

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

HOMELESS ISSUES SEEM TO BE ESCALATING IN FLORENCE

This letter is in regard to the increasing homeless population in our city and the threat they pose to the health and safety of our community.

The Grocery Outlet parking lot and 21st Street between Spruce and Highway 101 appears to be turning into overnight parking/camping as is the Fred Meyer parking lot.

The area around the Florence Events Center is also become trashed.

I also heard there was a recent attack on staff and a patron by a homeless woman at Fred Meyer, which demonstrates how the situation seems to be escalating.

A more vigorous enforcement of the existing city codes seems in order before Florence begins to look like San Francisco.

—Bruce Jarvis
Florence

HIDDEN CONSEQUENCES OF ANNEXATION

The City Council meeting of Feb. 1 was very intriguing.

It was hard to find the truth about why everyone in Idyle-

wood is so upset... until Zack Mittge, an attorney representing the Idylewood Homeowners, made his comments near the end of the meeting.

I would love to quote him exactly, but this paraphrase will have to do: If the annexation goes through, and Benedick gets its sewer line up Oceana Drive, any septic systems that break down will need to be connected to the sewer line per Oregon Department of Environmental Quality rules.”

This is the Naked King in the parade that all the homeowners know about, and none of the counselors or city staff have acknowledged.

And I was shocked to hear the elevations of Benedick’s subject property relative to those essentially downstream and also downhill.

To quote Bruce Hadley’s comments to the city council, “I took GPS readings over the weekend; the Benedick parcel is 30 feet higher than any point in Idylewood, and 80 feet *higher* than Idylewood’s lowest point.” (his emphasis)

I have heard rumors — and now read what appears to be

credible documentation in the record of Monday night’s meeting of how the Benedicks operate — and I hope the city denies this request.

Maybe Benedick Holdings, LLC can work with the State Department of Natural Resources or whoever the appropriate party may be (The Nature Conservancy comes to mind) and turn the property into a land trust, cut their losses and move on.

—Ivy Meadow
Florence

SCHOOL STAFF MUST BE IMMUNIZED

Wednesday’s edition of Siuslaw News featured photos of Viking football players returning to “Friday night lights” games — a happy sight.

However, in each picture, some players are wearing masks improperly. I get the part that they are engaged in a physical sport and are just kids being kids.

I also get the part that this is exactly why all school staffs have to be immunized prior to resuming in-person classes.

—Mary Jo Leach
Dunes City

As the virus unlocks another deadly sequence, our policies yo-yo

(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 a former science teacher and someone who tries to stay up with what’s going on in the United States and the world, I am at a loss to explain the behavior of many (too many) Americans in response to the pandemic.

I was compelled to write this after reading about a local restaurant owner who has been allowing diners in her establishment because it was “a constitutional right”; about “anti-vax” protesters who stopped vaccinations at Dodger Stadium; and about some state governors who, after half a million Americans have died of Covid-19, still refuse to mandate any protocols to stop its spread.

All of this after nearly a year of listening to people claim that the virus is a hoax, that any government mandate to wear masks or limit personal contact is against their freedoms, and that the economy, personal travel and super spreader events — whether political or social — are more important than the health of their fellow citizens.

Almost everyone can recall the scene replayed in many movies where one of the characters uses an electronic device to break a numerical security code in order to get into the vault, secret laboratory, enemy agent’s office or you-name-it.

The device is hooked up and digital numbers flash across its face. As one of the coded numbers is discovered, there is a click and that number remains lit as the others continue to flash searching for their match. Finally, the device breaks the coded sequence and security is breached.

This image has been on my mind since the coronavirus

spread throughout the world. The COVID-19 virus is just like that code-finding device — working insidiously, continuously and rapidly. Once it invades a human host, it multiplies in a reproductive cycle of only a few hours — numbering in the millions in a comparatively short time.

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Bill McDougal
Retired science teacher
Florence resident

The human body attempts to identify the virus and produce an antibody to fight that particular form (genome) of the virus. However, since the virus multiplies so rapidly, mutations can occur with each replication. Fortunately, many of the mutations do not benefit the virus.

Tragically, some changes allow the virus to “escape” the antibodies and can enhance its transmissibility, reduce the effectiveness of vaccines and treatments, and/or increase its fatality rate.

We are giving the virus too many chances to outsmart us. Tests on a COVID-19 patient in Boston showed that the virus had mutated four separate times in the 22 weeks before he died. Remarkably, he had been released from the hospital — and therefore, no longer in isolation — five times during that period.

In just the third week of January this year, 285,251 Americans tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19). Each time one of those people was infected with the coronavirus, it was an opportunity for it to mutate, evolve, survive, spread and perhaps become so deadly that science could not discover treatments fast enough to stop it.

We are waging a war against the virus with a divided army.

This “enemy” is more of a threat than many people real-

ize. Baring the development of a vaccine that will protect against all variants of the coronavirus in conjunction with swift and universal inoculation, we cannot end the pandemic without a unified effort — 100 percent unified — with everyone wearing a medically approved mask in public (that covers mouth and nose), and everyone practicing social distancing.

No exceptions.

The “yo-yo” policies being practiced in the United States and many parts of the world are proving ineffective against the virus or its variants.

Infection rates increase, mandates are issued; infection rates decline, mandates are eased, leading to infection rates increasing again in a seemingly never-ending cycle.

The United Kingdom is now in its *third* nationwide lockdown seeking to halt the B.1.1.7 variant of COVID-19 that scientists discovered had mutated in September — the *same* month that the UK had eased mandates by opening schools and universities and removing travel quarantines from several European nations.

Already this year, variants of COVID-19 from the UK, Brazil, South Africa and Denmark have all been found in the United States. In the time it took you to read this, those viruses have spread, replicated and conceivably mutated into something more difficult to treat.

People who refuse to fight the virus for whatever reason are giving the virus an opportunity to spread. And because it mutates, those infected are, in effect, human Petri dishes — crucibles in which the virus can grow, change and continue to have a detrimental effect on human life.

Click... click... click...

The device that is the virus is already unlocking another deadly sequence.

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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.

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