

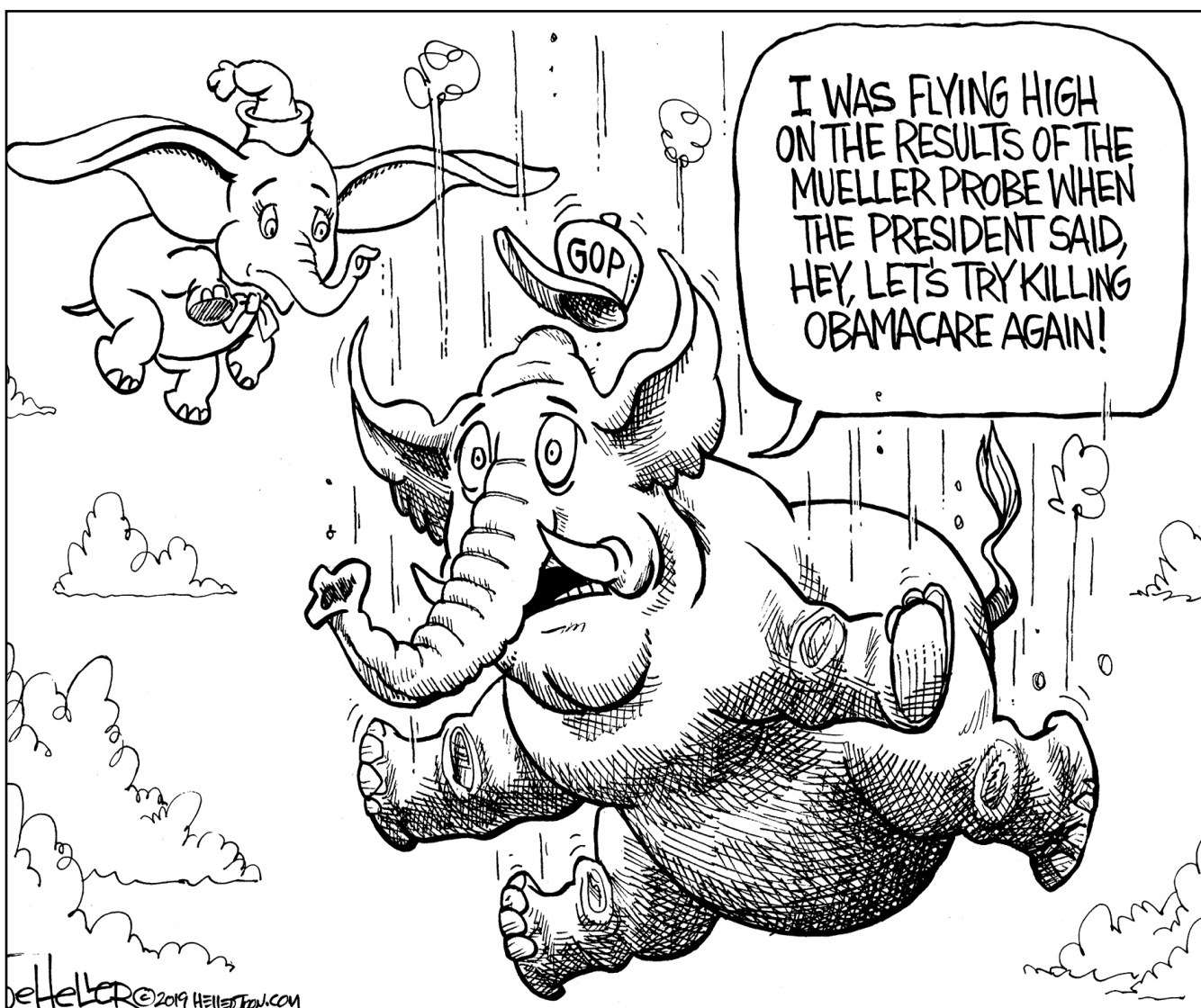
**Siuslaw News**  
P.O. Box 10  
Florence, OR 97439

# 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

### NEW THOUGHT ON MURAL

Now that the Florence City Council has determined that the proposed mural passes Land Use Criteria, isn't it time to ask the citizens of Florence and the surrounding area to vote to determine if they want the mural?

I suggest that one of the next projects proposed is an indescribable painting project on the steps leading from the northeast side of the Siuslaw bridge to Bay Street — that project might be fun for when the carnival is in town but not day to day, every day.

Again shouldn't the people who choose to live here have a say in what their surroundings look like?

—Sheldon Meyer  
Dunes City

### ART IS A PRIVATE MATTER, NOT A PUBLIC OBLIGATION

On April fool's night, the Florence City Council met to mainly discuss the efficacy of a mural located at Quince and Highway 126. The room was packed with citizens pro and con regarding whether the particular art was appropriate for Florence.

The artwork itself is certainly modern, with a sheen similar to a 'coat of many colors'. There were 25 citizens who took time to sign up and speak (I counted 13 for 12 against.) The meeting started at 5:30 p.m., however those speaking opposed waited for more than two hours, with members of that crowd eventually dissipating due to suffocation by what I felt was the outrageous promotion of the "pro" position.

The city staff made a grave, yet I believe purposeful mistake, in pushing for a pro agenda and not being a neutral arbitrator. One member of the city council even unthinkingly stated that they were "not going to consider in their deliberation what citizens said in their testimony."

Just who is paying the freight for this folly? In the history of the United States, art has always been a private matter until 1965 and the great society/war on poverty. Poverty won that war and the Great Society gave us the embryo of our modern trillion-dollar debt. Not only was federal sponsorship of art unconstitutional but never recognized as a public responsibility until President Johnson deemed it so. Since that fateful period, it seems state and local governments spawned similar ideas and *Shizam...art is a right!*

Not only is the proposed mural not indicative of Florence but the process by which the Florence City Council delegated its power to an appointed unselected group spending scarce tax dollars boggles the mind.

Just whose art are we funding? Art is too subjective to leave to a committee.

The solution is to allow the free market to determine what art is successful — not government by committee. No matter whether you like or dislike the design of the mural is your business; please don't ask others who disagree with your taste to pay for it.

May the God of Heaven bless Florence.

—Joel Marks  
Florence

### DOLLY BROCK WAS RIGHT; PAY ATTENTION AND GET INVOLVED

The CLPUD mural is still graffiti-like, not only to me but to my circle of friends and others who wrote to the *Siuslaw News* to complain and testify in opposition at the last Florence City Council meeting.

However, Dolly Brock is absolutely correct ("Pay Attention, Be Involved Before Complaining," April 3).

All of the information about the PAC is posted on the City website. All of the meetings are public, schedules posted and the agendas are available online.

The PAC membership is full — there are no more openings unless the City Council votes to add more openings (my assumption) to provide more of a balanced set of viewpoints. From the few members I talked to, as well as Harlen Springer himself, the PAC wants input from the citizens of Florence. They are open to other ideas of art for Florence. It doesn't have to be the graffiti-abstract style that fermented over the last few months and will end up on the CLPUD building.

There are other mural locations in the queue which don't have designs chosen yet. Now is the time to let the PAC members know what you would like to see.

I am looking forward to the opportunity to voice my preference for non-abstract scenes that emphasize our sand dunes, dune riders, sand boarding, lakes, forests, our bridge, Coast Guard and even a tribute to Frank Herbert, author of the science fiction book "Dune," which was inspired by our sand dunes.

To give your input and ideas to the PAC, you can:

- Send an email to Community & Economic Development Assistant Sara Moehrke via email at Sarah.Moehrke@ci.florence.or.us. She will pass on your ideas to the PAC members

- Attend the meetings and give your ideas for art.

- Make friends with the PAC members, if you're not already. Let them know so they can incorporate your ideas that are different from theirs.

Florence needs a balanced approach to "art." Art to me are paintings by

Norman Rockwell and Thomas Kincaid. I am sending in my ideas in time for the next PAC meeting and I encourage other area residents to do the same.

The next PAC public meeting is Monday, April 22, at 3:30 p.m., at Florence City Hall.

—Don Drozdenko  
Florence

### DARK TIMES, BRIGHT ART

The darkest times bring the brightest art.

—Edward Gunderson  
Local artist and art instructor

### OH, THE INCONGRUITY OF IT ALL

Let's see now, we have folks who want a voting age of 16; apparently, teenagers are mature enough to know what's good for them.

Then we have those who want to raise the smoking age to 21; apparently, the teenagers and post teens are not mature enough to decide not to harm themselves by smoking.

And we allow 18 year olds to join the military; apparently, the teens are mature enough to decide they can defend our country and learn how to use weapons.

And somewhere in there is the lowest legal age of marriage, somewhere around 14.

Oh, the incongruity of it all.

—Dana Rodet  
Westlake

### THRILLED LEONORA KENT IS RUNNING FOR LANE ESD

We have another election pending and I'm thrilled that Leonora Kent is running for Lane Education Service District 4 (that's us, folks).

Leonora is an untiring advocate for the students she represents and has spent her working life in service of education.

If you're not familiar with Lane Education Service District, please take a moment to visit [www.lesd.k12.or.us/](http://www.lesd.k12.or.us/) to see why having the best representation for our students is served by having educators like Leonora Kent on the board.

I'll be voting Leonora.

—Patricia Burke  
Westlake

### CORRECTION

In the April 3 edition of the *Siuslaw News* Opinion page, the Letter to the Editor "Stream Team Program Teaches Important Lessons" was attributed to "Jim and Jane Pittenger of Coos Bay, formerly of Florence."

The Pittengers currently reside in Florence, not Coos Bay.

*Siuslaw News* regrets the error.

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## Siuslaw News

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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.

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