

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)



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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, Oregon 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.

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DEADLINES:
 Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 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.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
 Website and E-Edition: TheSiuslawNews.com

LETTERS

FACTS CRUCIAL REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL LEANINGS

In the June 22 edition of the Siuslaw News, one of your readers misquoted President Obama as having said that the Constitution is "... an old piece of parchment that needs changing."

After researching this issue, it appears that no such statement was ever made by our 44th president. Rather, in his final farewell speech to the nation on Jan. 10, 2017, President Obama offered a strong defense of democracy, saying in pertinent part, "Our Constitution is a remarkable, beautiful gift. But it's really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power — with our participation, and the choices we make ..."

I write this not to call out the letterwriter's mistake, but rather to remind others that critically reviewing our news sources and checking the accuracy of facts and information presented in the media is crucial to a working democracy regardless of one's political leanings.

—Jill Thomas
 Florence

AN AMERICAN HORROR STORY

Having been born after the last internment camp for Japanese-Americans was closed down, I never thought I would see American concentration camps ... for children no less, in my lifetime.

Yet here we are.

For those who scoff at the use of the term concentration camp, I use this term unflinchingly. Let's speak the truth here; while the camps in our southwest are not death camps (yet), they are by every definition and by history correctly labeled concentration camps.

These camps are not "summer camps" as some would have us believe. Conditions are at best miserable — and at worst a crime against

humanity.

Picture your children or grandchildren packed in 25 or more to a cell, eating half-frozen food, sleeping on a mattress on concrete (if it isn't taken away as punishment), a thin aluminum blanket for a cover, filthy clothes, lice, no way to wash or comb or even brush their teeth.

Children under age 5 are being cared for by 12-year-old children, because no other care is available. Now throw in the flu or other communicable illnesses, and last but not least, having no idea where your parents are.

This is not propaganda. It is happening as you read this, and on American soil.

For those who say it is the parents' fault, I say this: Do we send the children of our own convicted felons to prison as well? Our own convicts live in miserable conditions in most facilities, but get better treatment than these children; the victim of Somali pirates recently said he was given soap and a tooth brush by his captors.

All of this is being done in our names. Our vote in 2020 will speak volumes about whether we support this inhumanity.

—Raymond Plumery
 Florence

WILL WE RECEIVE OUR FAIR SHARE OF FUNDS FOR PARK?

The North Jetty meeting (reported in the Siuslaw News on June 26) left many issues unanswered. I am sure Lane County Parks employees mean well, but the ready-made script they read from has nothing to do with reality.

Over the past 15 years, I have served on four county committees/commissions. Public Works Department personnel have told me that West Lane "will never receive its fair share of funds."

Simply put, look at the waysides of West Lane County. If you like craters to drive your vehicle through, a "Made by Lane County"

sign should be put on them. Then, there is the Lane County Sheriff's Department for which we pay taxes for but don't receive services.

The Parks Department depends on other departments for the services they talk about. If history tells us anything, to expect West Lane County will receive those services is a fantasy.

We'd be fools to think otherwise.

The big issue is "charge-for-use" fees. A resounding applause filled the room when someone spoke against those fees. Many visitors to the Jetty are from out-of-the-area and out-of-state. Can you see them backing away from a fee station on lands that used to be free?

I wonder, what will local businesses say about killing that golden goose?

There were many ideas put forth for us in West Lane to maintain and improve the North Jetty Parkland (as the City calls it).

Let's explore ideas and look to future uses of the area.

—George Goldstein
 Florence

WE NEED LOCAL WOOD BURNING REGULATIONS

Friends and neighbors, our city has come to the place where we need wood fire regulations. Like many other communities, it has become a health hazard.

We used to be able to have our bedroom window open for fresh air at night. Now, there often isn't any due to wood burning.

Unless there's a big wind or fog, the still air traps these poisons here. There is also business venting at night that contributes to the problem. If you can smell it, you are taking these pollutants into your lungs, where it goes into your blood stream and organs.

The reason we have to have laws and regulations is because some do thoughtless actions.

—Carla Green
 Florence

WHERE TO WRITE

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