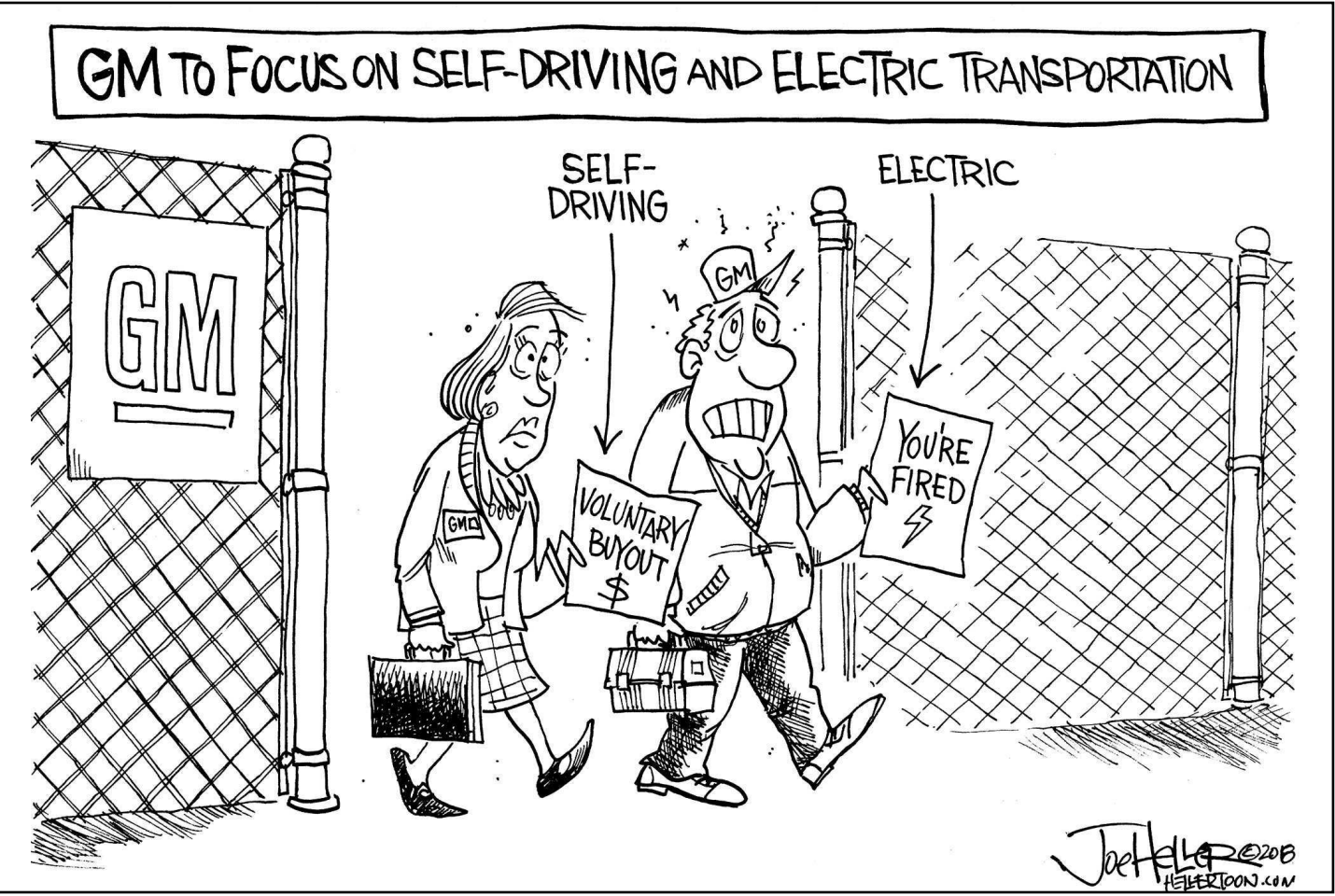


Siuslaw News
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Opinion

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)



Know the true history, meaning behind flag’s symbols

(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.*)

In the Nov. 24 edition of the Siuslaw News, a Letter to the Editor was published which included inaccurate and false statements.

Gene Olson’s letter (“Don’t Drag Disrespectful Symbols Into Veterans Parade”) in reference to the flag I have on my military jeep, the “Don’t Tread On Me” flag, was described as “insensitive and inappropriate.”

Olson’s lack of knowledge concerning the history of this flag has presented a totally false description of the background behind this flag.

Its long and distinguished history goes back to the colonial days of our nation. In the fall of 1775, the Continental Navy created the “first U.S. Navy Jack” and has traditionally been shown as consisting of 13 horizontal alternating red and white stripes with a superimposed rattlesnake and the motto “Don’t Tread on Me.”

The rattlesnake had long been a symbol of resistance to British repressive acts in Colonial America.

In August 1977, the Secretary of the Navy specified that the ship with the longest total period of active service display the First Navy Jack until decommissioned

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Sam Spayd Colonel USAF, retired

or transferred to inactive service, at which time the flag shall be passed to the next ship in line with appropriate honor.

On May 22, 2002, the U.S. Navy ordered all ships to display the First Navy Jack during the War on Terrorism. Currently the amphibious command ship USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) has the honor of flying the First Navy Jack.

As recently as last January, the U.S. Navy hoisted the First Navy Jack under Old Glory at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam to honor the 17 shipmates we lost on USS Fitzgerald (DDG-62) and USS John S. McCain (DDG-56).

It represents a historical reminder that our warfighting edge is not only back but

renewed and forged with purpose.

To describe this symbol of our rich American history as “divisive, disrespectful and generally offensive” shows a total lack of knowledge of our American traditions.

Once again, false and misguided information is promulgated by “do gooders” who add to the false narrative and spread half truths and misrepresentations without researching the full facts.

I will continue to display this “First Navy Jack” on my military jeep as a symbol of the respect I hold for all the men and women who have honorably served in the armed forces of our great nation.

I hope Mr. Olson will find some positive way to express his good fortune to live in a country where you have the right and freedom to express yourself freely and without fear of reprisal.

(Editor’s Note: *The Nov. 24 Letter to the Editor from Gene Olson mentioned the “Don’t Tread On Me” flag and also the Confederate Flag, which was flown on a different vehicle in the Veteran’s Day parade.*)

LETTERS

CELEBRATE THE ‘EXPLODING WHALE’

I am writing in response to the Nov. 14 article (“In Memorium of Florence’s Exploding Whale”) on the exploding whale celebrations.

I think that the exploding whale is and always will be considered a funny moment in Florence’s history. There are some people that view the whale explosion as an embarrassing event that should be buried like the whale should’ve been.

It was a silly decision to blow up the whale with some dynamite, but most people view it as a funny event that just made Florence famous. I’m glad that no one actually died from falling blubber or else the event might have been considered a grave mistake.

I haven’t heard of any other celebrations for the anniversary of the exploding whale, but what happened on the 48th anniversary was funny. I liked the re-enactment of the explosion at the beach. It created a fun and positive view on a city’s mishaps. The people who re-enacted the explosion probably got a good laugh out of it. Like the article said, the median age for people in this town is around 60, so doing the re-enactment gives the younger people something fun to do.

For the 50th anniversary, it would be cool to have a bigger celebration done. This year’s whale had about 10 people

used to make it. I think it would be exciting to have a huge re-enactment done by the whole town or a couple hundred people. It would generate more excitement in Florence for the younger people in this city, and could create more publicity for Florence.

Some tourists might hear about the event or be passing by and want to join in or spectate.

—Daniel Olson
Florence

GREASE THE WHEELS OF LOCAL DISCOURSE

I am hopeful that we can bridge the political divides in our town, and I liked seeing letters in the paper recently about participating in democracy.

I may have missed a few, but two I saw were about voting and about bringing concerns to the Florence City Council in person.

I say, Bravo!

What are other ways we can grease the gears of our local — and perhaps national — discourse? Letter writing parties? Phone banks on important issues? Weekly discussion groups with a focus and a facilitator? Monthly forums on topics of interest or concern?

I participate in some activities like these and I encourage others to do the same. Start a forum or activity if what you want to do is not around yet; if you build it, they will come.

From the resulting enriching and

thought provoking interactions comes guidance, support and camaraderie.

—Ivy Medow,
Florence

FIRE TRAGEDY WAS LARGELY PREVENTABLE

While the fires in California were horrendous, the terrible loss of life and property was largely preventable. President Trump was 100 percent correct when he said the forest was mishandled.

We are now seeing the end result of decades of lawsuits designed by “environmentalists” designed to not cut trees and stay out of the forests.

Remember the warnings (lies) about the spotted owl, wolves and cougar hunting?

We need to clear-cut, thin and take out trees that are infected with bark beetles or that are just plain unhealthy.

There is a lot of lumber in the forest, so why buy from Canada?

They need to take big tractors, crush the undergrowth and dig up the dried grass.

Two years ago, California had heavy rains which filled all the reservoirs. Everything grew like crazy. A few years later, it burned.

This cycle has been going on forever and will not stop.

— Martin Cable
Dunes City

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
OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN 160 State Capitol 900 Court St. Salem, Ore. 97301-4047 Governor’s Citizens’ Rep. Message Line: 503-378-4582 www.oregon.gov/gov	STATE SEN. ARNIE ROBLAN (DIST. 5) 900 Court St. NE - S-417 Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1705 FAX: 503-986-1080 Email: Sen.ArnieRoblan@oregonlegislature.gov
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