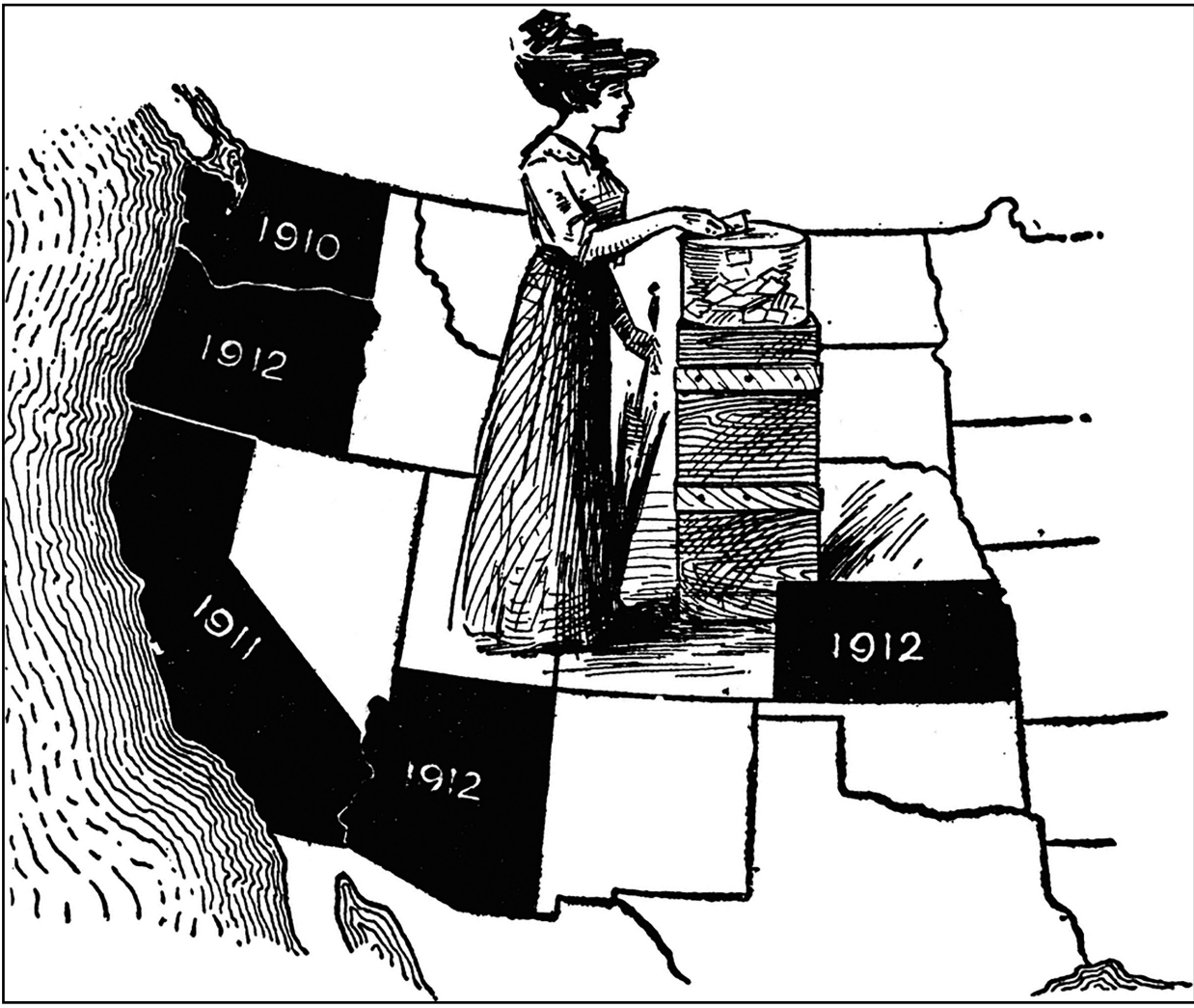


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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)



Women's voices crucial to defining our democracy

It was 100 years ago this Tuesday, Jan. 14, that Oregon ratified the 19th Amendment in 1920, joining 35 other states in ensuring that the right to vote could not be denied based on gender. It's important to note that this came some eight years *after* Oregon had already begun permitting women to vote in state elections in 1912. Ironically, this was the result of a narrow approval of 52-percent of voters — all of them cast by men — to guarantee the right as part of Oregon's state constitution. Today, it's hard to imagine our democracy without the crucial representation of women's voices in a nation where, according to the last census, women outnumbered men 161 million to 156.1 million — for a

nearly 1-to-1 ratio. In fact, there are only nine states where males make up more than 50 percent of the population: Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana,

suffrage movement led by Abigail Scott Duniway, who utilized her Portland-based suffragist newspaper *The New Northwest* to fuel the debate in favor of securing

cumulative IQ in the newsroom seems to drop considerably without the influence of our features editor, Chantelle Meyer, around.

On the homefront, my wife Alicia, as well as our daughters Elyse and Elizabeth, provide valuable perspective in family discussions and decisionmaking that assure that we don't devolve into an old episode of "King of the Hill." I say all of this to illustrate how, on just an individual level, the value and importance of women's perspectives impacts my own life every single day — and why I can't imagine not having those influences and perspectives as part of our national discussion. What an incredible loss it would have been if not for the determination of those like Abigail Scott Duniway to assure that we as a state — and eventually a nation — benefit from the voices of women in the discussions that define our democracy.

From the Editor's Desk
Ned Hickson

Nevada, North Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. In all the rest, including here in Oregon, women represent the majority of individual voices and perspectives that make up our decisions as a state — and ultimately as a nation. However, even in Oregon, which was among the first to provide that right, it took six ballot attempts — in 1884, 1900, 1906, 1908, 1910 and finally 1912 (more times than in any other state) — before women's voices became part of the discussion in state decisionmaking. It was a campaign that began as early as 1870 as part of the Oregon

women the right to vote. In a not-so-subtle twist of irony, it was her brother, Harvey Scott, who was her biggest detractor, thundering his opposition in the pages of *The Oregonian*, where he was editor from 1866 to 1872. Simply looking at the importance of women's perspectives on a personal level, there is no question that the wisdom and insight they offer each day as part of my own life has a profound impact that could never be duplicated by a men-only mentality. Ask any of the male reporters in our newsroom and they will openly admit that the

LETTERS

CRACKDOWN ON PLASTICS ADDS INJURY TO INSULT

So, the new year is here, and with it the dreaded plastic bag ban in stores. As a dog owner, this means I now have to buy rolls of plastic poo bags, put them in a paper bag I paid for (or buy a reusable bag that must be used hundreds if not thousands of times before reaching ecological break-even) and then recycle the otherwise useless paper bags while using the exact same amount of plastic as before. We also used the store bags for small trash cans around the house; in all the years up until now, we had yet to throw away a store bag without some kind of re-use. But the powers-that-be decided this maneuver will save the planet, and living in a civilized society means having to accept decisions that you don't always agree on the rationale for. However, there is one notable exception to the crackdown on plastic bags: The

cannabis dispensaries. These stores are *required* by law to put everything in bags whether the customer wants it or not, while grocery stores are *prohibited* from providing the bags the customers actually want. Adding insult to injury, the dispensary bags must be child-proof, meaning they are much thicker,

using more plastic than the banned store bags. I would go on ranting about this inconsistency, but I have to wrap things up before my beverage has completely dissolved the paper straw.

—Matt Danielsson
Florence



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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.

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