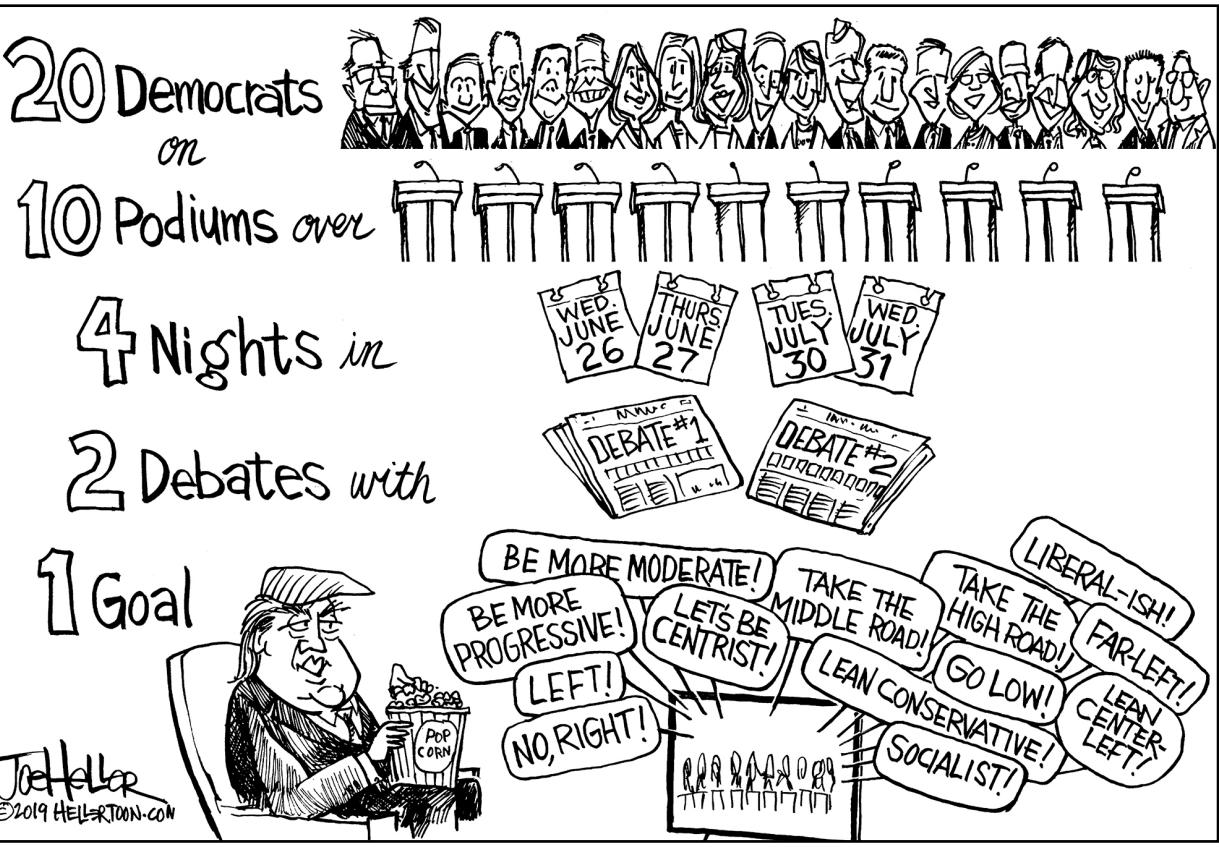


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
Florence, OR 97439

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)



Will we allow ourselves to be informed or distracted?

While watching coverage of the Democratic debates along with my normal intake of national news, I switched between CNN, ABC, FOX-News, CBS and others. I read news articles online and in print. Even after two years, I continue to be struck by how one event can be seen so differently by so many news organizations — nearly all of which had a clear slant, whether for or against.

When our forefathers included Freedom of the Press in the Constitution, they knew it was a double-edged sword with as much potential to do harm as it could to ensure the exchange of factual communication free from governmental interference.

However, they knew it was a risk that needed to be taken if America was going to have a chance at establishing a peaceful de-

mocracy — one that is protected by the intellect of an informed society.

One of the key ingredients to a foundation strong enough to support the weight of democracy with-

Journalists are liaisons of trust between the American people and those who govern, whether it be in Washington D.C., state government, a national corporation or with local

much more powerful visual medium of television.

In 1955, during an awards dinner where he was the keynote speaker, Murrow spoke of the new television medium and the paradox it presented for journalists and our society; it's a paradox we find ourselves facing once again in the age of social-media-style journalism — and in particular, the ease in which assumption can be passed along as fact.

In his speech, Murrow challenged us to utilize the new medium of television as a way to enhance our understanding of issues and each other. "Otherwise," he said in his final remark, "television is nothing more than lights in a box."

As we enter into the upcoming election season — both nationally and within our own communities — we need to ask ourselves whether the age of information will enhance our understanding or simply distract us with the lights inside the small boxes in our hands.

From the Editor's Desk Ned Hickson

in our Constitution is the freedom given to the press. Its intention is to guarantee a level of transparency within the government and, just as importantly, keep government from manipulating the information its citizenry receives.

Shortly after the Missouri School of Journalism was established in 1906, its founder, Walter Williams, wrote The Journalist's Creed. Within it are these words:

I believe that clear thinking, truthful statements, accuracy and fairness are fundamental to good journalism, and that the supreme test of any journalist is the measure of their public service.

officials and institutions.

The trust we place in journalism is one of the cornerstones of maintaining a unified, peaceful society. Without the trust and belief that we are an informed people, the ensuing uncertainty is fertile ground for chaos, mistrust and division.

Today's Information Age, thanks to the Internet and social media, has forged its own two-edged sword with the potential to do as much harm as good. In the late 1950s, iconic newsman Edward R. Murrow recognized this paradox. News reporting was being transformed from the purely word-driven medium of radio into a

LETTERS

HOMELESS BUT NOT NAMELESS

He spoke through tears of fifteen years; How his dog and him had travelled about. The dog up and died, just up and died; After twenty years he still grieves.

From the song "Mr. Bojangles"

His name was Adam — the man who died up on the hill behind Safeway the Wednesday before last. Adam.

He loved to travel up to Whitefish, Mont., with his old dog Brucer. They'd been together for nearly a decade. Adam never really got over Brucer's death. There was a catch in his voice when he mentioned Brucer, even many years later.

Adam was a friendly, generous man — always willing to share what little he had. He believed that people were basically good.

"If people knew what it was like out on the street" he once said, "they would help us."

There are many of us who live out on your streets and in the forests around Florence.

We die homeless.

Please don't let us die nameless, too.

His name was Adam and he was

a good man. His many friends will truly miss him.

Homeless, but not nameless.

—Steve Wandrus
Florence

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE A STAND AS A CITY

What's important about passing a climate crisis resolution?

Resolutions by a city council are non-binding statements, but can be used to express values.

Despite not having legal teeth, taking a stand means something. A resolution is important not only in communicating the values of a community, but also in acknowledging the government's failure to realize that value.

It puts the city council on record as being fundamentally behind a pledge to make a difference.

In the case of man-made climate change, a resolution signals that the city council sees climate change as a growing threat to be countered.

A climate crisis resolution should include endorsements from the City's environmental committee (EMAC in Florence), local organizations and business owners.

I hope Mayor Henry will take the lead in passing a climate crisis res-

olution.

Resolutions by a city council do matter.

—Michael Allen
Florence

WE AGREE

This may come as a shock to many, but I have to admit that I am in total agreement with Tony Cavarano and his recent Letter to the Editor regarding our voting systems ("Simple Answer to Voting Concerns," July 31).

I have always been very proud of the manner in which our voting system functions (limiting the receipt of a ballot to only those registered and returning by mail) without the need for the polling places, where most of the fraud is taking place.

The time involved should permit everyone to study the issues, and complete their ballot in their own home. This would greatly eliminate the need for political parties to be telling people how they should vote.

Unless that's not what Mr. Cavarano meant?

—Charlie Pennington
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

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
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