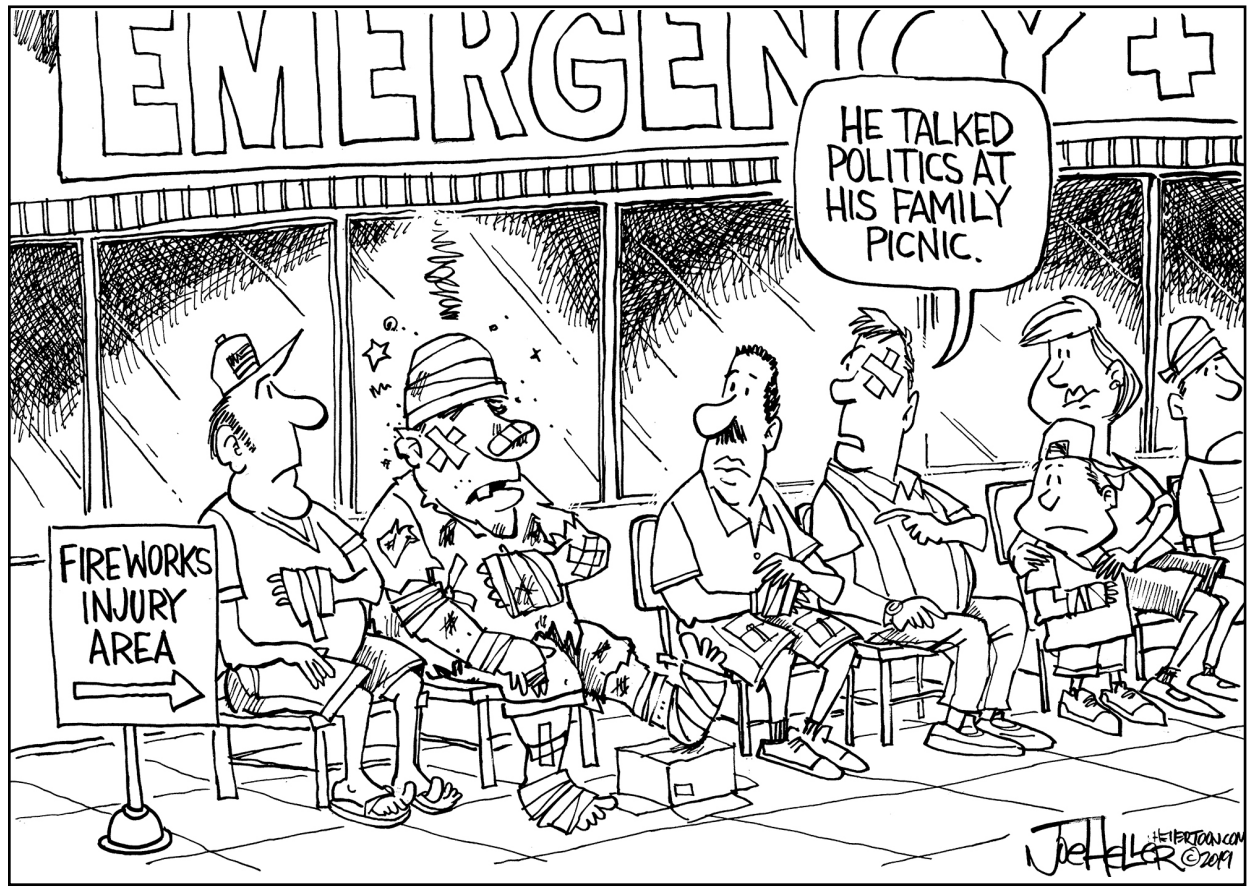


Siuslaw News
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Opinion

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)



LETTERS

STILL THE BEST TOWN, EVEN WHEN WE DON'T AGREE

Regarding Michael O'Connor letter ("City Must Have Unlimited Funds," July 3), as I was leaving town I saw all the weeds in the planters along the highway and when I came back they were gone. So, I called the City of Florence and was told that these plants just came up in the soil — they pulled them before they went to seed. Anyone who has questions about what is going on with this or other City project should just call the City. However, the part of Mr. O'Connor's letter that really bothered me was about the mural. Admittedly, I did not like it when I saw the pictures in the newspaper. Then I saw the mural in progress; beautiful with bright colors — what a statement. Why would anyone encourage people to tag the mural? That is a crime. What if a neighbor did not like the color you painted your home? Would it be ok if they tagged your home? It is a painting — Leave it alone and please be nice to the people doing the mural. They are doing a job that they were hired to do. I have lived in Florence 43 years and there have been all kinds of changes, some I liked and some not so much. With that said, this is still the best town to live in, with the best people — even if we do not always agree.

—Mary Grigsby
Native Oregonian
Dunes City

SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS

This Fourth of July, I sat on the front porch, contemplating how radically things have changed in regard to our national perspectives. Watching the flag flutter in the afternoon breeze, it brought to mind the Pledge of Allegiance and these words: "...one nation, indivisible." Really? As far as I can tell, that dream is over, extinguished by the now unrecoverable polarization in a society where there is no respect for any idea — or for anyone expressing any idea — that runs contrary to one's own bias. To be disagreed with is considered an insult; real taunts and insults have become the standard tools of the political trade; and reasonable compromise is considered surrender. Such is the sad state of affairs at the national level — and now, reportedly, right here in Florence.

—Jimmie Zinn
Florence

WHAT A GREAT WEEK IN FLORENCE

Lots of good things happened in Florence over the last week. A really great park along the Siuslaw River was opened, complete with picnic tables. I recommend the new park highly. It's good for dogs, too. We had a great day in Old Town on July Fourth with many visitors and residents taking part in Hula-hooping, pie-eating and watermelon-eating contests. (Although old folks had some trouble finding places to sit, and this is supposed to be a retirement community.) Then, this past weekend, we had the Wings and Wheels Show. The WWII planes were the biggest hit, with a lineup for the \$300 tickets. They were amazing and exciting when they buzzed the airfield. Everyone stopped to watch and took photos. We loved the car show as well. Next, we toured the Military Museum. I recommend that everyone should make an effort to see the many exhibits. There are tons of interesting and historical stuff and the staff is so helpful, with lots of things to buy. All the events were well organized and fun to be a part of. Our only wish is that the Port would use some of its budget that comes from the taxpayers to put some of its 125 picnic tables on the boardwalk so we can also enjoy the river as much as the RVers do. Otherwise, we had a great time in Florence this past week.

—Gene Olson
Florence

WHERE ARE THE SPECIFICS REGARDING ACCUSATIONS?

Lea Patten's July 3 Guest Viewpoint ("No Room For Bullies In Our Local Government") was interesting but not very profound. She went on at length to charge Mayor Henry with "ethics violations," violations of his "Oath of Office" and suggests the mayor is guilty of bullying. Yet Ms. Patten offers no examples, nor any specifics, of Mayor Henry's transgressions — but calls for him to resign. Cautioning Ms. Patten on the slander laws in our country, I await to hear her specific examples of Mayor Henry's misdeeds.

—Ron Duzy
Florence

NOTION THAT ART IS NOT GOVERNMENTAL IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

When some of us testified before the Florence City Council concerning the mural project, the

municipal atmosphere was rigged for adoption.

It was strongly posited by some that art is not a governmental function. The unconstitutional notion that it is was theorized by none other than Lyndon Johnson, resulting in the Ungreat Society during the 1960s and, ever since, has dominated the cultural thinking throughout the country.

Localities such as Florence have accepted this false idea of governmental responsibility for art and, as a result, deep division and contention has erupted in our community due to personal preferences.

Witness the recent newspaper opinions and letters submitted by Del Phelps, Tony Cavarro, Win Jolley, Bruce Jarvis, Judith Priesler and Lea Patten. Our strong Mayor Henry took an honorable stand in his "no" vote, truly representing the local populace.

However, tepid groups such as our local Chamber of Commerce, not wanting to enter the fray instead of leading and helping the citizenry, took no strong stand, apparently afraid of the public scrutiny.

Education and fortitude are always necessary.

By the way, wouldn't it have been a teaching moment in Florence to have had a speaker expressing gratitude for Thomas Jefferson and the ennobling Declaration of Independence before the recent July Fourth fireworks display?

Because this has been the case nationally as well over the years, the Charlottesville City Council in Virginia recently voted to stop celebrating Thomas Jefferson's birthday.

Stricken from history!

Yes, without each generation being educated on America, we will strike the author of the Declaration from our collective minds and paint over them with murals.

—Joel Marks
Florence

(Editor's note: According to a report by the Associated Press submitted July 2, the Charlottesville City Council voted to no longer celebrate Thomas Jefferson's birthday on April 13 as an official city holiday and instead will observe a day recognizing the emancipation of enslaved African-Americans during Liberation and Freedom Day on March 3, the day U.S. Army forces arrived in the city of Charlottesville in 1865.

Charlottesville was the site of a white nationalist rally in 2017 that descended into deadly violence.)

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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:
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TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213
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