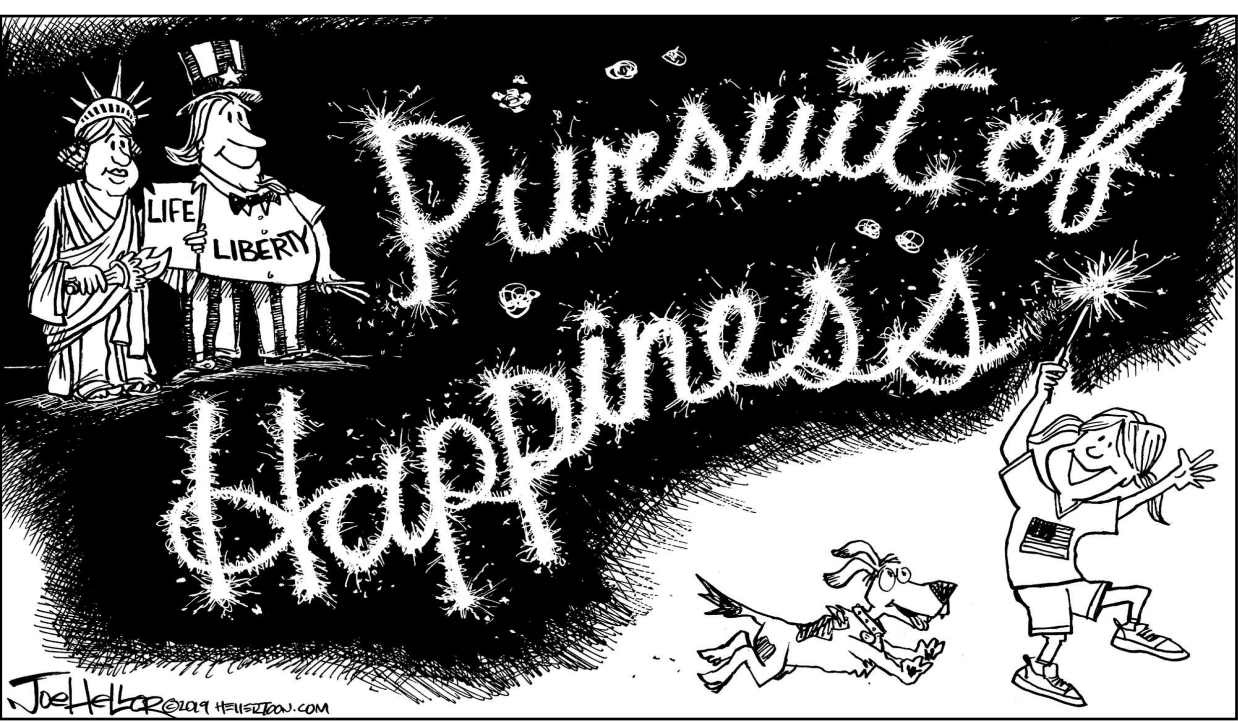


**Siuslaw News**  
 P.O. Box 10  
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# Opinion

**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

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## No room for bullies in our local government

**(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.)**

Every now and then, human beings do something that, later, causes terrible embarrassment. That is the situation in which I find myself.

It became obvious to me, in 2012, that "new blood" was desperately needed on Florence City Council. Yet, due to the council's brutal reputation, no one would step forward. After months of searching, asking, pleading for possible candidates, the name of someone I had never met, nor heard of, came to my attention — that of Joe Henry.

It took many telephone conversations before Joe agreed to file and run as a Write-In candidate for City Council, and he won. Then, in 2014, Joe and two others ran for Mayor of Florence. The other candidates split the vote and Henry became Mayor

with approximately 1/3 of the vote. Not long after his ascension to Mayor, I watched and listened as he began to make comments that I consider to be uncalled for and vio-

**GUEST VIEWPOINT**  
 By Lea Patten  
 Concerned area resident

lations of the Oath of Office. I tolerate a lot, but I cannot — will not — tolerate what I see as clear ethics violations. Had I been a resident of the city, I would have filed several ethics complaints against Mayor Joe Henry.

Now, proof of those unethical behaviors have literally become "front page" news ["Councilor Conflict Dominates Discussion," June 29 edition of the Siuslaw News].

It is my hope that City residents will step forward and file with the State those ethics complaints against

the Mayor. It, also, is my hope that both Councilor Greene and Mr. Harlan Springer will 'consider the source' of the unethical comments made against them and recall the words of Lord Acton: "All power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Finally, I urge Councilor Greene to remain on the Council and to give serious consideration to running for Mayor; Mr. Springer, I hope, will hang in there.

Each one should know that his talents, experience and efforts are greatly appreciated; each is doing great work.

There is no room for bullies in City government — and Joe Henry's behaviors have gone beyond the pale. He should resign.

In the meantime, my face is red from embarrassment that I urged him to run for Council in the first place.

### LETTERS

#### PROUD OF PROGRESSIVE LOCAL ART, MURAL

After being out of town for an extended trip, I was astounded to see a bold and colorful mural come into sight as I approached Highway 101 from Highway 126.

What a stunner! It makes me proud to see that my adopted community is a progressive, forward thinking town that supports the arts and stylized art at that.

—Cris Reep  
 Florence

#### CITY MUST HAVE UNLIMITED FUNDS

I hope at the end of this supposed beautification project it will look completely different than it does in its initial stage; so far, it looks as if they are planting weeds and ugly flowers.

The curbs extend too far out into the side streets off Highway 101 and I imagine there will be several accidents from turning off Highway 101 because of it.

Also, regarding the mural, I am sure the city has prepared itself for the probability that it will be tagged. I guess the city will have additional money to pay artists to repair.

The City of Florence must have unlimited funds.

—Michael O'Connor  
 Florence

#### NEVER EXPECTED SO MUCH GENEROSITY, SUPPORT

When I was small, my mother made sure I wrote a thank you letter for every gift I received, no matter its form, function or cost.

I just completed my fifth year of teaching at Siuslaw Elementary and I need to thank, essentially, the entire city of Florence.

First, last summer the VFW donated a set of durable crayon and

colored pencil holders to my class. They were a simple, elegant solution for a problem I've had every year! This group of citizens regularly donates to our schools — their time, money and care make a world of difference, so thank you!

Second, I applied for and received money from the Western Lane Community Foundation to purchase 10 new sets of books for our third-, fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms to enrich our reading program. Before attending a luncheon for recipients, I had no idea how much good this group does for our community — Thank you, WLCF, for your generosity this year and for all the years you have helped our schools and teachers.

Lastly, I have a special person to thank but I do not know her name. I was in the store buying supplies for my "end of year" party and spending out of my own pocket to buy 35 beach balls, foam footballs and glow sticks. It must have looked strange because the lady behind me asked what it was all for. I hesitated, but someone else said, "It's the end of the school year, I bet it's for a class party," and I affirmed that it was for my class.

Without hesitating, this stranger handed me a \$20 bill and said "Thank you for all that you do. I hope this helps you to do more."

I never expected to be helped in such a kind and generous way, so spontaneously. This person represents all of the individual parents and adults, retirees and working people in this city whom strive to make the lives of our young ones so much more.

The actions of these groups and that individual describe the heart of this town; we take care of each other and we see value in helping when and where we can.

I hope I can show you my gratitude by doing what I can to make

our students' experience "that much more."

—Sarah Barnard (a.k.a. Miss B.)  
 Florence

#### DISTRESSED BY DISCOURSE

I'm glad I kept my opinion to myself when I first saw pictures of what the mural on the Central Lincoln building was going to look like. I was not a big fan but, like the vast majority of our community, did not attend the public opportunities provided for discussion before the project was approved by the Public Arts Committee.

Had I been one to publicly say what I thought at the time, I would gladly have been eating my words now.

Living close to Highway 126, I see the progress on the mural almost daily. It is a vibrant, storytelling work that I greet with a smile with each completed new section.

Kudos to the PAC for having the vision to approve such a delightful mural for all to see as they enter Florence from the east. And thanks to the many volunteers who are still busy finishing the painting; I wish I had done my part.

I must say that it is distressing to read in the *Siuslaw News* ["Councilor Conflict Dominates Discussion," June 29] that Mayor Joe Henry has chosen to attack both Councilor Joshua Greene and PAC Chairman Harlan Springer, two men who work tirelessly to improve the appearance of the city through public art.

Politics has reared its head in the ugliest manner over this issue, and what a shame that is.

How much better to look around Florence and see the good work that the PAC has accomplished under the leadership of Greene and Springer.

—Judith Preisler  
 Florence

### 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

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