

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)



This editorial is one I never expected to be writing. I liken it to the conversation one might hope to never have with a friend, explaining how — as much as you care about and respect them — you feel it’s your duty, as a friend, to ask if they have been having an affair.

It’s the necessary and life-jarring question you pose with the hope of setting your friend straight, before the amount of damage is too much to repair.

In today’s edition is the first part of a two-part story that delves into our current city council elections. It’s a story that actually began long before the email from Councilor Susy Lacer to council candidate Geraldine Lucio, suggesting she consider dropping out of the race; long before Mayor Joe Henry’s public-record response to Lacer’s email; and even before the first yard signs

Politics is wrong direction for a city’s motion

for candidates began appearing along storefronts in Florence.

It actually started in early September, the morning after Lucio’s campaign kick-off. I arrived in the office and saw the blinking light of my phone’s voicemail box and, after push-

different — and not in the way one might hope.

Like many Americans, I have watched the politicization of self interest grow exponentially at the national, state and even county levels of government elections.

From the Editor’s Desk

Ned Hickson

ing “play,” listened to two anonymous tips accusing Lucio of having a felonious past. In the newsroom, a reporter had received two similar messages.

By the next morning, I had received two more anonymous “tips,” also referring to wrongdoing, this time against candidate Maureen Miltenberger.

Over the course of the next few weeks, they continued — always anonymous — with voice messages and handwritten notes shoved through the mail slot in our office door.

I knew then that this election, unlike any other since my return to Florence some 23 years ago, was going to be

But I always felt — *believed*, actually — that our local community-oriented elections were too good for that.

Too smart for that. Too committed to each other as a community to allow politics to poison the well water that we all drink from.

I was wrong. This editorial, as well as today’s front-page story, is that gut-check conversation with a friend who, until now, you never thought would cheat in their marriage.

It’s unexpected, uncomfortable, painful — but necessary, even at the risk of losing that friendship, if it means potentially keeping them from mak-

ing a terrible mistake.

In this case, everyone involved is someone I would consider a friend to one degree or another, from Mayor Henry to members of the council and all three candidates.

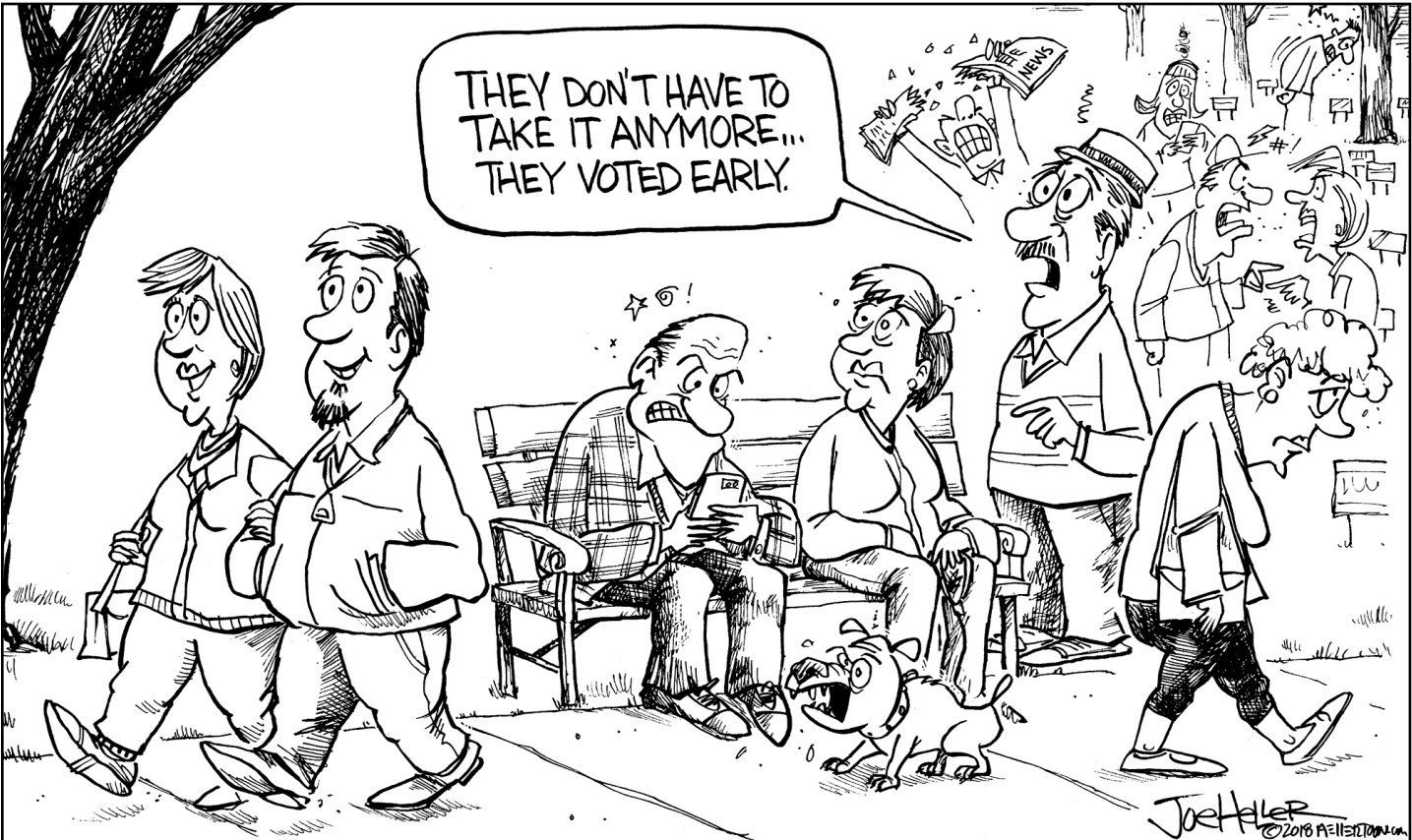
And to each of them I ask: Is partisan politics really the direction we want to take? If so, are we willing to accept the consequences of that decision?

The reason that council positions are non-partisan is to avoid exactly what is happening with this election: Persuading votes with politics rather than personal platforms.

The danger in that is establishing the same kind of polarization and political posturing that has reduced our national conversation to tribal grunting.

Thanks to the hard work of our current city council members, we have indeed become a “City in Motion.”

The question is, will we allow politics to determine the direction that motion will carry us in the future?



LETTERS

INTERESTING SIGN OF THE TIMES

The other day I noticed a sign in front of the little building on Nopal Street just south of First Street. It had a lot of pictures on it, and the lettering under them read: “Victims of Illegal Immigrants.”

It was sort of interesting, but I think a more striking sign would have *all* of the pictures with the lettering “Victims of Civilian Mass Murderers.”

Maybe those people in that little building don’t care, but I know *I* do.

—Charles Pennington
Florence

DUCT TAPE AIN’T CHEAP

When the existing school bond retires in 2019, my household will be saving a whopping \$255.55 a year on our property taxes. And there is no hesitation in my decision to vote to reinvest this amount in support of the new Siuslaw School Bond Measure 20-291.

Why would I want to save a couple of hundred dollars a year at the expense of our kids and our community? And this from someone with no kids nor grand-kids.

I see the need for upgrades; I see the need for creating a better learning environment; I see the need to support this and future generations just like my hometown community supported with proper schools.

And speaking of money, there are large sums of money being poured into a

campaign to elect a small-business owner to City Council.

Look around town and you’ll see clusters of campaign signs that support Woody Woodbury and that young business owner.

Why are the business owners with clusters of signs not showing support of the school bond? Do they really want to save \$0.9022 and forget the benefits of making our town great — again?

My vote goes to Maureen Miltenberger, who is outspoken about her support (even with her fixed income) of this important bond. As a long-time educator and activist in every community she’s lived, she understands the value of what the Citizens for Siuslaw School know: A strong learning environment equals a passing grade for all of us.

Finally, if the new bond measure fails, I’ll send a check for \$255.55 a year to the school to help pay for the repairs that will be needed to keep the lights on and the doors open.

Duct tape ain’t cheap.

—Sally Wantz
Florence

INFRASTRUCTURE IS A NEED, NOT A WANT

As a retired professor of School Librarianship at California State University, Long Beach, I am strongly in support of the passage of the Siuslaw Schools bond measure for the following reasons:

1. All across America today our school libraries are rapidly becoming centers of modern learning based in large part on materials and information that students and teachers locate on the Internet.

This can only happen when the school library has adequate high-speed cable connectivity and computer hardware for every student in the library, even when two classes are in the library at the same time.

Our existing Florence school libraries are woefully inadequate to meet this need.

2. Our children are growing up in a world that is becoming increasingly digitized. Their teachers must have classroom access to technology in its many forms to prepare them for effective adult citizenship.

This requires new infrastructure in every classroom, library and all other school facilities.

We hear much discussion of “fake news” and students need instruction in ways to evaluate the news they read and hear in order to determine its authenticity. The new school facilities will provide access for students to learn these important evaluation skills.

I will be voting “yes” for new school facilities that will make all this possible for our students now and in the future.

—Ann Lathrop, Ph.D.
Florence

WHERE TO WRITE

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