

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

VOTE, OR DON'T COMPLAIN

We are fortunate to live in a state where we have the ability to vote in the privacy and peacefulness of our own homes, but for some reason our voter participation is not very good.

We will all want to express how upset we are with the results, and how terrible the other people are who did not vote the way we think they should.

It is all very simple: *If you do not vote, you have no right to complain.*

So please vote — and then complain all you want. Thank you.

—Charlie Pennington
Florence

JUDGING BY LABEL

The vast majority of us on the Central Coast of Oregon are migrants from someplace, even if that place is within the boundaries of the U.S.

Our identities are increasingly gleaned from TV and our handheld devices.

I grew up in rural N.Y. where identity was local even though neighbors were recognized by ancestor country of origin. The "inks" were Dutch, "skis" were Polish, "walds" were German, Greens were Irish, etc.

We kids hopped on the same school bus and bonded at our well-funded public school. Elections for governance of the township offered a slate of citizens with talents required for the positions. Nominees' names ended in "ink," "ski," "wald," etc.

Everyone knew everyone and was thankful that individuals with know-how, were willing; political or church affiliations were immaterial.

No candidate running for a nonpartisan position had a hidden agenda. No outsider organization was paying for advertising, buying signs, managing a candidate or attempting to influence outcomes. There was no big money involved and we were better off without it.

My grandmother, 1/8 Seneca whose father died in the Civil War, taught her children to know their neighbors, help them reap harvest, rebuild a burned barn, go to their weddings, attend their funerals, work with them and never, never gossip about nor demonize them.

"Do not judge with a label."

We knew our neighbors and found common ground. May we migrants to Florence area strive to do the same.

—Kathryn Damon-Dawson
Florence

NOT ABOUT POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

I am a registered Democrat. I live in Westlake, so I am unable to vote for Maureen Miltenberger. However, I collected signatures for Maureen's Florence City Council candidacy because she is an objective and honest person who listens closely.

I admire and respect her commitment to making our world a better place for each of us. That's full disclosure, but not why I'm writing.

I attended the first Florence ORganizes (FOR) meeting because it was a productive call for interested people to make positive efforts for change, no matter how small or local. It was not then — and is not now — a political group.

FOR is a consortium of committees in which each member can focus on a particular area of interest: education, recycling and plastics disposal/reuse, Climate Change, social justice, and healthcare, among others.

This is not about political ideology; it is about doing what each of us believes is necessary for a better and sustainable world.

After reading the two-part Siuslaw News article ("Chaos' In The Community," Oct. 27), I was dismayed that there seemed to be a conflation between Patriot Place and Florence ORganizes as political opponents. Please!

—Patricia Burke
West Lake

WILL WE STAND UNITED OR FALL DIVIDED?

I have been watching electioneering since I missed, by one week, being old enough to vote in the 1968 presidential contest. Today, I am completely disgusted with what the process has evolved to over those years, the degradation clearly accelerating over recent history.

For the past few weeks my mail box has been inundated with partisan political flyers, issued by both parties and all following

the same format. Not a single one informs me as to what the particular candidate has to offer, but instead harangues me with the myriad evils of their opponent.

Apparently these things are effective because a great deal of effort and money must go into their production. That being true, it just speaks so well of the intelligence of the American electorate, doesn't it?

Personal attacks and smear campaigns are more effective than honest discourse.

On top of all this, I took the time to read, in detail, the various pro and con arguments on ballot initiatives provided in the published voters pamphlet.

More misdirection and frequently outright distortion is difficult to imagine.

For me, whether selecting a president, a representative to congress or a member of the local city council, it comes down to this: As Aesop first stated, and so many have quoted over the ages, "united we stand, divided we fall."

The disgusting display of unveiled animus permeating recent political cycles has become what is, so unfortunately, now a national disgrace.

And you know what? It isn't just them doing it; it is also you and me! Each and every one of us should take a moment and think about those words, "united we stand, divided we fall," and ask ourselves which side of the phrase our own words and deeds are most contributing to.

—Jimmie Zinn
Florence

TRICKLE-DOWN THINKING

Thanks to the Siuslaw News for two detailed articles on conflict in the city council. ("Chaos' In The Community," Oct. 24 and Oct. 27)

In the 27 years I have observed the Florence City Council in action, I have seen fisticuffs between a city employee and a citizen contrasted with a calm centrist council re-electing a councilor and a mayor until they were termed out and then continued to serve the community; I have watched two councilors consume bags of candy as they voted in every fast food outlet along Highway 101 and demanded 'turrets' on the Fred Meyer building in the sand dune; and a mayor who approved liquor license applications to increase the thousands of dollars poured into the city's general fund from 'sin taxes'; I've seen disabled councilors struggle to mount the dais and a businessman mayor who peered at seniors in the audience who would receive his business letter the next day.

But the only meeting I attended purportedly on rural development that included hoots of derision, bullying and outright threats was 15 years ago.

That winner-take-all attitude has now raised it's hideous head again. School yard behavior just does not cut it for adults.

As a community we must thrive together in harmony or sink into stagnant doldrums.

The Siuslaw News said it best with it's final comment of "We need to grow up."

—Jenny Velinty
Florence

WE NEED MORE LISTENERS

I read with interest the recent articles "Chaos' in the Community" (Oct. 24 and Oct. 27). Personally, I don't care about who on the council or among the candidates is a Republican or Democrat.

It just doesn't matter to me.

There are three candidates running for two seats. The one incumbent member is Woody Woodbury. It is something of a cliché but quite true that "everyone knows Woody." His record of public service to our community is near legendary.

The controversy lies with the other two candidates, Geraldine Lucio and Maureen Miltenberger. There are obviously some people who don't want to see Ms. Miltenberger on the council. There are also people who don't want to see Ms. Lucio on the council.

The solution to this is not through anonymous phone calls or Photoshopped hit pieces. The solution is to vote, get involved, write letters to the paper, put up signs, and talk to your friends and neighbors. Then, when the election is over, let's all work together to keep Florence such a great place!

Much has been made of Ms. Lucio's seeming reluctance to engage in public speaking. Has anyone offered to help her with that? I met Ms. Lucio at the Candidates' "Meet and Greet" held at the Elks Club. I found her to be rational, engaging

and articulate.

More importantly, I noticed that she listened. She listened to me, basically a nobody, as if I were Socrates, himself. I am most certainly *not* Socrates. I think listening is a quality we need more than smooth talking. We have talkers at every level of state and national government.

We need more listeners.

—Stan Easter
Florence

BUEHLER WILL TIGHTEN SPENDING, REDUCE TAXES

Knute Buehler's visits these past few weeks to the small towns of Oregon speak volumes. He understands that Oregon is much bigger than the Portland area.

Kate Brown doesn't get it.

Those making up the majority of the area of Oregon are hardworking, fiscally conservative folks. Knute Buehler understands their needs and will remember all of us who make up this great state when he becomes governor.

Kate Brown will take more of our hard-earned money and keep our state in financial ruin.

Knute knows we can't afford Kate Brown with her liberal spending and expensive programs, which results in increased taxes for every program she invents. That's why I believe he will make a great governor; he'll tighten up spending which results in less taxes for us.

Thanks for remembering us, Knute.

I will remember you at the polls.

You have my vote.

—Kay King
Florence

POINTS TO PONDER ABOUT SCHOOL BOND

In casting your vote for the proposed bond to construct and upgrade school facilities and improve safety, all property owners must consider carefully the impact the proposed bond will have on property taxes.

Many people in our community are in agreement that the school facilities would benefit from some major improvements. There is concern, though, that the amount of the proposed bond, \$108 million, may reflect an imbalance of "wants" vs "needs."

Voters should be able to review a line-item breakdown of the proposed replacement and upgrades to the schools. This bond is asking the property owners of our community to shoulder a substantial increase in their property taxes.

The bond proposes a \$2.72 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. If a home has a taxable value of \$225,000 that would mean a yearly property tax increase of \$612. Florence is comprised of a very high percentage of seniors, many of them on tightly fixed incomes. Single parents and families are struggling to make ends meet.

Renters of all ages may see a substantial increase in their already high rents from their landlords looking to recoup their costs. What daily living basics will need to be sacrificed by these folks because of the burden of a tremendous tax increase?

Have proponents of this bond considered that property taxes inherently go up annually to support education and general government taxes?

Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak said he believes the district faces considerable issues regarding the safety, comfort and education that students in the district will face if the decided upon bond modifications are not undertaken. What about the considerable monetary issues property owners will face if this bond passes?

We love our kids and supporting our schools is an important investment in our community, but this bond is not a viable solution.

—Fred and Doris Boyan
Florence

MEASURE 105: WHY FIX SOMETHING THAT ISN'T BROKEN?

Oregon is a beautiful, wonderful place to live in this great country.

It always has been, and we are all blessed to be here no matter where we came from.

ORS181A.820 has been on the books for more than 30 years.

If it's not broke ...

You know the rest.

—Theresa Olmstead
Florence

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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; 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; 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 partisan-ship 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:

nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

WHERE TO WRITE

PRES. DONALD TRUMP The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 20500 Comments: 202-456-1111 Switchboard: 202-456-1414 FAX: 202-456-2461 TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213 www.whitehouse.gov	U.S. REP. PETER DEFAZIO (4TH DIST.) 2134 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-6416 541-269-2609 541-465-6732 www.defazio.house.gov
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