

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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Jenna Bartlett
 Ned Hickson
 Cathy Dietz
 Ron Annis
 For Advertising: ext. 318

Publisher, ext. 318
 Editor, ext. 313
 Office Supervisor, ext. 312
 Production Supervisor
 For Classifieds: ext. 320

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Siuslaw News

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LETTERS

GREAT SPIRIT AND INSPIRATION IN MAPLETON

In a giving and loving spirit, the Mapleton community came together during some very difficult times to aid and support their friends, and neighbors in need.

A special thanks to the Mapleton Fire Department volunteers, members of the Mapleton Lions Club, Western Lane Community Foundation Directors, Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, SVFR volunteer Capt. Liz Iabichello, and the volunteers at the Mapleton Food Share.

All truly gave from their hearts and of their time to raise more than \$1,100 in gifts for children — and for gifts children were able to give to their parents, utility vouchers for families having difficulties making payments, and food baskets for those in need.

Great spirit and inspiration to us all.

—Dave and Cindy Haberman
 Mapleton

WE LIVE IN A SPECIAL PLACE

Christmas.

A time of joy; also a time of sorrow for those no longer here. A time of excitement and anticipation for the young; a time for blessings and prayer for a special birth so many years ago.

A time for sharing with those less fortunate; a time for gatherings of and with loved ones.

All of this was true until the pandemic hit our world. In many homes now, the holidays have been a time of stress. A time of fear of the future; a time of despair and depression and deep seated loneliness.

Most of us, including myself, have experienced some of these emotions throughout these many months. Last evening, I was picking up a pizza at a local restaurant

across the street from the beautiful display of the wonder of the season lights. It took my breath away and got me to thinking of all the good things in our little town.

I'm just so grateful to live in such a generous place where so many think of others. Whenever there is a legitimate need, it is almost always taken care of. After observing so many other cities, we live pretty much in freedom and harmony with no overwhelming fears for safety and security.

So, thank you to all who contribute to help make Florence the special place that it is. So many organizations and groups that give of their time and energy — Kiwanis for displaying our flag on special holidays, Elks, SOS, Soroptomists, Food Share and church groups as well as our men and women in blue and firefighters ... too many to list.

I close with wishes to all for a loving and healthy holiday season to be followed by a much better New Year 2021.

— Sue Hale
 Florence

in adjacent areas, not just those along Oceana Drive.

The only "good" in this annexation will be for the benefit of a wealthy land developer (Benedick Holding LLC) and for the city's tax coffers at the direct expense of older, long-time existing residents that have been conveniently denied a say in this decision.

Keep in mind that there is no other reason for this annexation — none — other than for development of a wetland area that was previously shot down by Lane County.

If this annexation is passed by the Florence City Council, it will be a complete betrayal of the "for the public good principle" — let alone any democratic principle — and a total loss of trust and faith by citizens for whom the city council supposedly represents.

Not only that, the city can plan on years of expensive legal entanglements due to what will be solely for the benefit of a special interest.

—Jeff Gemutliche
 Florence

THANK YOU, ELKS

The citizens of Florence are so fortunate to have dedicated people like the Elks, giving their time, energy and Christmas Day hours to provide turkey dinners to anyone needing or wanting them.

The meals were exquisitely packaged with everything one would want. They even gave thought to whether a person liked white meat or dark — so they provided *both*.

I felt so fortunate that I didn't have to spend time in the kitchen.

I am sure that everyone who took advantage of the gift felt the same way.

Thank you Florence Elks for this gift.

—Nan Harvey
 Florence

LET'S GET THIS STRAIGHT

The Dec. 8 favorable approval recommendation made by the City of Florence's Planning Department and Planning Commission to the city council for annexation of Oceana Drive and certain wetlands had absolutely nothing to do with being "reasonable and for the public good."

What this gross misrepresented justification for annexation, as stated by Planning Director Wendy FarleyCampbell, that evening leaves out the fact that *none* of the hundreds of existing homeowners and residents — i.e., the public — wants this annexation.

It will have future devastating financial, safety and quality-of-life impacts to so many older residents

It has been a privilege to serve as a city councilor

(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.)

I would like to apologize for my part in the trauma that this council has inflicted on our staff and citizens.

Partisan politics has played an oversized role in the conflict — and on a much smaller scale, we have followed the same divisive rhetoric as seen on our national stage.

I suggest the next council take up the task of revising our city charter with the goal of the revision being ready for our next election in 2022. We revise our city rules and regulations on an ongoing basis. It's been almost 32 years since the charter

was adopted; our laws need to be better defined and brought up to current standards.

That being said, I have had an opportunity to work with Jo Beaudrou and have seen her qualifications, which are outstanding. Jo has worked on various committees for four years to the benefit of Florence. The fact that she was supported by so many of our citizens — and she is young, bright, energetic and creative — makes her a great candidate for our next city council seat. Selecting her would heal some of the divisiveness that

GUEST VIEWPOINT
 By Ron Preisler
 Florence City Councilor

we face. I have enjoyed being part of the process that built the Public Works facility, remodeled Florence City Hall, the vision that created the new Highway 101 corridor, remodeled the Justice Center and many other projects, including a gate for the pocket park on Munsel Lake Road. My committee work has been very rewarding and educational. Yes, old dogs can learn new tricks. I would like to thank Erin Reynolds, Megan Messmer, Wendy FarleyCambell, Mike Miller, Tom Turner, Anne Baker and Kevin Rhodes for the privilege of working with them for the past 6 years. They are all dedicated men and women who keep Florence the premier city on the Oregon Coast.

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

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OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN 160 State Capitol 900 Court St. Salem, Ore. 97301-4047 Governor's Citizens' Rep. Message Line: 503-378-4582 www.oregon.gov/gov	STATE SEN. ARNIE ROBLAN (DIST. 5) 900 Court St. NE - S-417 Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1705 FAX: 503-986-1080 Email: Sen.ArnieRoblan@oregonlegislature.gov
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U.S. SEN. RON WYDEN 221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg Washington, DC 20510 202-224-5244 541-431-0229 www.wyden.senate.gov	STATE REP. CADDY MCKEOWN (DIST. 9) 900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1409 Email: rep.caddymckeown@oregonlegislature.gov
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