

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)



We must agree to hear the deafening silence of suicide

In 2019, more than 900 people in Oregon took their own lives. In 2020, suicide remained the second leading cause of death among our young people (ages 10-24). Sadly, this past week, the suicide of a local student was a stark reminder that statistics are ultimately comprised of names and faces from among any community — including our own.

According to a 16-year study released in 2019 by Lane County Health and Human Services, Florence — along with Cottage Grove and Junction City — had twice the rate of death by suicides of any other communities in Lane County.

Bottom line? Suicide is a problem that cuts a large swath through our youngest and brightest to our oldest and wisest. It isn't limited to a particular set of circum-

stances, financial status, blue collar or white collar, urban or rural, male or female.

There is, however, one common thread that

able to discuss openly and, as a result, people often suffer with those thoughts silently — planning death without anyone knowing until

end suicide's deafening silence. In 2018, the *Siuslaw News* made the decision to acknowledge the circumstances of death by suicide in our reporting and will continue to do so with as much respect and sensitivity as possible.

Some agree with our decisions and others do not.

From the Editor's Desk
Ned Hickson

runs through the sad and growing tapestry being woven by suicide: It's the fact that we rarely talk about it.

While as a society we champion and openly support those battling life-threatening diseases whose physical impacts are apparent to the eye, we struggle to discuss the less apparent yet equally life-threatening battle that many face each day living in the shadow of depression, despair, personal loss, bullying, drug addiction and psychosis.

That's because talking about feelings of suicide has been taboo and often associated with being weak and overly dramatic, or simply isn't taken seriously. Many times, thoughts of suicide aren't accept-

able to discuss openly and, as a result, people often suffer with those thoughts silently — planning death without anyone knowing until it's too late.

For decades, the media has played its own role in perpetuating those notions by not reporting on suicides except in rare circumstances, such as when involving a public official or suicide occurring within a public place. Until just a few years ago, the common belief was that reporting on suicides can create a "contagion effect," as well as cause additional trauma to surviving family members.

Good reasons to be sure, except that current research indicates thoughtful reporting and discussion of suicide can actually help prevent suicides by creating an atmosphere supportive of the kind of dialogue needed to

However, experts agree the best way to prevent suicide is by being aware of the warning signs and encouraging someone we suspect might be contemplating suicide to talk about it.

And the only way that conversation can take place is by turning the perpetual silence of suicide within our communities into the sound of hopeful and helpful dialogue.

If you or someone you know might be contemplating suicide, here is the link to Lane County Public Health, which offers multiple resources available to residents in Lane County:

www.preventionlane.org/suicide-resources-family-youth.

LETTERS

FLORENCE IS ECOSYSTEM NEEDING SUSTAINABILITY

To the dedicated volunteers of the Environmental Management Advisory Committee (EMAC), and to the Florence City Council:

Climate change is, in the words of *The Atlantic*, "The Most Interesting Problem in the World."

It is very complex, multifaceted and controversial. Our town, like others around the world, will need guidance and support as we feel its effects.

I want Florence to have a sustainability advisory committee that gathers and presents information to the city leadership and the citizenry on national, local and global trends, funding, projects, dangers, prevention ideas, safety drills and so much more.

Yet what I really want to ask the EMAC and the City are these questions:

Will the new hotel across from the Events Center, or the Burger King slated for 35th Street and Highway 101, use solar panels to lessen their carbon footprint?

Will this Tree City allow Burger King to cut down those last few beautiful trees on its huge lot?

What about the new subdivision at 35th and Rhododendron streets? Are they going to be allowed to strip the land bare before they start building?

Are any of these three projects going to be encouraged to install EV charging stations in their parking lots as they are being constructed?

What is the Environmental Management Advisory Committee's role in these projects? It seems like it should be more

than the Planning Commission, Economic Development and city council involved.

Our town is an ecosystem and all activity is interconnected. EMAC and the proposed Sustainability Advisory Committee (yet to be formed) should have a seat at the table as new growth is considered and implemented.

—Ivy Meadow
 Florence

THIS IS THE TIME TO DE-ESCALATE HOSTILITIES

My husband and I are glad we moved to Florence. There are a lot of good people here. The air quality is far superior to our previous home in San Francisco's North Bay. The scenery and nature here are superb.

Any day you take a walk on the beach or in the forest you are rewarded with the beauty and bounty of nature. We love the picturesque first look of downtown Florence, historic, sheltering and welcoming.

There are shops and restaurants that define what hospitality and goodness look like.

Great thanks to all those who bolster this community with their love of it!

Through our COVID-19 experience here — a year of lockdown and masks (for some, not all), isolation (for some, not all) — we experienced what was not so apparent at first look: the down-and-out get short shrift here.

We want to live in community that does right by all who come here.

Homelessness finds no better safe harbor here than in many other communities. There is no shelter for homeless youth. The county, not the city, provides

a very minimal shelter in the most extreme temperatures.

There are those who begrudge even that much. Most homeless sleep in their cars, if they are lucky enough to have a car. Food insecurity requires Herculean efforts to overcome.

Food Share, Free Lunch (a once-a-week voucher program for a Subway sandwich) and other local outreach exists. Countless volunteers, those who can offer charitable donations, their service, try to stem the rising tide of human suffering.

Always we seem to fall short of the need, but no one is giving up.

Climate deniers at the very top of our local government remain resolute and dismissive of those who say we only have one planet and we need to change our ways. There are gun owners here who grow so furious at the idea of common sense gun control, they would upend our entire government and everyone with it.

There are neighbors who want theirs and feel aggrieved by the least restriction in getting it.

A time to deescalate hostilities seems to be required.

Our common ground is we love Florence. Who wouldn't?

Is it even possible to hope and pray our leaders will see the time for a conversation that fairly considers what is the highest and best for all of us?

And will they do all they can to ensure that conversation happens, without prejudice and in justice to all who find themselves here in Florence?

It can happen.

What a tragic missed opportunity if it does not.

—Darlene Norwood
 Florence

USPS# 497-660 Copyright 2021 © Siuslaw News

Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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

DEADLINES:
 Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.

Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
 In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$79; 6-month in-county, \$56; 10-week subscription, \$25; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$102; 6-month out-of-county, \$69; 10-week subscription, \$35; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$134; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
 Website and E-Edition: TheSiuslawNews.com

Siuslaw News

Office: 148 Maple St./PO Box 10 Florence, OR 97439
Office Hours: Monday to Thursday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday: 8 a.m. to noon

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

WHERE TO WRITE

- | | |
|---|---|
| PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414
TTY/TDD: 202-456-6213
www.whitehouse.gov | STATE SEN. DICK ANDERSON (DIST. 5)
900 Court St. NE - S-417
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1705
Email: Sen.DickAnderson@oregonlegislature.gov |
| OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN
160 State Capitol 900 Court St.
Salem, Ore. 97301-4047
Message Line:
503-378-4582
www.oregon.gov/gov | STATE REP. BOOMER WRIGHT (DIST. 9)
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1409
Email: Rep.BoomerWright@oregonlegislature.gov |
| U.S. SEN. RON WYDEN
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244 541-431-0229
www.wyden.senate.gov | LANE COUNTY DIST. 1 COMMISSIONER JAY BOZIEVICH
125 E. Eighth St.
Eugene, OR 97401
541-682-4203
Email: Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us |
| U.S. SEN. JEFF MERKLEY
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753 541-465-6750
www.merkley.senate.gov | FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL & MAYOR JOE HENRY
Florence City Hall, 250 Highway 101, Florence, 97439
541-997-3437
ci.florence.or.us
Email comments to Florence City Recorder Kelli Weese at kelli.weese@ci.florence.or.us |
| U.S. REP. PETER DEFazio (4TH DIST.)
2134 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6416
541-269-2609 541-465-6732
www.defazio.house.gov | |