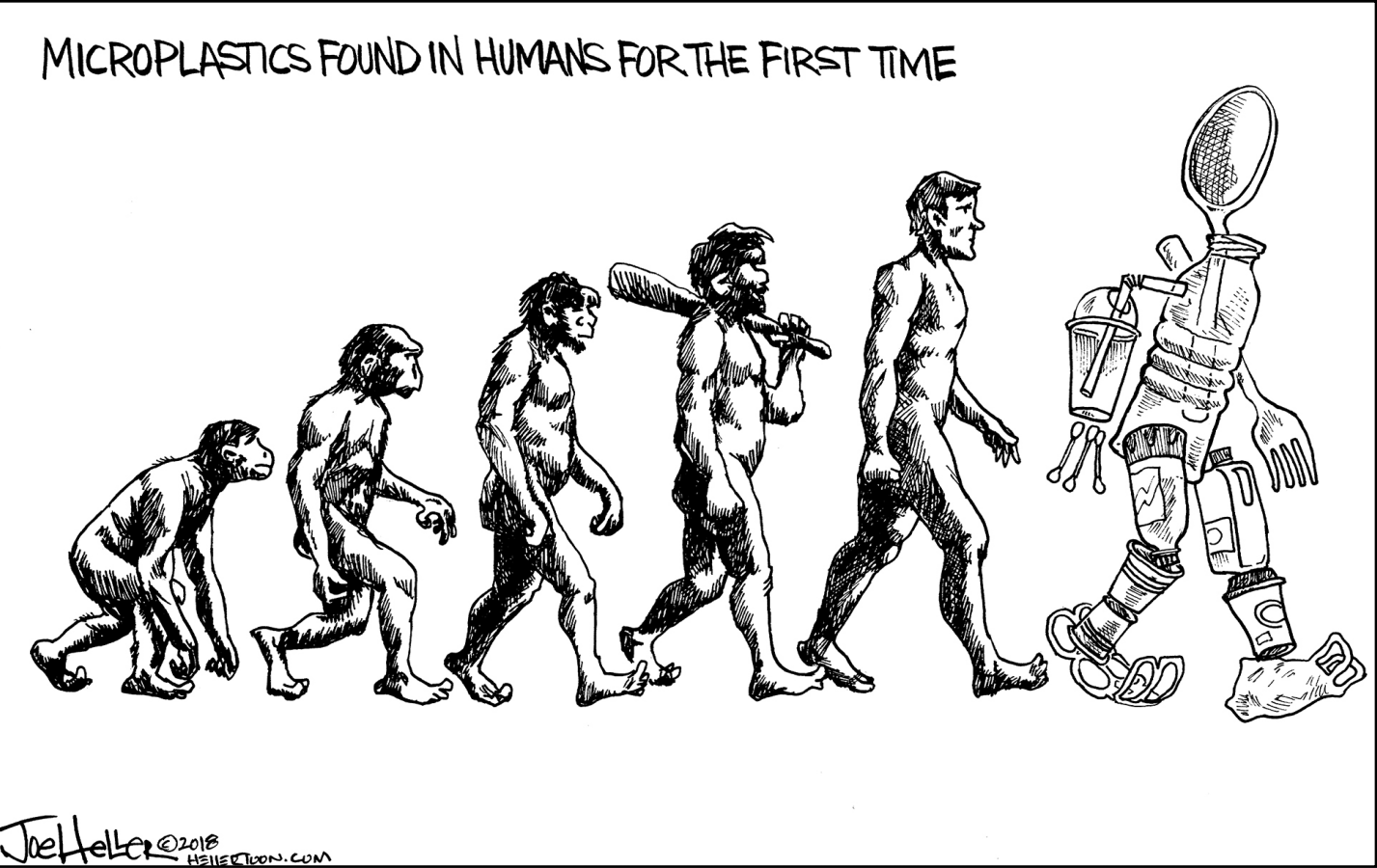


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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)



Ultimate cost of plastic convenience is far too high

The inclusion of plastic in our lives has grown exponentially over the past 70 years, making our lives easier, more convenient and often providing a significant cost savings almost too good to be true. However, as we have begun to realize, the ecological interest rate on the cost of convenience has come due — with an unexpected balloon payment. We produce nearly 300 million tons of plastic products each year, nearly half of which is designed for single-use purposes in what has increasingly become a disposable society. And despite our efforts to educate the public about the importance of “Reduce, Re-use and Recycle,” each year more than 8 million tons of plastic is dumped into our oceans. When we lose electricity in our home, I still walk into every dark room and flip the switch because

it’s second nature. I’m so used to it being there that I don’t even think about how often — and in how many ways — I use electricity. The same can be said for our use of plastic. Here are a few statistics to help illustrate the scope of how plastic has become a second-nature element of our lives:

In Lane County, our goal was to recycle two-thirds of our waste products by 2025. We were making great strides, leading the state in this campaign by being the only county in Oregon to send more waste to recyclers than we did to landfills. However, recycling restrictions in the Siuslaw region introduced last

In that spirit, Siuslaw News once again partnered with City Lights Cinemas yesterday as part of the Siuslaw News’ free Green Film series, which targets important topics through innovative films and community discussion. Yesterday’s film was “Divide in Concord,” a feature-length documentary that follows the story of 84-year-old Concord, Mass., resident Jean Hill, who waged a seemingly unwinnable battle to rid her town of single-serve plastic bottles of water.

Our hope is that the Green Film Series presentations and discussions that follow will spur the kind of community conversation that will lead to solutions in dealing with what we have embraced as an element of everyday life that seemed too good to be true — and was. The question is what we can do — and are willing to do — as individuals and as a community to address the true cost of convenience.

From the Editor’s Desk
Ned Hickson

Worldwide, more than 500 billion plastic bags are used each year, or more than 1 million bags every minute. The average “working life” of a plastic bag is 15 minutes, after which it “retires.” In 1996, 3.8 billion plastic water bottles were sold in the U.S. By 2014, that number had grown to 57.3 billion. It’s no small irony that the process of producing a water bottle actually requires six times as much water as there is in the actual container itself.

January are jeopardizing the progress we’ve made as a county, and ultimately as a society. While our dependence on plastic is a global issue, the solutions will need to be implemented one community at a time, with the first step in that process being education. Before we can solve the plastic problem, we need to fully understand its scope and the ways it is intertwined not only among those of us who use it, but how any changes we make could impact us economically.



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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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