

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)



An intern's thoughts on community journalism

ion are blurring. There is no place for a journalist's opinion in a news article; this is why we have the "opinion" section.

News answers what happened, to who and when, where it happened and why. The why is explored more in feature stories, but even features hold the same standards of news.

names get misspelled, dates get mixed up and, ultimately, we get things wrong sometimes.

Journalists are, after all, human.

Over the past few months at the Siuslaw News, I've listened to multiple conversations about how to approach a topic, how difficult reporting situations should

discuss how stories will affect the community, when to hold a story from publication because it doesn't have all the facts yet. National news publications can certainly replicate this ideal, but it starts at the ground level and works its way up.

Yet we must take into account how national publications have a very different focus than local newspapers.

The Siuslaw News fills in the news gaps for western Lane County while the news sources such as the *Register-Guard* covers central Lane County. The *Eugene Weekly*, meanwhile, focuses on more hyperlocal stories while the R-G incorporates more national news.

They all tend to work together but separately for the people of Oregon.

But the model of community journalism can — and should — be replicated at the larger outlets in terms of attention to details in the story, the ethical conversations that need to take place in newsrooms, and the strict adherence to giving the public the most accurate and well-researched information available.

There are, of course, many national news publications that are already doing this, just as there are local newspapers that fall short. But during my time at the Siuslaw News, I was given the opportunity to see how large an impact great community journalism can have on a community — and throughout my future career as a journalist, that notion will continue driving the standards I hold for myself and at other news publications where I may work.

(Editor's Note: Victoria Sanchez has been part of an internship through the University of Oregon's Snowden Grant program since mid June and completed her 10-week internship this week. In that time, Victoria has written 17 stories, ranging from the Siuslaw Watershed to local housing, business women in Florence and House Bill 2020. It has been a true pleasure having her as part of our news team.)

Local journalism is what sets the expectation for major news outlets, or at least it should. Community newspapers like the *Siuslaw News* and other locally based media outlets are the most important sources of information in Florence.

Nowhere else can residents consistently read about what happened at the school board, city council, planning commission meeting or any of the other dozens of monthly meetings and events that take place in and around the community. But it's not just the fact that area residents have the option of reading so many locally focused stories — it's that the news team at the Siuslaw News holds itself to higher journalistic standards which I would argue some major news outlets tend to stray from.

In the rapidly evolving world of social media and the 24 hour televised news cycle, the lines between what is actual news and what is opin-

Through my time at the Siuslaw News, my hope for the world of journalism was renewed and strengthened as I was surrounded by talented journalists who uphold the principles of journalism: telling the truth and telling it well.

It's better to take the time necessary to tell the whole story with the most accurate information available rather than rush to print with something incomplete or inaccurate.

As I discovered in my 10 weeks as a University of Oregon Snowden Grant journalism intern here, this is the ideology of the newsroom at Siuslaw News.

The fact is, there's never enough time with news. Journalists face the challenge of telling readers the what, who, where, when and why of what happened to the best of their abilities in a relatively short period of time, with facts checked and double-checked in order to tell each story in a cohesive manner.

At the same time, as much as the goal of accuracy is the aim, errors occur in small newsrooms;

be approached and have been approached in the past, and why it's important to cover as many public meetings and events as possible.

The theme in all of these conversations was always the same: How best to inform and educate the public in a way that is balanced and unbiased.

On a basic level, journalists spend their lives informing the public on what's happening. This drives what we write about; it propels our ethical integrity and *should*. The public is our audience; it's who we essentially serve.

This is why local journalism is so important and what makes community journalism different than large media reporters. Being part of a small town means everybody knows just about everybody. And while that can be welcoming for a community journalist, it also puts an extra sense of obligation on reporters to do things well — which in turn drives good journalism.

At the local level, reporters take the time to

By Siuslaw News intern

Victoria Sanchez

LETTERS

THANKS FOR SUPPORT OF LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS

Once again, I want to give a huge thank you to the Florence Community for its overwhelming support of the Florence Police Department in hosting our second annual National Night Out on Aug. 6 at Miller Park.

We partnered with our local public safety agencies to make this happen and I want to thank the Oregon State Police, Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, Western Lane Ambulance, Lane County Emergency Management and U.S. Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River.

The event was such a wonderful success thanks to the numerous monetary donations and many volunteers. A special thanks to Charles Korando and Korando Family Dentistry, Best For Hearing, Florence Kiwanis, Hine Investments, Anderson & Forrester, Northfork Roofing, Stitch & Sole, Bill and Katie Prosser, Guy Veach, Bill Meyer, Wells Plastic, Heceta Self Storage, Ray Wells, WG Peterson Woodworking, Bob Steele, Hoberg's Auto Repair, Streets

Insurance, Joe and Pam Henry, Banner Bank, Project Graduation, Al Pearn, the Tavish Sextet, the City of Florence and Three Rivers Hotel and Casino.

The evening went off without a hitch, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and overall the event was a success!

National Night Out is a large-scale event and it wouldn't be possible without the assistance of countless people who help prepare ahead of time, work during the event itself, and clean up afterwards.

It truly is a community event. Again, our thanks to the donors, volunteers, our wonderful City employees and all who attended for making it possible.

—Tom Turner
Florence Chief of Police

BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

One day after unpacking some farm supplies, I found my two favorite chickens, Tofu and Licorice, eating the small, round pieces of the polystyrene packaging. It's easy to understand how they mistook the bite-sized plastic foam for food, especially

when they can't recognize it as a harmful chemical.

But nothing we use for five minutes should be harming our wildlife for thousands of years. That's not only true in our backyard farms, but in our oceans as well.

Often, we don't think twice about getting our coffee to-go in a foam cup, or food in a foam takeout container. Currently, 70 million plastic foam cups are estimated to be disposed by Americans every day. Of these, about one-third end up in waterways: rivers, lakes and especially oceans.

To protect our wildlife and our waterways, we need to dramatically reduce our plastic waste and we can start by banning foam cups and takeout containers here in Oregon.

Senator Arnie Roblan has the chance to be an environmental champion and vote to ban single-use polystyrene to protect our ocean wildlife as well as our backyard chickens.

—Marcella Buser
Eugene/Florence

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DEADLINES:

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Website and E-Edition: TheSiuslawNews.com

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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