

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

AUTHORITIES DON'T CARE ABOUT NURSING HOMES

After reading the sad opinion letter by Quinn Gates in the Saturday paper ("Please Stop Complaining About Protecting Each Other," Jan. 2), I started wondering about why this person's father got sick in first place.

There needs to be an investigation into how nursing home residents are contracting Covid. Since they never go anywhere or see anyone, the contamination has to come from the staff.

Healthcare facilities, and staff are supposed to be taking extraordinary measures to prevent the spread. Healthcare staff have been threatened with immediate dismissal and loss of license if they don't comply.

Since this is happening, those facilities must be out of compliance with OSHA and the health authority.

So, why don't we hear about the contact tracing and why is this still spreading in closed facilities?

I think the answer is simple, because the state authorities don't care about nursing home residents.

—Lori Straley
 Florence

GOVERNMENT CONTROL WILL ONLY INCREASE

All of us remember the government lockdown of all but a few businesses deemed "essential." This was going to only be for a month or two to "flatten the curve" of the China virus illnesses that, by government estimates, would overwhelm the healthcare system.

However, *now* the reason for the lockdown is to end the pandemic, because no one should die from this virus.

The right to conduct commerce, the right to worship and the right to freedom of assembly have been arbitrarily taken away from "We The People."

Harken back in time.

These were reasons for the American Revolution back in 1776. Leadership in large part came from the church because "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" are God-given rights.

Where is the Christian Church?

How come all of the congregations of the faithful are not mobilized and beating down government office doors demanding that we follow our own U.S. Constitution?

It is because the church has tax exemptions based on being non-political. Pastors in this 21st century are cowards; they will not rock the boat.

Pastors believe that this too shall pass.

Unfortunately, government control will only increase if We The People don't secure our rights — and the elderly will continue to die alone without family members present.

—Ralph Ray
 Florence

COUNCIL NOT LISTENING TO IDYLEWOOD RESIDENTS

When my husband and I were finally able to move to Oregon, we carefully evaluated different small towns and coastal communities. Among other desirable qualities, we loved the fact that the Flor-

ence area seemed to realize the value and importance of preserving green space in and around the community.

We were thrilled beyond measure to be able to purchase a modest house on the edge of forested acreage that had been set aside as a wetlands preserve or had been deemed unsuitable for development by Lane County.

It is a great disappointment to find that the city planning commission has agreed with a developer to annex many acres within our community of Idylewood. No one in the Idylewood area is in favor of annexation.

Annexation will increase taxes, increase traffic in the area, deprive homeowners on Oceana of much of their street frontage, and building in the area will destroy the green space and wildlife habitat.

Nobody will gain from this annexation except the developers and the city — the city by expanding its tax base, the developers by increasing their wealth.

The Florence City Council is considering the recommendation of the Planning Commission to approve the annexation. The residents of Idylewood are against annexation. The commission did not value the statements presented from residents of Idylewood. We demand that the city council listen to the concerns of citizens in this community.

—Cris Reep and Bill McDougale
 Florence

Citizens of west Lane... You rock

(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.)

As I reflect on the craziness that was 2020, I am reminded how wonderful, thoughtful and generous our community is. We can all agree that there were a lot of hardships, challenges, hiccups and tragedy experienced by many residents of Western Lane County.

As director of SOS, I saw firsthand the toll 2020 took on so many. I saw instances of domestic and sexual violence increase dramatically and the need for rent and utility bill assistance increase as well.

It is easy to get fixated on all that went wrong in 2020. However, I would prefer to look back on 2020 with pride and look forward to 2021 with encouragement.

This past year, when the need arose, our community came together. Many caring and thoughtful citizens stepped up to support our local restaurants and merchants to keep them running.

Grocery stores added services to help keep patrons safe.

Our teachers continually adapted to constant changing guidelines to

ensure our students receive an education.

When much of our nation was gripped by violence over injustice, many local citizens stepped up to be a voice for those feeling oppressed and demonstrated safely, peacefully and with civility.

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Bob Teter

Executive Director, Siuslaw Outreach Services

When the pandemic threatened the cancellation of many holiday traditions, that "Florence Can-Do Attitude" came forward and adaptations were made to ensure those traditions continued.

Interact Club members from Siuslaw High School went to several senior facilities to sing Christmas carols outside with masks on. Soptimist and several community members and groups did not let the COVID pandemic stop the Christmas Baskets from going out to nearly 400 struggling families.

The Twin Lakes Giving Tree adapted to COVID guidelines to continue supporting needy teens. Many thoughtful citizens made special gestures to show support and thankfulness for first responders.

Support for Siuslaw Outreach

Services this year has been phenomenal. Through the support of the community and regional foundations, SOS served a record number of clients. The increased need is not necessarily something to celebrate, but the fact those needs were met is certainly worth celebrating.

I also must give praise to my staff at Siuslaw Outreach for the tireless dedication and hard work. They have literally worked around the clock for the past few months to care for those in crisis. The support they give each other, through tough times, is inspiring to me.

You guys make my job a pleasure. Thank you!

I have often believed that our true colors and what is truly important comes out when we are tested or faced with trials.

As a community, I think we passed the test.

Again, we should look back on 2020 as a year when we saw the best in us. Looking forward, let us focus on hope and opportunity that 2021 is making available to us. Let us remember what is important and that we are all in this together.

I know we live in a community that has accomplished so much in 2020, and will accomplish even more in the coming year.

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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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