

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)

Do the Albatross know what real food is?

(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.)

Imagine a 22-pound ocean-going bird with a wingspan of up to 11 feet, taller than man if you look at it askance, as if it was on its side. The Albatross lives and breeds in the North Pacific. There are three species of Diomedeiade on Midway Island: the Laysan, the Black-footed, and the endangered Short-tail.

Young, from the parent’s only egg, take flight and soar over the ocean between three and 10 months after hatching. One will glide for hours without flapping its wings or settle on the surface of the ocean without returning to land for five to 10 years until it is time to reproduce. These birds and three billion people rely on the ocean for survival.

They are carnivores; they eat squid and schooling fish. And yet, there are signs that they are increasingly confused about what is real food. They are dying by the thousands on Midway Island, and the shocking sight of rotting corpses with stomachs full of plastic is prevalent.

There are two great garbage patches in the ocean: one in the eastern Pacific between California and Hawaii, and one in the Western Pacific near Japan — both spinning off debris that ends up on coast

lines around the world or is pulled into the eye of the Great North Pacific Gyre where four currents meet and flow clockwise.

Eighty percent of this debris is plastic. Nearly every piece of plastic ever made still exists. The Journal of Science reports that 8 million metric tons of plastic go into the ocean each year. By 2025, the

GUEST VIEWPOINT
By Joanna Henderson
Florence

cumulative estimate will be 20 times that number — or 100 plastic bags for each foot of ocean coastline.

According to the World economic Forum, we produce 300 million tons of plastic a year.

Plastic takes decades to break down. You will find whole electronics whose parts may eventually sink to the ocean floor, decaying blocks of styrofoam, every manner of plastic item from throw-away lighters, straws, plastic bags and six pack rings to toys, chairs, containers — all breaking down in massive soups over decades — in garbage patches in the ocean and on the coastlines of islands and continents.

Plastic’s last stage of decay becomes styrene based micro-plastic particles that

are now being found in every part of the ocean, floating in seemingly clear water everywhere and washing up on beaches to become the new sand.

These micro-particles are small enough to be ingested by phytoplankton, the base of the ocean food chain, and then affect marine organisms up to birds, mammals and the tissue of fish we eat. We are literally eating the plastic we haphazardly discard.

So why is the fish-eating Albatross eating plastic? Along with what washes ashore, these birds fly in 5 tons of plastic in their bellies each year. Perhaps garbage patches of plastic are now substitutes for less abundant shoals of fish. Perhaps the adults feed their chicks shiny bits of plastic shards without discriminating.

Whatever thw case, speculation is that the young Albatross, having been fed plastic as a chick, now eats what he believes to be food. In any case, volunteers on Midway are removing an increasing number of carcasses whose rotting bodies leave only piles of plastic behind to mark their deaths.

Perhaps it’s time we kick this habit of convenience and get plastic out of our lives before it kills us as well — in the fish we eat and in the destruction of an ocean that could eventually have more plastic than fish.

She has supported bi-partisan legislative work on transportation infrastructure, quality schools including trade and technical courses, greatly reducing tuition at Oregon Community Colleges, and expanding affordable health care in Oregon that includes keeping cover-age for pre-existing conditions.

Caddy McKeown’s parents were both veterans. Her father at age 97 gives Caddy a personal understanding of the needs of our senior citizens.

We have a sincere and well-liked representative who knows this district and our state.

I will be voting to re-elect her.

—Karin Radtke
Yachats

VOTE FOR A WELL-QUALIFIED CANDIDATE WITH INTEGRITY

It is my privilege to recommend Maureen Miltenberger for Florence City Council. I met her two years ago when she offered to volunteer for my Adult Basic Skills class at LCC. I feel fortunate to have such an experienced and competent retired educator work with my students.

She brought her many resources and her compassion to help our lowest level students gain reading skills and confidence. She made a huge difference in their lives. As in my classroom, Maureen makes a difference wherever she commits her time, energy and skills.

She has so many wonderful qualifications. Maureen serves on the Environmental Management Advisory Committee for the City of Florence; she is also the chair of Siuslaw Climate Alliance.

She has former experience as a council member for the City of Canby.

Maureen has shown the courage of her convictions as an outspoken advocate for the rights of all people in our community. We would be blessed to have such a competent, caring person representing all of us in Florence.

—Nora Kent
Florence

CLARIFICATION

In the Oct. 3 edition of the Siuslaw News, the Guest Viewpoint “Time To Ask Serious Questions of State Legislators” was attributed to “Joe Henry — Mayor of Florence.”

Siuslaw News would like to clarify that the viewpoint submitted by Mr. Henry was as a citizen, and not as Mayor or as a representative of the City of Florence or Florence City Council.

Siuslaw News appologizes for any confusion.

LETTERS

ARGUMENTS AGAINST MEASURE 105 DON’T HOLD WATER

The opponents of Measure 105 have tried to label those who favor this measure as hate mongering anti-immigration bigots.

I will try not to be so intolerant to persons with a different point of view, no matter how misguided and uninformed. I believe that legal immigration is vital to America’s well-being with an ongoing transfusion of new ideas and talents.

My own extended family and friends include Mexican, Philippine, Sikh and Vietnamese who have come here legally, and have become citizens. I have great admiration for them, along with the other 750,000 people who participate in citizenship ceremonies each year.

To compare their accomplishments with those who remain here illegally is demeaning.

Its said that illegal immigrants are necessary to harvest our crops. The big farming corporations agree, because they have a cheap labor supply that they can control and abuse with low salaries and poor working conditions.

As Cesar Chavez pointed out, it’s very difficult for legal, organized farm workers to negotiate for fair salaries and working conditions when illegals undercut their efforts.

You should vote no on 105 if your cheap lettuce, produced on the backs of oppressed illegals, is that important to you.

The argument that by cooperating with the enforcement of federal laws, crime will increase because illegals will be afraid to assist local police doesn’t seem to hold water with the 18 County Sheriffs that support Measure 105.

—Keith R. Kraft
Florence

FLORENCE NEEDS SKILL AND EXPERIENCE OF MILTENBERGER

I first met Maureen Miltenberger when she attended a committee meeting where I was a member. She spoke effectively though briefly, stayed on topic and brought insights based on what I later understood to be her skill and experience in committees at many levels.

It was not a surprise to learn she was not just a member but chair of the EMAC committee for the city. She knows how to lead, how to involve everyone, how to not push beyond what can be accomplished and to get things done which benefit our entire community.

The Polystyrene (styrofoam) ban is working and the community is still whole. The proposed single-use plastic ban is moving as quickly as the com-

munity can accept it so that our oceans can be kept from deteriorating by the amount of plastic we together discard.

Florence needs her skill and experience on our Council so that her strengths can be applied to every program and issue affecting our lives. Join me in voting for Maureen Miltonberger for City Council.

—Milton Nelson
Florence

THANKS TO COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORT

This letter is to the community who came out Sunday for the Rally for Siuslaw Schools. Thank you, thank you. It is really great to see so many people who want better schools for our kids. Several students made beautiful posters for the contest.

The bond measure is expensive. However, if we don’t pass it this year, it will cost all of us more next time. Construction costs keep going up and the backlog of maintenance needed in the high school won’t go away.

The high school uses 48 percent of the district utility budget and 42 percent of its maintenance budget.

This could fund a new teacher.

Quality schools attract health professionals and new businesses. Currently, our schools need a lot of upgrades to get to code and as a result we can’t keep new doctors very long as their families want better schools and better opportunities for their children.

—Nancy Rickard
Florence

McKEOWN TAKES ALL SIDES INTO CONSIDERATION

In an atmosphere of corruption and un-American values associated with the current White House, and the spectacle of a judicial nominee making an embarrassment of himself on national television, I found it very refreshing to hear and talk to my local state legislator last week.

I wish all politics were local these days. Our House District 9 Representative Caddy McKeown is rooted in Oregon values. She was a school board member when her children were in public schools, was appointed by the Governor to be a Port Commissioner on the central coast, and she knows the lay of the land in our diverse district very well.

Representing all of us in Salem is a tough job, and for pay that is barely above minimum wage. Caddy is a straight-talker and listener, always taking every side of an issue into lengthy consideration.

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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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WHERE TO WRITE

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