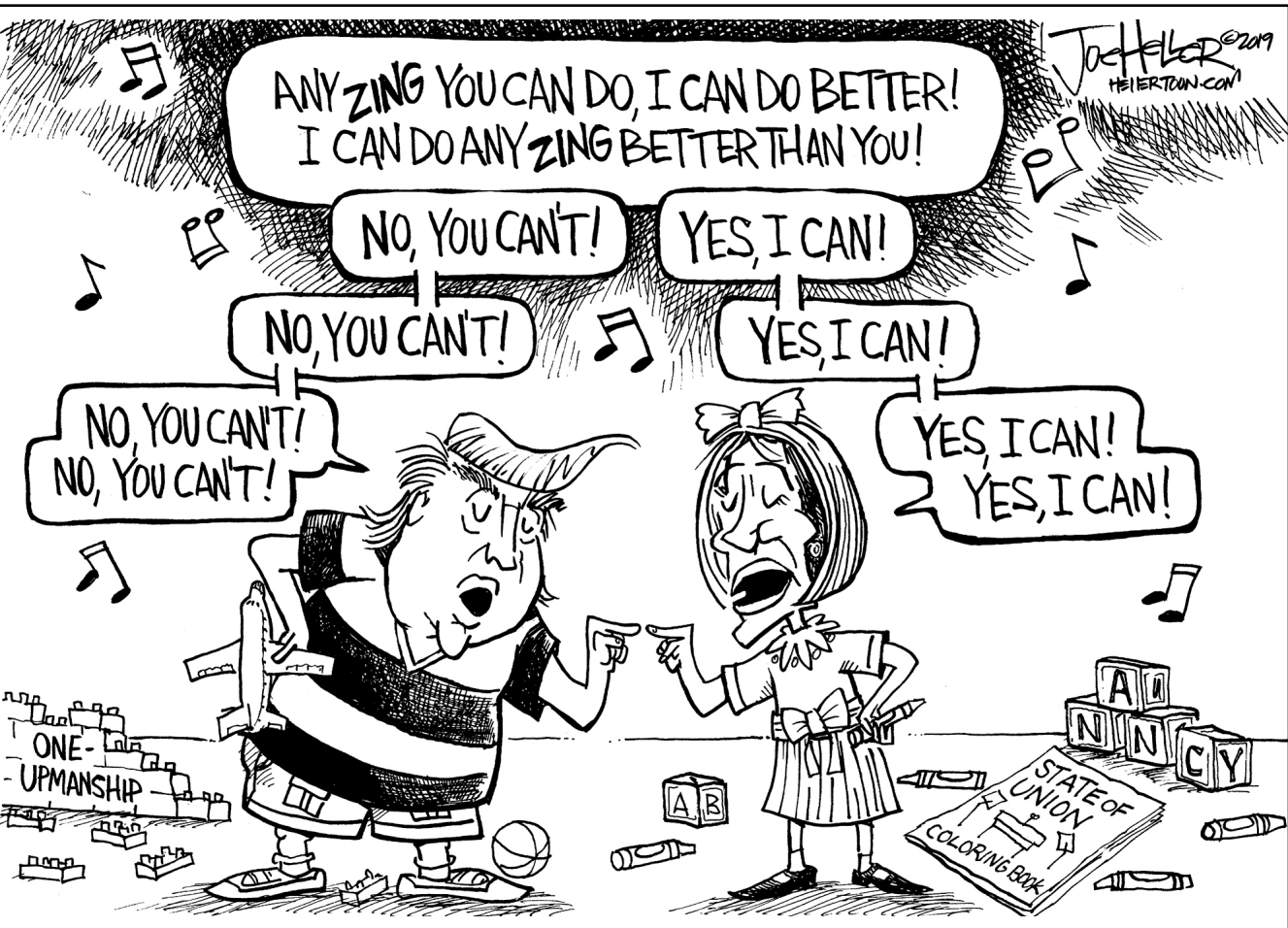


Siuslaw News  
P.O. Box 10  
Florence, OR 97439

# 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)



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## Siuslaw News

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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that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or documented will not be published.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:  
[nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com](mailto:nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com)

The shame of the 1 percent continues

(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.)

Speaking at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Sir David Attenborough called on government and business leaders to support, with practical plans, “United Nations decisions on climate change, sustainable development and a new deal for nature. What we do now, and in the next few years, will profoundly affect the next few thousand years,” he said.

True enough, but politically speaking, Sir David probably knows as well as anyone that precious few in his audience will be motivated to act decisively in the human interest — no more so than at any previous Davos meeting.

At this very moment, in fact, Oxfam published its latest data on global wealth distribution. It’s another sad rendition of an old theme:

The rich are getting richer, the poor poorer.

Notwithstanding China’s remarkable poverty reduction, the rest of the world’s poor are getting a decreasing share of the economic pie. As a result, Oxfam reports, “the 26

richest billionaires own as many assets as the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of the planet’s population” (Larry Elliott, [www.theguardian.com/business/2019/jan/21/world-26-richest-people-own-as-much-as-poorest-50-percent-oxfam-report](http://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/jan/21/world-26-richest-people-own-as-much-as-poorest-50-percent-oxfam-report)).

In 2016, it took 61 billionaires to match the wealth of the world’s 50 percent in poverty, and 43 billionaires in 2017. (By the way, 13 of the top 30 billionaires are American.)

For the world’s 2,200 billionaires,

wealth rose an astounding \$2.5 billion a day in 2018. These people — the global 1 percent — typically take in 27 cents on every dollar of global income growth, compared with 12 cents on the dollar for the global 50 percent.

It doesn’t take much imagination to understand the real-world consequences of those figures. For example, that “about 10,000 people per day die for lack of healthcare and there were 262 million children not in school, often because their parents were unable to afford the fees, uniforms or textbooks,” according to Oxfam.

As we in the U.S. celebrated Martin Luther King Day, we would have done good to consider what a single decision by any of those Davos participants would mean: a 1 percent tax on the 1 percent, which today would raise about \$418 billion — and enough to meet those health and education needs just mentioned.

Think they’ll do that, in between glasses of Champagne?

LETTERS

COLLARD ROAD ISSUE HAS DEEP ROOTS

The issue of County maintenance of Collard Lake Road has a long and inglorious history, going back nearly 20 years. Most recently, in the fall of 2016, a group of concerned residents, myself among them, raised the issue with the County Board, Mr. Bozievich, et al, only to be told in no uncertain terms that the county will not accept any responsibility for the maintenance of this “local access road.”

Regular maintenance falls to the residents to shoulder any costs incurred, excepting only emergency situations wherein access for emergency vehicles is impeded. The core of the issue is the contention of the county that the road budget simply cannot afford to provide any regular maintenance.

The reality is that Collard Lake Road is a disaster waiting to happen. This recent failure of one section is only a harbinger of what will, most certainly, be a much worse situation to come.

There are sections of the road where cracking and subsidence is obviously endangering not only access for the approximately 95 homes dependent on the road, but

clearly threatens residents of properties below, along Mercer Lake Road.

It should be remembered that, not long ago, a failure of nearby Chapman Road resulted in the destruction of a home and the death of a resident.

What the county fails to accept is the simple fact that the cost to the county of regular maintenance will shrink to insignificance should a catastrophic event occur, an event that would seem inevitable to anyone looking closely at the current conditions along the more precarious sections of the road.

It is not a matter of what will happen, only of *when*.

—Jimmie Zinn  
Florence

WHERE WERE THE HOLIDAY DECORATIONS?

So another holiday season has passed, and once again no holiday decorations to speak of on our businesses along Highway 101.

Mapleton and Reedsport have very nice holiday decorations, so why not Florence?

Friends, relatives visiting us and fellow Florence residents have commented on our lack of holiday spirit everywhere but Old Town.

And now an unattractive mural is being proposed at a huge cost? Couldn’t a more attractive mural be found at less cost?

—Barbara Cavarno  
Florence

CURIOUS ABOUT THE LACK OF FLAGS ON MLK DAY

One of the many things I love about Florence is the civic pride displayed during national holidays by placing American flags along our major thoroughfares. I believe this is done by a private group and their efforts are to be highly commended!

But I did find it curious while I was out on MLK Day and didn’t see any flags out.

Maybe someone from the paper could contact them to understand the reasoning behind this decision.

—Rob Welles  
Florence

(Editor’s Note: The posting of flags along the highways and around town during national holidays is through the Florence Kiwanis Club, which is limited to the number of volunteers available for that program. To find out more about the flag program, visit [www.florencekiwanis.org](http://www.florencekiwanis.org))

| WHERE TO WRITE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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