

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)



LETTERS

PROPERTY TAXES CAN’T CARRY THE LOAD INDEFINITELY

I may be wrong, but it seems like the only taxes going up in Oregon are property taxes. I just got my 2018-19 statement, and now we are being inundated with new bond measures, which as good citizens we are asked to support.

But past issues haven't prevented the closing of libraries or there being many schools in poor condition around the state.

There needs to be some serious discussions in Salem and around Oregon about another way to pay for these things. Bond measures are not doing the job.

A general sales tax, say 5 percent, on everything — which applies to all residents, nonresidents and *tourists* — would be a lot more fair than expecting property owners alone to carry the school improvement load.

I don't like paying more in taxes, but unless the issue of more revenue is addressed, in the future we may be looking at a Proposition 13 revolt like they had in California.

—Charles Lugg
Florence

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR BEAUTIFUL TOWN?

At the risk of getting on the wrong side of the local newspaper of a small town I happen to love very much, I'd like to comment on the recent rise in political confrontation and ask: *If a truly genuine person wants to run for office and finds themselves the victim of ongoing harassment, bullying and vicious attacks, how do we end it?*

I, an unregistered, unaffiliated independent voter, will take the blame (or credit) for having encouraged Geraldine Lucio — my friend and barber — to run for City Council. I did so because I believe she is a smart, personable young woman and small business owner who is a fair thinker and wants what's best for our community. She isn't pushing either a conservative or liberal agenda.

She has many friends across the political spectrum in this community. To me, that is exactly the kind of candidate we need.

When she announced her candidacy at an event in her barbershop in early September, it was attended by friends who were liberal and conservative alike, many of whom made donations.

What a breath of fresh air. And when Geraldine signs started popping up around town, they were in all types of businesses and yards.

What happened next was truly tragic as attacks began, starting with anonymous and false accusations made to the newspaper. Then she was harassed by sitting city council members, one in person and one by email encouraging her to withdraw from the race. That was followed by numerous vile letters, texts and — just recently — anonymous and derogatory flyers distributed in Old Town during the night.

She is now afraid that she or her property will personally be targeted.

What is happening to our beautiful town? Where does this viciousness end?

Sadly, I think I need to apologize to Geraldine for ever encouraging her to get involved. But I will support her to the end. Her only “crime” has been having the audacity to challenge the powers in charge.

How sad for all of us.

—Terry Tomeny
Florence

I WANT MORE FROM MY CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

I cannot afford the luxury of such a crippling emotion as despair. But, after twice reading the saga of the Siuslaw News story “Chaos in the Community” (Oct. 24), I bumped it up a notch to feeling sad that the community leadership allowed itself to dip so low.

I read the account twice to make certain that I was not jumping to conclusions. I read the mayor's words “gifted speaker” and “attempting to shame” in what seemed to be a defense for a particular candidate under scrutiny because of her own avoidance behaviors.

Also, the mayor's statement that the qualifications to run for city government are to “live in the city for one year, to attend meetings and vote yea or nay.”

I don't think he believes his own words. I know I want more from *my* councilor. These words gave further substance to my conclusion, which is that who is running for councilor is a personal issue for the mayor.

The job of councilor, like many volunteer public service posts, requires a great deal of skill and dedication both for the time and the complex issues that come before them.

Had I not done a good deal of exploration, I would have gone forward on my application to run for the school board. I thought I had what it took. But after speaking to school board members, it was pointed out to me that what I thought I would bring to the school board would be better addressed at the state level.

I thanked them for keeping me from making a bold move that might not have benefitted our local community.

—Nan Harvey
Florence

MILTENBERGER IS MY CHOICE

In the Nov. 6 election, Maureen Miltenberger is running for city council and she will be my choice. She is a wonderful person, a local Oregonian, and she cares about the people and the environment.

We sit together in EMAC (Environmental Management Advisor Committee) and in Siuslaw Climate Alliance, in which she serves as the chairperson of both.

I learned to respect and appreciate her and all she does because her heart is in the right place and she is fighting for better education and better environ-

ment for all of us. She is an intelligent and warm-hearted woman trying to get involved and improve lives. She is a volunteer at the school helping adults with basic skills to gain reading skills and confidence, and she does so with respect and compassion.

She is also helping EMAC to improve the rules and make our environment better and cleaner. We are lucky to have her and would be a great addition to our city council.

I will be filling in the oval next to her name on the Nov. 6 ballot.

—Liat Meller
Florence

BOND MEASURE WILL HURT THOSE ON FIXED INCOME

Measure 20-291 was not addressed in the voter's pamphlet. This letter reiterates information contained in an article published in the *Siuslaw News* earlier this year.

Measure 20-291 is a 30-year school bond measure. The present school bond, which will expire soon, levies a property tax of .90 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The new measure will raise the amount to \$2.72 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For example, a home assessed at \$200,000 under the current bond equals \$180 per year. If Measure 20-291 passes, that payment will be \$544 per year — a number that will increase as assessed property values increase.

This measure, if passed, will have a significant impact on the amount of property tax that homeowners/property owners will have to pay in the future — especially for those of us on a fixed income.

—Robert Flowerday
Florence

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING

Drive by Siuslaw High School and you see a well maintained campus — green, manicured lawns, well-kept shrubs and a distant but nice looking large building.

But take a tour of the school as I did and what do you see? Small, dark, windowless classrooms, inadequate lighting, a 50-year-old heating system that breaks down, an electrical system that cannot accommodate new technology, outdated plumbing, an antiquated lift system for students with disabilities, a girls' locker room that affords students no privacy, and no cafeteria.

So why should I care? I'm retired and don't have any children or grandchildren in school.

But, my doctors do; my hair stylist does; the checker in the grocery store does. So do many others who provide invaluable services for retired people like me.

To keep Florence a growing and vibrant community with a good quality of life for all ages, I'll vote “Yes” on the school bond for the future of Florence.

—Pat Allen
Florence

(More LETTERS on 5A)

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

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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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