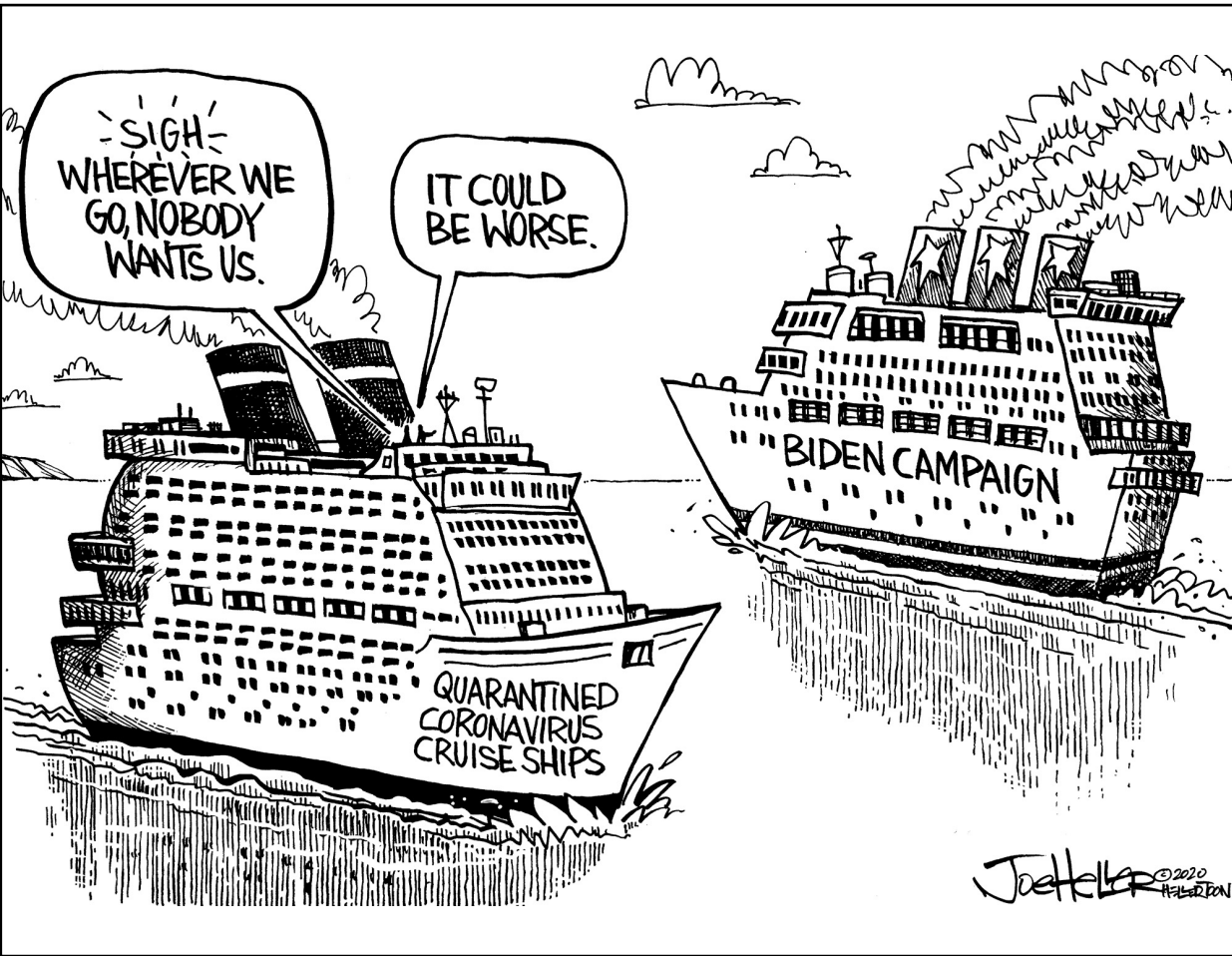


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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)



LETTERS

POLITICS, JUDICIAL SYSTEM SHOULD NOT MIX

Everyone should be alarmed — strike that, *outraged*, by the recent invasion of politics into our Criminal Justice system. It is an invasion led by the President and U.S. Attorney General, who should be the strongest bulwarks against this kind of unconstitutional behavior. As someone who spent 23 years in the federal criminal justice system, I can tell you first hand the power of the government when it chooses to bring charges against someone ... or when it chooses to *not* bring charges and thus allow behaviors detrimental to society. It is something to be feared and controlled. Our criminal justice system above all else must remain out of the realm of politics — and never more so than now, when our politics are so divisive. Over 40 years ago, another president created an enemies list in an attempt to get the criminal justice system to help his friends and harm his enemies. This ended with the U.S. Attorney General in prison and a disgraced President forced to resign. Strict controls were then put in place to prevent this from ever happening again. Now, our current President and Attorney General have been rapidly ignoring and dismantling those controls. To allow this to continue is to invite national disaster. It will lead to an inability to speak out against injustice for fear of indictment and prison.

It goes against everything this Republic has ever stood for. It must end the way it ended in the 70s, or we are doomed as a free democratic nation.

—Ray Plumery
Florence

THE 'SILLY SEASON' HAS STARTED

Once again, we enter the fourth-year silly season, aka the Presidential election cycle. I would like to remind some of those who submit letters and viewpoints that this is the Opinion page, not the "news" or "facts" page. Some people seem to think that if they don't agree with your opinion, then it must be disinformation that is being spread. Then there's the "stretching-the-truth" folks, the "moral-compass" folks and the "comparing-to-a-dictator" folks, with that last one getting a good belly laugh from me. There is also the "editor-is-the-arbitrator-of-all-that-is-real" and "1,2,3-strikes-you're-out folks."

Another good belly laugh. I will say right up front that I am a President Trump fan. I can also tell with some certainty who the letter writers are a fan of — including the editor, who will say he is neutral; but unless he doesn't vote, I am not falling for that one. I won't waste my time trying to convince anyone that "Trump Derangement Syndrome" is real (even though it is.) All you have to do is turn on MSNBC or CNN any day of the week. I will proudly cast my vote for President Trump, knowing that — of all the candidates out there on both sides — he is the one true lover of United States of America and all our traditions.

— D. Eckhardt
Florence

A SPECIAL TOWN WE LIVE IN

Florence is such a special place. If there was a complete list of all its positive attributes, it would go on much longer than time allows. Our many artisans and talented craftsmen, the Last Resort Players, CROW kids, many wonderful restaurants, beautifully equipped library, our school athletes, special movie theater, the army of volunteers and services available, the health network, local firefighters and police who keep us safe, not to mention the natural beauty which is all about us. Now, you get the picture. Today I would like to add praise to another positive attribute: The beautiful national flags lining our streets on Presidents Day. Each special holiday, the flags are out there — even in some of the most remote areas — just to call attention to a particular day in history or a particular hero of the past. I grew up during WWII and, maybe because of that, I had a very strong sense of patriotism instilled in my upbringing (sadly something I see waning in today's youth). The community owes a huge thank you to the many members of our Kiwanis group who have taken on the responsibility to go out early in the day and place each flag in its spot. Then when the day is nearly done — before dark — they go back on their route to carefully remove each one and carefully roll it up until it's next showing. This procedure must take a very large crew of volunteers to accomplish this project and I (I'm sure many others, too) recognize their service to the community. I look forward to each holiday in antic-

ipation of seeing our beautiful flag blowing in the ocean breeze again. So, thank you members of Kiwanis- your community is better because of your patriotic deed.

—Sue Hale
Florence

CAN'T JUST SILENCE THE OPPOSITION

Regarding the Letters to the Editor from Marybeth Marengo ("Stretching The Truth—Not," Feb. 19) and Kenneth Janowski ("Bench' Letter Writers Who Misinform," Feb. 19), I was going to refute Marengo Point by Point until I saw Mr. Janowski's letter. Madam: I saw the speech *and read* the transcript [from the State of the Union]. The SOTU has been a propaganda platform for decades and probably should be abolished. Dictators like Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Castro shut down the media and publish party organs. Do *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Pravda* ring any bells? The *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, et al are Democratic Party organs who report 90 percent against Trump. Trump is against *illegal* immigration of the unskilled who are a burden on the country. Sir: You advocate silencing the opposition. This is exactly the tactic Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro et al used. BTW: *Only* conservative letters ever get an "Editor's Note"

—Ian Eales
Florence

KINDNESS OF PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE

I live on Mitchell Loop Road and go for a walk every day if it's not raining. It surprises me when people stop to tell me, if I have trouble on my walk, they will be glad to give me a ride back to my house. Especially since these are often people I don't know. One time when we were traveling in our motorhome in California, we came to a dead end road. We stopped at a house to ask for directions and no one would come to the door. They were peeking out at us from a window that had the blinds pulled. It is really nice to live in Florence, where people aren't afraid to answer their door.

— Virgil Bechtold
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:
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WHERE TO WRITE

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