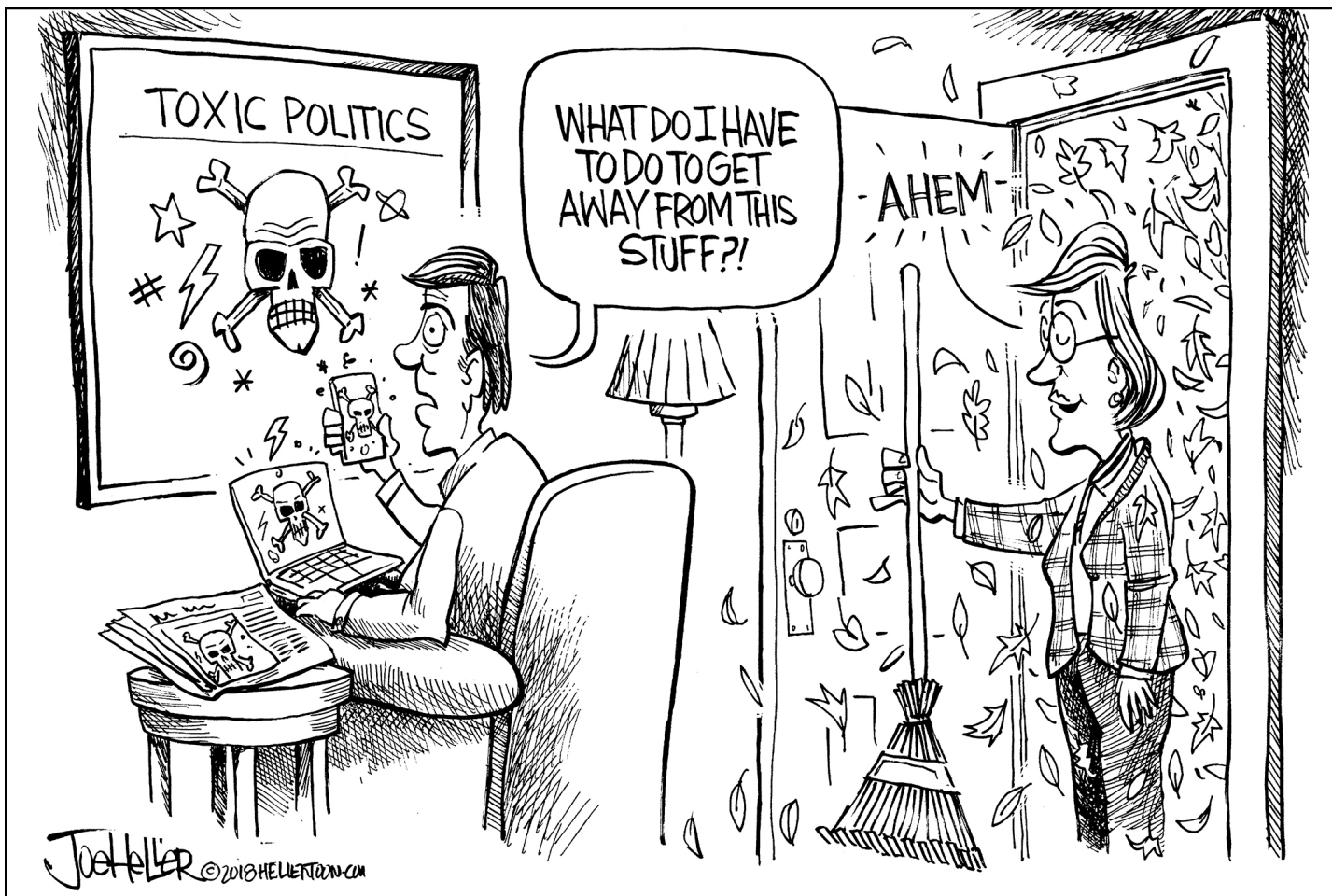


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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)



Addressing homelessness in our community begins with changing its stereotypes

less families (60.5 percent) are without shelter, living in cars or tents within areas of that scenic beauty I mentioned earlier.

As much as we may want to tell ourselves that most of the homeless are drug addicts, criminals or suffering from mental illness, the fact is that more than half of the homeless living without shelter in Oregon — over 7,000

According to a study released by the Oregon Department of Education last November, 2017 saw a 5.6 percent increase in student homelessness — continuing a trend in Oregon for the fourth consecutive year.

Before we can truly address the issue of homelessness, we must be willing to understand that many of those who are living their

They are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, students, cooks, part-time employees, unemployed veterans and senior citizens faced with deciding between medication, food or shelter.

That's not a stereotype we want to acknowledge. But it's one we must be willing to accept in order to affect the kind of change that will, in turn, change the lives of the homeless in our community and our state.

As we consider state measures and explore local policies aimed at addressing the issues of affordable and transitional housing, the most important component to reducing homelessness in our communities will be our ability to acknowledge our own stereotypes about homelessness.

That is the most important step we can take toward reversing the trend of homelessness in our state — and achieving something we can all be proud of as Oregonians.

From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

of them — are either school-aged (64.4 percent) or displaced veterans (55 percent).

To bring it a little closer to home, each day nearly 90 students between the Siuslaw and Mapleton School Districts go to class, participate in school activities and then finish the day with no permanent home to return to.

In 2016, 4.3 percent of Siuslaw's student body was homeless. By comparison, the state average is actually lower at 3.7 percent.

lives without a home aren't those who are readily identified as homeless.

They aren't necessarily the ones we see on street corners or parking lots asking for change.

They aren't the ones we can easily avoid making eye contact with as we busy ourselves past them.

The fact is, they are also those whose faces we recognize each day but who never say a word about their homelessness.

LETTERS

BE SELFISH

Don't vote for the high school bond because of earthquakes and safety reasons; don't vote for the high school bond because it's best for our children and our collective future; don't vote for the high school bond because it's a nice thing for the community; don't vote for the high school bond because the old high school is run down an inefficient.

Be selfish and vote for the bond because it's best for your pocket book.

When a community builds, it's growing. When it's growing all boats are lifted with the tide; this is Economics 101. With any large community investment, much of the money spent goes back into the community in a multiplying effect.

There are a number of studies which show this effect as much as eight times the original investment. Does this mean that Florence can look forward to \$800 million?

Probably not.

But what about half of that? What do you think that a few hundred million dollars of spending in the community will do to your property value? I don't know about you, but my house is an investment for me, my wife, our children

and their children. This is me being selfish, looking out for me and mine.

What do you think that a few hundred million dollars will do for small businesses in Florence? I've owned or operated several restaurants here in Florence and I can tell you any of those could have used a stimulus shot like this. In fact, I have several friends who run "Mom and Pops" here and I'm excited for the influx in business they will enjoy during and after the new high school construction.

To oppose the bond because your property taxes will go up is myopic and the opposite of being fiscally responsible. Be selfish and support the high school bond not for altruism but because it's best for your pocket book.

It's best for your business, it's best for your property values and it will make us all richer.

—Eddie Mielke
Florence

SO MANY CHOICES

Dunes City has a slate of ballot measures to consider:

- 20-293 Prohibition of pot growing in Dunes City. This is where a "Yes" vote is a No to pot growing, and vice-versa, a

trick question.

- 20-294 Changes Charter language regarding a Municipal Court; eliminating complex requirements so that we may contract for outside court services, thereby giving codes an enforcement mechanism.

- 20-295 Authorizes a minimal property tax for a 5-year period solely to qualify for shared revenues from the State. The Council has said it would not increase the amount. If you believe that and want the city to continue, a "Yes" vote is in order; if you don't believe it, or would like to see the city dissolve, a "No" vote is the choice.

Dunes City already certifies to the state that it provides fire protection, which it does not— so if truth be told, is ineligible for revenue sharing in the first place.

The school bond is also there, exempt from the compression rules. An approval will equate to tripling whatever you have been paying under the expiring bond; for every \$100, triple that to \$300, if you can afford it.

—Mary Jo Leach
Dunes City

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Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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DEADLINES:

Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.

Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$76; 6-month in-county, \$52; 10-weeks subscription, \$23; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$99; 6-month out-of-county, \$65; 10-weeks subscription, \$29; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$125; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$71.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
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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.

Email letters to:

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