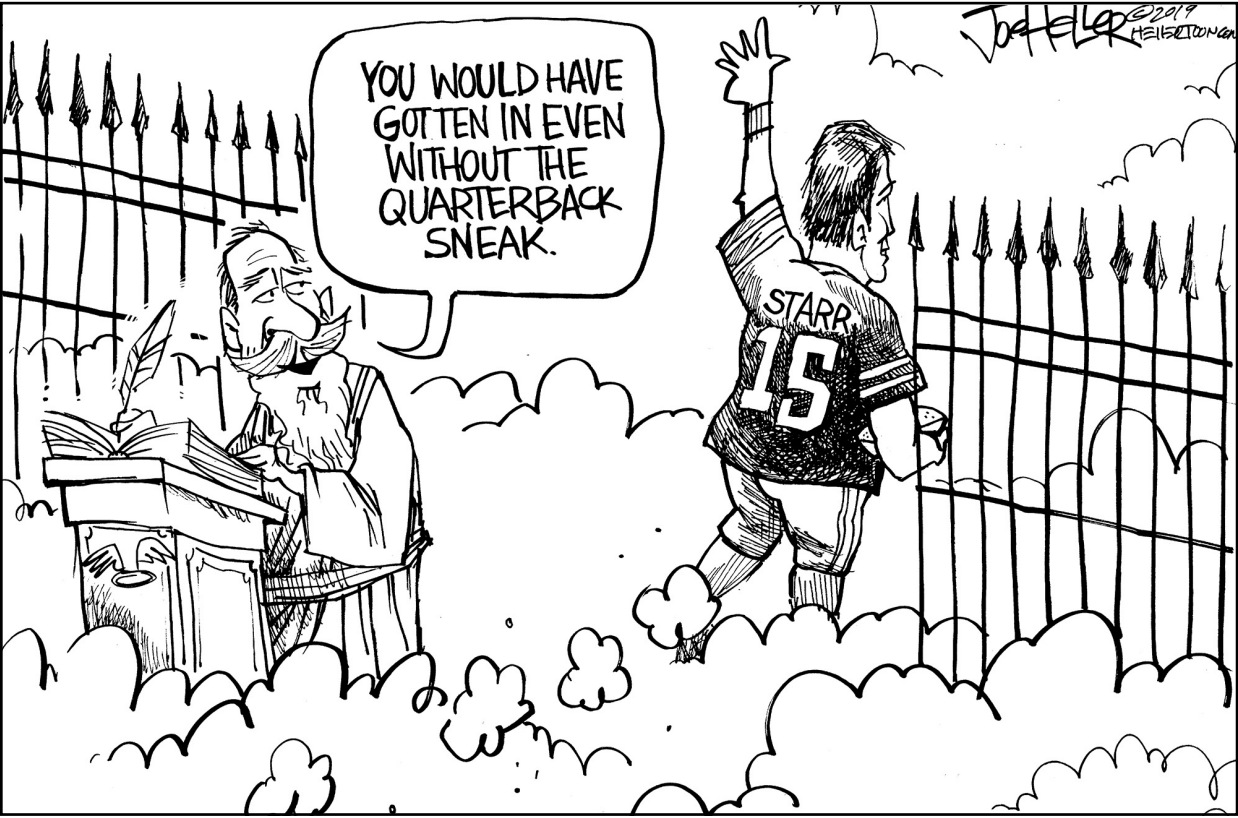


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
Florence, OR 97439

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

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

Jenna Bartlett
Ned Hickson
Susan Gutierrez
Cathy Dietz
Ron Annis
Jeremy Gentry

Publisher, ext. 318
Editor, ext. 313
Marketing Director, ext. 326
Office Supervisor, ext. 312
Production Supervisor
Press Manager

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Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.

Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$79; 6-month in-county, \$56; 10-week subscription, \$25; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$102; 6-month out-of-county, \$69; 10-week subscription, \$35; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$134; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

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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

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

U.S. SEN. RON WYDEN
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
541-431-0229
www.wyden.senate.gov

STATE REP. CADDY MCKEOWN
(DIST. 9)
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1409
Email: rep.caddymckeown@oregonlegislature.gov

U.S. SEN. JEFF MERKLEY
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753
FAX: 202-228-3997
541-465-6750
www.merkley.senate.gov

WEST LANE COUNTY COMMISSIONER JAY BOZIEVICH
125 E. Eighth St.
Eugene, OR 97401
541-682-4203
FAX: 541-682-4616
Email: Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us

Recognizing teachers at graduation is fitting tribute to seniors, school district

for content and creativity but "D" for mechanics.

My thinking was, *Who cares about mechanics when the story is so great?*

Mrs. Fillers did. As we headed into the

had never received before. Well, not for English.

At that point, I had learned our family was moving to Florence and I'd be attending a new school whose name I couldn't yet

tential.

Mr. Danielson taught me about essay format and the need to have a logical beginning, middle and end — and that energy and enthusiasm are wasted if they aren't given a direction that readers can follow.

He remains one of my favorite and most influential teachers. But I also know, if not for Mrs. Fillers' willingness to teach me an even more important lesson about writing, I may not have recognized what Mr. Danielson had to offer me.

A few weeks ago, students at Siuslaw High School petitioned to have teachers hand them their diplomas rather than school board members, breaking with a long-standing tradition.

I applaud the students for taking that initiative, and also the board and administration for recognizing the students' desire to share that moment with the teachers who helped guide them to this point in their lives.

And, in the case of one newspaper editor, continues to guide them long after.

It's a fitting tribute in recognizing the educators in our community whose influence in our lives goes well beyond our time in the classroom.

And Mrs. Fillers, if you somehow ever read this... Thank you for the "F" that changed everything.

Write Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com or P.O. Box 10, Florence, Ore. 97439.

From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

second semester, she took me aside and told me that raw talent wasn't enough, and that I needed to learn the tools of writing if I wanted to get serious.

She described my writing as something similar to chainsaw sculpture: Creative and interesting, but it would never be Michaelangelo unless I learned the tools needed to smooth the edges into something seamless.

I listened carefully to her advice and then, like any teenager, disregarded everything except that part about having "raw talent."

Surely that was enough.

However, in the weeks ahead I realized it wasn't nearly enough in the eyes of Mrs. Fillers. I began to fail miserably on my assignments, which had shifted from creativity to the analysis of writing pros and recognizing the mechanics and devices used by writers like Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Hemingway, Emerson...

...Blah, blah, blah.

When the final grades were given, I went from having a crush on my teacher to being crushed by her and the "F" on my report card — something I

pronounce. With that in mind, I went to Mrs. Fillers and told her how unfair I felt my grade was, and that I'm sure my new school and its teachers would be better.

To this day, I still get knots in my stomach when I think about what I said, and how visibly upset she was by my hurtful words.

My sophomore year at Siuslaw, I was enrolled in College Prep English once again. For our first assignment, Mr. Danielson asked us to write an essay titled "At My House."

We were given no further instruction other than it being due the following day. When I turned in my five-page essay, I felt I was off to a good start with a teacher who would surely overlook the petty details of mechanics and grammar in favor of creativity.

When he handed back our assignments, he had written the following comment: "A+ for enthusiasm/ D+ for mechanics. What are you trying to say with your essay?"

It seemed there was no escaping what I eventually came to realize were the demands of engaged teachers unwilling to bend at the expense of a student's po-

LETTERS

REMEMBERING OUR HISTORY AND THOSE WHO MADE IT

On a somewhat overcast day at Veterans Park, the Memorial day remembrance of our fallen dead was surely solemn and somber, honoring the sacred fallen heroes who gave the "last full measure" of devotion to their country.

It would be fitting and proper to extend the short program with words of consolation denoting not only where we derive our freedoms and liberty but who and what it all means. Names such as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, Lincoln and Adams should be as resplendent as the wonderful Coast Guard ceremonies.

If we remember not who and why

we have the glorious freedoms put together over the many millenia, our children's children will grow up despising the very freedoms our forefathers preserved and wrought.

Each generation has a responsibility to light freedom's vanguard for all to see, especially the present and future generations who so desperately need to know.

We need more words of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln so that we may preserve the "last best hope of man on Earth" for future heroes.

God bless America.

—Joel Marks
Florence

HOLIDAYS' MEANING IS LOST

This past Friday I was watch-

ing a morning show when one of the commentators said Memorial Day Weekend is when families and friends get together for cook-outs to celebrate "False Summer."

I was appalled in that the true meaning of Memorial Day was not addresses. I then realized that most of our younger population has a mindset of what holidays are. Christmas is a time for a decorated tree and presents; Easter is decorated eggs and chocolate bunnies; July Fourth is fireworks, hotdogs and beer.

Most do not seem able to understand the true meaning of holidays and why we recognize them.

—Win Jolley
Florence