

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)



LETTERS

ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO EXERCISE FIRST AMENDMENT

As a retired elementary school teacher, I go on record to support students' right to peacefully and respectfully exercise their First Amendment right to protest. I understand policies are in place preventing staff/teachers from participating in important and vital protest events, however, staff participation would be an obvious solution to safety/security concerns.

It is important that we adults, including staff and teachers, support our students' efforts to become involved in civic issues vital to their future.

Ninety-seven percent of our world's scientists have declared climate change to be the most pressing problem in the world today. The Australian Medical Association has categorized climate change as an immediate health emergency, and a current article in the *Washington Post* states that most American teens are frightened by the threat climate change presents to their future and that of the planet.

Surely the students in Siuslaw Middle School who wish to make their voices heard regarding the urgency of this issue should be commended for their initiative rather than marked truant.

And if it's true some would prefer free time to participation, then perhaps the schools can provide an appropriate curriculum to raise students' awareness regarding the

reality of climate change and the dire impact it will have globally on the lives of the current generation.

Instead of worrying about the few who may seek to use a walkout as an excuse to simply get out of school, I suggest our school district promote the development of after-school, science-based programs mentioned in the article in Saturday's edition of the *Siuslaw News* ("Siuslaw School Board Considers Gym Floor, Climate Change at Meeting") to help increase students' knowledge base on climate-related issues, as well as seek a resolution supportive of students' expressing their First Amendment right.

—Linda Olsen
Florence

PROPOSED BUSINESS MOVE NOT GOOD 'VISION'

Revision Florence is a plan to "improve the visual, pedestrian, gateway and safety aspects of our Highway 101 and 126 corridors in Florence."

Highway 101 and Maple Street will be a main gateway into Old Town, directing visitors off the highway and into Historic Old Town. The art renderings show more pedestrians and bicyclists as the Highway 101 streetscape is improved.

Pro Lumber is now on the prime corner of Highway 101 and Maple Street — and certainly not a retail draw for 99 percent of tourists and visitors to Florence.

An application has been submitted to the Planning Department for the entire property to be approved for Florence Yamaha to move there from its current location on Highway 126 under the zoning permit category of "Sporting Goods Stores."

Is this the type of "store" that we envisioned for prime Highway 101 property that is supposed to encourage tourism, pedestrian and bicycle traffic in and around Historic Old Town?

ATV sales and a repair shop?

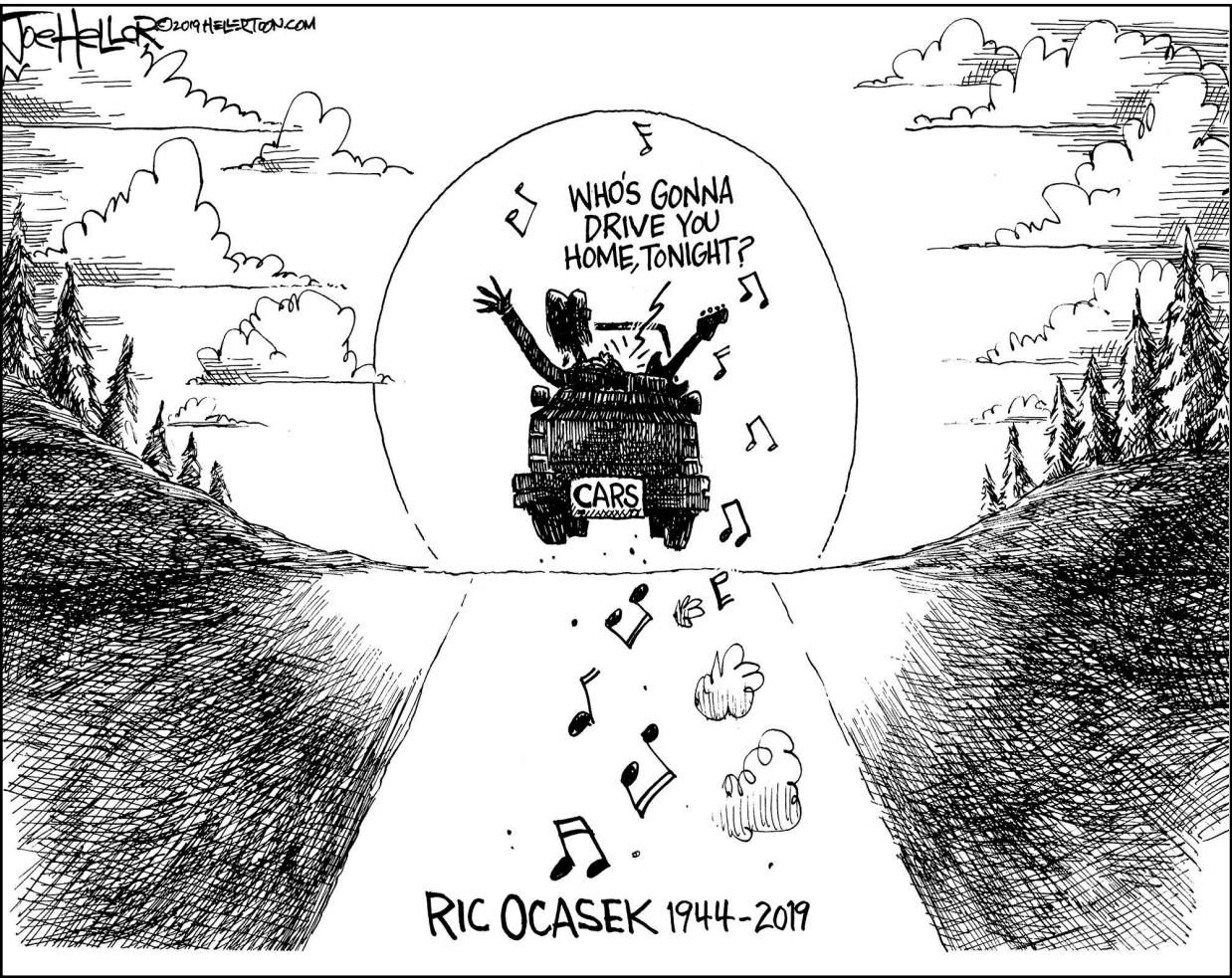
Certainly not a retail draw for most tourists. In addition, it could also be a traffic safety nightmare as targeted left and right turns are made on and off of Highway 101 by RVs and vehicles with trailers.

I ask community members to educate themselves about this proposal and decide if this is what's best for Revision Florence.

Information is available at the Planning Department or online at ci.florence.or.us under "Planning, Development, Pending Land Use Decisions, Florence Yamaha Relocation."

— Jack and Judi Smrekar
Florence

(Editor's Note: On Tuesday, Sept. 24, a public hearing on this proposal will take place at City Hall, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Complete information is available at the Planning Department or online at ci.florence.or.us under "Planning, Development, Pending Land Use Decisions, Florence Yamaha Relocation.")



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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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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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