

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)



Succumbing to our worst nature in ‘real time’

require us to ensure it would be used towards those ends. “Otherwise,” he said, “it is merely wires and lights in a box.” This past week, millions of Facebook users witnessed

there are more NCIS spin-offs than any other genre on TV; and why Greek mythology is full of cautionary tales that end in tragedy. We find a certain comfort in recognizing when the mistakes or

In a way, social media is promoting a culture of digital-aged peeping Toms, encouraging us to gawk through an endless array of partially open windows into the lives of others — many of whom we don’t truly know. We can leave comments and engage in the conversations of strangers without consequence or accountability.

It’s an era of communication unlike any other, and the ultimate repercussions on our culture remain to be seen. In the same way that Murrow expressed the need for us to have a willingness to use the medium of television to teach, educate and inspire, we need to ask ourselves what direction we will take with the evolution of social media. Will we succumb to the worst of our nature or the best of it? Will our smartphones and other digital devices be utilized to improve the way we communicate and broaden our understanding of each other and the world? Or will they prove to be little more than microchips and lights in an even smaller box?

From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

in real time the murder of 50 people during an attack at a New Zealand mosque. Most of those who witnessed the murders simply found it in their Facebook feed and clicked to see what it was about. Though social media was quick to condemn the live feed and Facebook removed it, the footage had already been downloaded by hate groups associated with White Supremacy and shared to other social media sites. This horrific use of social media is becoming more common as platforms such as Facebook and others succumb to the worst — rather than the best — we have to offer as a society. It’s human nature to be drawn to things that disturb us. It’s the reason we gawk at the scene of accidents; why

problems of others have led to their misfortune — and how we can avoid making those same mistakes. But things are different in this era of social media communalism. It’s no small irony that, while we have become increasingly engaged in sharing our thoughts and experiences with more people than ever before, we have simultaneously come to accept that we are sharing those very things with people we will likely never meet. Through that acceptance we are slowly laying the groundwork for the kind of social disconnect that we have begun to see with live streaming of disturbing events — and, perhaps even more disturbing, having them shared hundreds of thousands of times by others.

LETTERS

LET’S REALLY SEE WHAT FLORENCE WANTS

I am opposed to the placement of any large visually distracting mural at the intersection approach to highway 101 and 126 for the following reasons. Motorist approaching from the east already have many directional signs to observe and select the directions they wish to go. There are seven possible turning points at the site of the proposed mural. The proposed PAC mural, with its bright colors and graffiti-type figures, would pose and extreme visual distraction. In my opinion the style and graphic representations are not reflective of the spirit of Florence as seen in the other murals in town. In addition, this section of highway 126 already has a problem area with the pedestrian crosswalk recently installed between Spruce and Quince Streets. I note the city has found it necessary to cover over the flasher buttons as they were too disruptive to traffic. While funds have been expended already on the mural the potential for the City being sued could well out weigh that cost. At the very least a well advertised public hearing should be held. I note

there were hearings in December at the height of the holiday season and during a time when much of the population of Florence was sick with a virus and was avoiding public contact. Lets really see what the population of Florence wants on this matter. —Bruce Jarvis Florence

WHERE HAVE ALL THE CLEANERS GONE?

Why is there no maid service in Florence? And by that I mean a legit, insured business that has proper coverage both in case of damage to a clients property or injuries sustained by the workers. I was quite shocked to discover that none of the national chains had any coverage in the region, and a call to the Chamber of Commerce confirmed that not a single local business exists. This makes no sense to me. It would seem like a no-brainer that a town with such a high percentage of retirees could sustain a thriving maid service. I mean, wiping countertops is one thing, scrubbing stubborn bathroom tiles with arthritic knees and fingers is something else altogether. Sure, there are hand-written notes

offering all sorts of services including cleaning to be found on community boards around town, but elderly in particular may not be comfortable letting a complete stranger into their house. And what if that person has an accident? A simple slip on the stairs could open a legal can of worms about as pleasant as a trip to the dentist. I guess this is my way of putting up a flag that there is a great opportunity for a hard-working person to become his or her own boss with a minimal start-up investment. So who will salute and capture this large, completely neglected market? —Matt Danielsson Florence

NEW POLICY AT THE PEARLY GATES COULD BE A PROBLEM

After seeing some of the vitriol posted on Facebook in regards to the proposed mural, I feel it’s a good time to remind folk that there’s a new policy at the Pearly Gates of Heaven: Saint Peter now reads your internet comments out loud. All of them. —Ed Gunderson Florence

WHERE TO WRITE

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