

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

HELP US KEEP OUR BUSINESSES OPEN

I am confused by the administration's belief that if we open our schools and businesses without doing adequate testing and contact tracing — and without insisting that people protect each other by wearing a mask — that somehow our economy will thrive and we will all be back on the glory train of economic stability.

As it happens, the opposite seems to be the case; we seem to be having our lessons in cause and effect.

Our coastal town has had a rebirth in the last 40 years. It has become a destination for many visitors. We welcome them and try to provide a reasonably good getaway from cities and personal stresses. And their contribution to our economy helps us to maintain Old Town and our community in a way that is pleasing, welcoming and relaxing.

Up to now, we've been able to avoid COVID-19 contamination and keep many of our businesses open. But current misunderstandings about the seriousness of the pandemic have brought people here who, for one reason or another, are either unwilling to wear a mask or believe that we have no virus cases and don't see the need.

Now the influx of people getting away from quarantine and lockdown have brought the virus to us, and businesses have had to temporarily close their doors in recent weeks to try to regroup.

If cases continue to rise in areas like ours, the chances of having another lockdown increase, threatening our businesses, our health and our ability to maintain our community as a viable destination.

We hope that people coming here to Old Town and other parts of Florence will be more thoughtful. And if you *live here*, help us out — economically as well as physically — by wearing a mask and observing physical distancing, whether you are inside or outside (Crowds of people on our small sidewalks without masks can also make passing residents ill. We would rather not cross the street to avoid you).

Help us keep our businesses open and our residents (the median age here is about 65) healthy so we can continue to accommodate you as a respite from the heat and the anxiety of confinement.

—Joann Henderson
Florence

PORTLAND IS NOT EXAMPLE OF 'PEACEFUL PROTESTING'

While I respect the right of Donna Mlinek to share her views in the *Siuslaw News* ("Respecting Constitution, Bible Are Not Exclusive," July 29), I must respectfully disagree.

Webster defines "Peaceful" as "not quarrelsome; free from disturbance; calm; of or in a time of peace."

Not one of these is the case in Portland. BLM and the Anti-Trump forces have taken over portions of the city, burned buildings, destroyed businesses, injured folks, looted, vandalized and left parts of the city in ruins.

Jerry Nadler refers to the rioting in Portland as "a myth."

Ms. Mlinek refers to the peaceful "moms, dads and vets" who are being gassed, but what wasn't mentioned was the gangs wielding baseball bats, explosives, lasers, Molotov cocktails and guns, or how many police officers have been injured.

We have the right to peaceful protesting, but when lives, businesses and homes are at risk, that's going too far. This destruction, this carnage, this total disregard for others has gone on far too long.

—Trish Rhodes
Florence

WHAT TYPE OF MAYOR DO WE WANT?

In 2018, Sandra Roumagoux, the Mayor of Newport and on behalf of the Newport City Council, signed off on a "A Proclamation Recognizing Climate Change Awareness."

The journey to this proclamation began by two organizations, 350 Oregon Central Coast and Citizens' Climate Lobby Newport, when they requested that the United Nations Human Rights on Climate Change be accepted by the Newport City Council.

Mayor Roumagoux responded with the Climate Change Proclamation.

The proclamation began with a declaration that "climate change, created by atmospheric warming caused by greenhouse gases, has reached a critical level" and that "science has shown that climate change is a result of human activity." She ended the proclamation by urging "residents and visitors to address this very serious and profound crisis facing our globe."

Mayor Roumagoux did this on behalf of the Newport City Council as well as herself.

At the last Florence City Council meeting on July 20, Council Vice-President Ron Preisler, who acknowledges the threat of climate change and responded to his constituents' call for action, presented a modified version of the Newport proclamation for discussion and a vote.

Unlike Newport, Councilor Preisler had to bypass Florence Mayor Joe Henry, who effectively shut down any meaningful discussion of the merits of the proclamation and it was defeated by a 3-2 vote.

What type of mayor do we want for Florence? One like Mayor Roumagoux who will listen to her constituents, or one like Joe Henry who doesn't?

—Michael Allen
Florence

PROPOSED 126 NEW HOMES WILL COME AT A COST

I live in the small community called Sea Watch Estates across the street from the new proposed high-density development of 126 new homes.

Besides all the other potential issues with this development, I'll focus on one: groundwater.

This area has a well known issue with groundwater because of a clay layer about 40 ft down. Water isn't absorbed here but instead travels horizontally through the 40-feet of loose sand under our homes at Sea Watch and goes out to the Siuslaw River via our slope on the river's edge.

Anyone knows plants use water. Imagine how much nine acres needs? The City's plan is to remove all the vegetation and infiltrate all water from the development into the ground. This will create about 2-plus million cubic feet of additional water annually that will be travelling horizontally through that 40 feet of loose sand under our homes.

In 1998, a Sandpines development put a much smaller amount of water in that area which, as a result of the extra pressure on our slope, caused a "blowout." The subsequent erosion nearly took out a house. The City had to correct this issue. The homeowner had expensive repairs. In researching information to try to get the City to consider this issue, I found that the groundwater issue — the geology causing it and the damage it's done in the past — is in their own records.

Yet, it appears there is zero consideration of this known issue in any of the City's plans.

If the project moves forward as is, settling and slope failure (possibly causing home loss) is a sure thing. We are a small HOA, mostly retired and on a fixed income. The City approved our Sea Watch Estates development as a viable place for one to build a home and live.

What concerns me most is finding out that the City had all this information and apparently excluded it as a factor in planning, knowing that the groundwater issue has caused us damage in the past, and certainly will again.

Perhaps Sea Watch (25 homes) can't complete against the tax revenue of 126 new homes?

They may call this progress. My hope is that the City may read this and redesign a drainage system that won't destroy our community. I would hope that any development the City does, would work to protect the homes of people already living here.

—Steve Williams
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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