

**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)



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## Siuslaw News

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## Siuslaw News

**Office:** 148 Maple St./PO Box 10 Florence, OR 97439  
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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that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are un-sourced or documented will not be published.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](mailto:nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com)

### WHERE TO WRITE

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## Let's move forward expecting better from ourselves



While I don't necessarily subscribe to the theory behind trickle-down economics, I have become a firm believer in the trickle-down effect of national discourse and its ability to permeate how we feel about our lives — and, just as importantly, in recognizing the good in each other.

The overt divisiveness that has arisen within our society over the last few years has conditioned us to accept pessimism as a natural part of our daily perspective.

Forget about wearing rose-colored glasses or beer goggles; more often than not, we have come to instinctively reach for a blindfold when it comes to

how we see each other and anyone with a differing viewpoint.

It's a mindset that runs completely counter to being thankful — because it narrows our vision and

constantly being diverted away from real interaction with each other and toward a nebulous relationship with those we hardly know.

The result is a growing

fact of kindness to provide some much-needed levity.

It is within times like this, especially as we enter into the holiday seasons of Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year, that we are reminded of the things that unite us as people rather than partisanship.

I realize that the end of the elections doesn't guarantee something better.

However, I do believe in the natural pendulum swing we regularly take as a society in our ever-constant need and desire to correct ourselves in the pursuit of something better.

I still believe that, despite how our divisions have been amplified, we ultimately share more common ground than our surface tribalism would have us believe.

We can expect better as we move forward.

And we *should*.

### From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

minimizes the chance of recognizing any good that exists within our peripheral.

To put it plainly, it's hard to appreciate a sunset while facing east.

Admittedly, I'm no exception. And not just because I have a lousy sense of direction.

In today's constant barrage of information, opinion and analysis through

news outlets, social media and notifications on phones, computers and tablets, our attention is

inability to live in "real" time and in the moment with one another.

With the final tally of elections essentially over, and taking into account the historic participation made by fellow Americans, I hope we can finally begin talking about the things that unite us and the common good that defines us as family, community and ultimately as Americans.

I believe the trickle-down divisiveness around us can be diluted if we allow the ripple ef-

### GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Chuck Trent

Boys & Girls Club Executive Director

But the Club is so much more than childcare. It is more than helping kids with Distance Learning while they cannot go back to the classroom. The reason kids come to the Club is that we talk with every single child 1:1 every day. We listen to them. We cry with them, laugh with them.

We create a safe place for them both physically and emotionally; we are a youth development organization and not a childcare organization. When the Club was shut down for COVID, our staff could have gone on unemployment and received the extra \$600-a-week. But they chose to keep working so that First Responders and Essential Workers had a safe place to leave their kids while serving the community.

There is another value we bring to the community. Our Club has about a \$550,000 budget.

- Roughly 60% of the costs are for salaries.
- The state of Oregon dictates the number of kids to staff ratio, so we have little or no control over the number of employees.
- We have 5 full-time employees

many of our families are at or near the poverty level.

Many middle-class families make just enough that they don't qualify for public assistance. Last week, I met with a family where both parents are working, but childcare is half of their rent. The cost of childcare has an enormous impact on these families too.

and 7 part-time employees.

- Before COVID, our part-time employees worked 15–20 hours a week.
- In the world of COVID and Distance Learning, they are working 20–35 hours a week.
- Since Sept. 14, we have prepared and served over 1,000 meals at the Teen Center.

Your donations to the Club and our staff's salary go back into the community through local businesses from coffee shops to insurance companies.

Due to the COVID crisis, we had to cancel our Homecoming Event, which is our major fundraiser. Last year, it raised \$120,000 to fund our programs, program scholarships and covered almost one-fourth of our total annual expenses. At the same time, our donations have dropped significantly.

Since we can't hold our Homecoming Gala, we created a fun virtual event that is our FUN-D Raising Competition of Ducks vs Beavers Platypus Bowl, which will run from now to the Ducks vs Beavers game Nov. 27.

You can pledge a dollar amount of your choice for either the Ducks or the Beavers. The team that raises the most money will be the winner of the Whatever It Takes Platypus Bowl and have their team logo painted on the Teen Center for bragging rights.

All the proceeds will support our Club kids right here in Florence.

Checkout the Club Facebook page for information as we announce the details at <https://www.facebook.com/BGCWesternLaneCounty/>.

And remember:  
 "To the world you may be one person, but to a child you may be the world."

## 'Whatever It Takes' for the kids of our community

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

It just takes one person who cares to change a child's life. I know that from personal experience and my bet is many of you have a story about how one person made a difference in your life; if not for them, your life would be very different.

Public assistance is vital to many families in Florence, but will not fill the hole in a child's heart created by a parent who is in prison; or the death of a parent or sibling; or the child exposed to domestic violence; or a child that is feeling isolated and alone; or the parent who is stressed out about how they are going to help their kids with Distance Learning.

Families need money, food and clothing to survive. But those things cannot heal the heart or give families the tools to help them overcome the enormous obstacles that break a child's spirit.

I've heard the comment over and over the Boys & Girls Club is where all the "poor" kids go. That is largely a true statement. Two-thirds of our kids' families are at the poverty level or below, which makes sense when we understand the demographics of Florence. We have no major industries to speak of. There is a very limited number of full-time jobs that pay full benefits. When the local economy is built on tourism like Florence, major events like COVID-19 have a devastating impact on local businesses and jobs.

Coupled with the cost of childcare, shortage of housing and cost of housing, we shouldn't be surprised that