

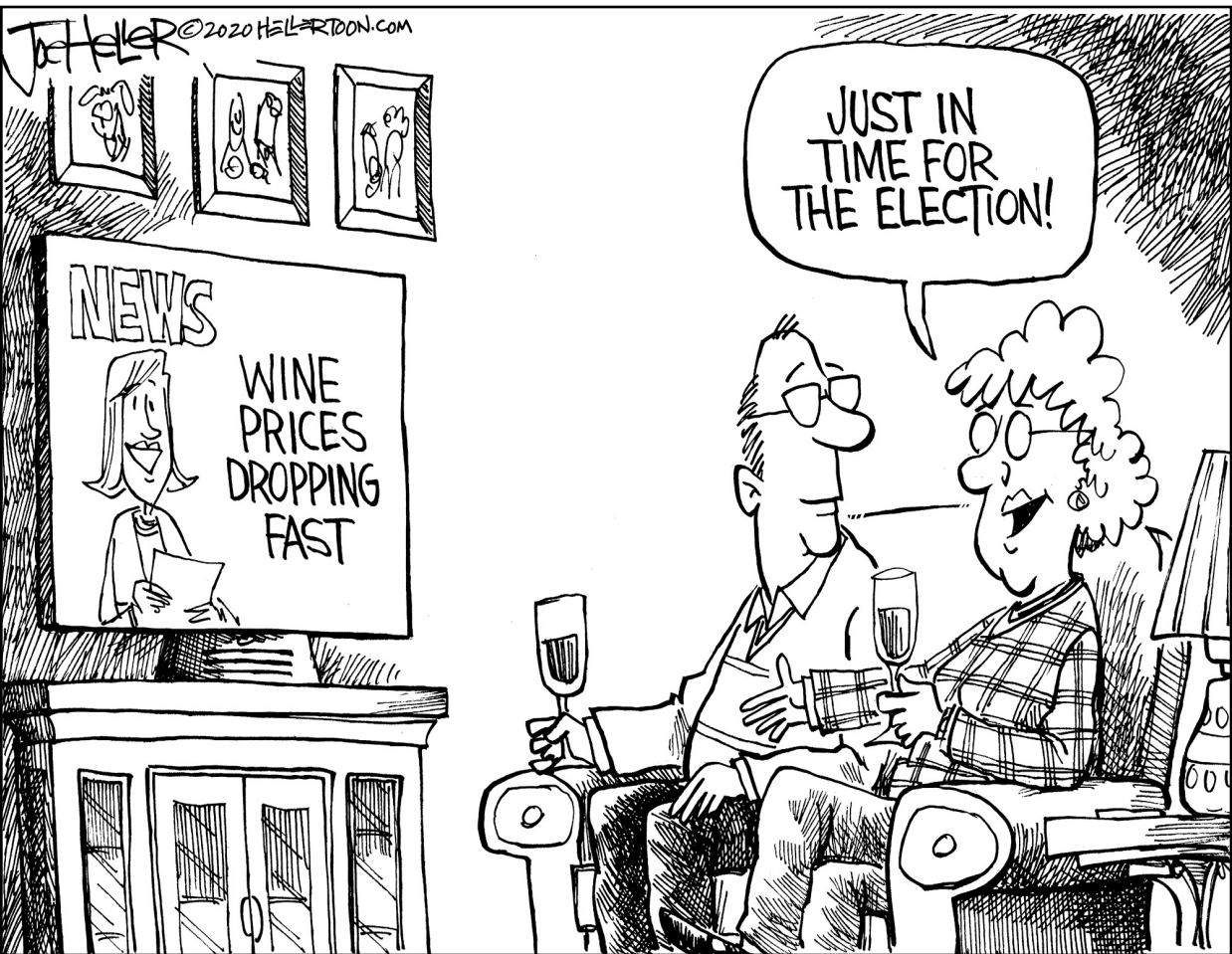
Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
Florence, OR 97439

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

ONLY IN FLORENCE

What could have been a not-so-pleasant day surgery experience at Peace Harbor, in fact turned out to be more like a "Queen for a Day" experience.

I've been through many in my lifetime, but do not remember any where I was tucked into a space suit with the temperature adjusted to my liking with the staff hovering about to make certain that I was comfortable.

Not only did everything go smoothly, but a week later a card appeared in the mail signed by seven people who tended to me, including my R.N. and the anesthesiologist — with some even thanking me.

For what?

Being a good patient.

I am still shaking my head at such a pleasant surprise. I think this could only happen here.

Thank you Peace Harbor.

—Nan Harvey
Florence

PORT LOOKS BETTER THAN IT EVER HAS

I adore taking my Sheltie, "Spirit," for long walks along Bay Street and then into the Port of Siuslaw property.

The port has never looked better, thanks to Dave Huntington and his dedicated crew and office staff. The lawns are green, the gravel roads are smooth, the beach access is safe and accommodating, the new railing is superb, the signage is clear and understandable, and so many happy people and pets are staying in the park — even throughout the winter.

The port can easily take care of small and large boats, small and large RVs and families of all shapes and sizes. All are happy, laughing and enjoying our town.

The entire property is organized, clean as a whistle, and delightful to walk around. All of the visitors that I have ever spoken to rave about the scenery, are excited about the RV slots and their accessibility, and continually compliment the ease with which they can fish, barbecue and enjoy the ambiance of our Siuslaw Port and the majestic Siuslaw River.

The fish cleaning stations just beg to be used and it is great when they are filled with the voices of excited fishermen and their families.

We are such a fortunate community to live within this beautiful watershed, and our Port is exemplary of all that we stand for.

If you have not been down to

the port recently, I highly suggest that you take you, your friends, your family, your guests and your furry animals to enjoy one of the treasures that is right here in our own backyards.

—Kimberly Fleenor
Florence

STRETCHING THE TRUTH — Not

In a letter to the Editor (Feb 15, "Comparing Trump to Dictators Shows Ignorance"), Ian Eales stated that Karen Mahoney "stretched the facts" in her Feb. 12 Guest Viewpoint ("We Need Strength of Character For Our Nation To Endure").

It appears to me that it is Mr. Eales who has stretched facts to fit his narrative. Donald Trump did, in fact, mock Nancy Pelosi for her prayers and Mitt Romney for his faith. Trump did not mention them by name, but it was clear that his criticisms were directed toward them.

If you did not see his speech before the National Prayer Breakfast, I invite you to look it up on youtube.com.

Trump, nor anyone else, can claim to know what is in another's heart or mind with regard to personal relationships with their God.

It is not hypocritical for Pelosi to pray for the President while pursuing the truth about what she sees as his lawlessness; many faiths implore us to pray for all, even our enemies, that they may see the error of their ways.

Also, it was not illegal for Nancy Pelosi to have torn up her copy of the State of the Union speech. It was not the original and the speech will be on record forever in the National Archives.

In my opinion, it was not a truthful account of the State of our Union. Rather, it was another campaign rally speech which are typically full of misinformation and falsehoods.

In addition, Trump has shown a lean toward dictatorship on a near-daily basis. He spreads misinformation and often outright lies at rallies, at press conferences and during television appearances, as well as in his tweets.

Throughout history, dictators such as Hitler, Putin, Stalin, Erdogan and others have used authoritarian devices to discredit the media by calling them the "enemy of the people" and trying to silence them.

The authoritarian will try to discredit the Congress and the judiciary by minimizing their

importance and attempts to influence their decisions; the authoritarian will try to discredit his political opponents by name-calling, mocking, etc.

Trump, like past dictators, has no compunction about breaking the law while dividing the country into "us" and "them."

Often, authoritarian dictators name a scapegoat for all the ills in a country. Hitler's scapegoat was the Jewish population; Trump's scapegoat is immigrants — particularly those of color.

If we don't pay attention and stop his attempts to become an authoritarian dictator, we are doomed to repeat history.

—Marybeth Marenco
Florence

'BENCH' LETTER WRITERS WHO MISINFORM

In 1997, after we had selected Florence as our retirement destination but before we moved here, my wife and I wanted to get to know our new hometown so we subscribed to the *Siuslaw News* and have remained subscribers ever since.

One thing we noted early on was that we frequently saw the same names in the Letters-to-the-Editor column. When we mentioned this to the locals, we got the eyes-raised-to-heaven look like we were talking about someone's crazy uncle.

Recently, we have come to realize a welcome change in that letters containing blatantly false or misleading claims no longer get published without an editor's note correcting the misinformation.

This much-appreciated addition is unfortunately not observed in much of the information-generated media, particularly things like Facebook, where egregious comments often go unchallenged.

So here is a suggestion for the *Siuslaw News*, borrowed from the sports world. After a given letter writer has received one admonishment in an editor's note, that individual should receive a warning to get their act together and, in the future, verify the accuracy of what they have submitted.

After a second infraction, "bench" them for 6 months. If they still haven't gotten their "stuff" together, a third violation would deserve a lifetime ban.

Your readers — at least *this* one — would applaud and approve this action.

—Kenneth Janowski
Florence

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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:

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
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