

**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)



## A COMMITMENT TO LEGACY

through 2000, when publishers Paul and Beverly Holman sold the newspaper to News Media Corporation.

I'm not the first person to go back through our records — I leaned heavily on past work — nor will I be the last.

But it was an honor to dig through our old editions and find treasure in the form of old stories and photos.

The whole series was a chance to learn about the community and newspaper I love. It was also an opportunity to learn about the enduring legacy of a newspaper that has been around even longer than the city it serves.

It's also why Publisher Jenna Bartlett chose "news and views that define a community" as our tagline.

In my previous roles of intern (summer 2014), city reporter (January 2015 through September 2016)

and features editor (September 2016 to May 2021), I have learned nearly every aspect of putting together a community newspaper. There is still, of course, much more to learn.

Thanks to the staff at the *Siuslaw News* and a newsroom filled at various times with friends and

mentors, I feel prepared to take on the responsibility of editor. This is not just due to the writing, photography and graphic design skills they have helped me develop. It is also because each of my colleagues have been dedicated, passionate proponents of journalistic ideals and commitment to truth.

These are the genes getting passed down from the generations in the newsroom before me. Not just the editors and reporters I've worked with, but from those with

whom my team has worked. Their legacy continues, too, in the *Siuslaw News* of today.

As I begin my first week as editor, I have with me two people in the newsroom: Lead Reporter Mark Brennan and Sports Reporter Zeahna Young. I am so proud of them and the work they do to write stories about our community. Together, we make a pretty great team.

In the coming years, some things will be different. After all, the world continues to change at a rapid pace and the news media both documents and reflects those changes. But some things will remain the same. For example, the *Siuslaw News'* dedication to truth, integrity, hope and this community. It is a legacy I proudly embrace as I become editor.

To readers of the *Siuslaw News*, thank you for 131 years. I and my team look forward to this next part of the journey with you.

### From the Editor's Desk

Chantelle Meyer

## LETTERS

**BUDGET SHOULD BE A CONCERN**  
 It is a concern and should be a question for all fiscally responsible citizens of Florence what their city budget consists of and how their hard-earned dollars are being spent.

Presently, the most recent City of Florence biennial budget is 19% higher than the previous budget — \$65 million to \$72 million. The biennium before that incurred an 11% city government increase.

I am confident that with councilors Woody Woodbury, Joe Henry, Maggie Wisniewski, Bill Meyer and Sally Wantz, there are at least 3 votes against the big budget.

Surely, we as citizens do not believe in our times and present history that government, whether local or national, needs a larger than life increase rather than a diet. People are hurting and no one is working; however, government, like the mighty Missouri, keeps on rolling.

Zero-based budgeting, a "from scratch" means of determining needs instead of wants, would look closely at privately funding arts, privately funding the Chamber of Commerce, privately funding parks and public works maintenance as well as some public safety and communications services. Capital equipment can be cut back if more request for proposal contracting takes place and a good hard look at salaries and benefits are in order. Does any city really need an economic development specialist to replace the free market?

The policymakers of any city need more faith in Adam Smith than Ted Kennedy.

One more possible step. Let's have a good old annual budget and discontinue the biennial budget, that way policymakers are more hands on.

It's now time for our elected officials to take charge and not let city hall be controlled

by city hall, but by city citizens.

— Joel Marks  
 Budget Committee Member  
 for the City of Florence

### BACKING UP BELIEFS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

I have read a number of Michael Allen's submissions to our local newspaper concerning carbon emissions and climate change, including his Guest Viewpoint on May 21. He speaks more eloquently than I can on this subject, but he is not alone. He is backed up in his belief that climate change is based on human activity by more than 90% of the world's climate scientists.

I would hazard a guess that there are more than a few Florence citizens who also stand with Mr. Allen and wish the current City Council and EMAC would pay more attention to the majority of climate scientists and not just a few dissenters.

In answer to two of Mr. Spayd's questions in his May 29 Guest Viewpoint, I don't know how Mr. Allen would answer, but for myself, yes, I do believe the carbon problem and climate change are the most pressing issue of our time, and yes, I do want the City Council and Committees to develop a Comprehensive Climate Plan. The lives of future generations depend on it. Florence is on the front lines of the warming oceans to our west, and surrounded by trees to the east that we must keep healthy and safe from fires (as we saw last summer) to sustain human life. We cannot be shortsighted and bury our heads in the sand.

It is our moral obligation to our children and grandchildren to do all we can to slow or (hopefully) reverse the devastation to our Earth.

— Marybeth Marengo  
 Florence

## At the library, we will start saying 'soon' and 'yes'

**(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 started shelving books at the Salt Lake City Public Library while I was studying to be an actor at the University of Utah. I fell in love almost immediately with working at the library, and I knew librarianship, not theater, would be my career.

I fell in love with my chosen career for a second time when I moved to Florence and became the director of the Siuslaw Public Library District.

In this community, I get to work with the best patrons and the best staff in a beautiful library that has been a gathering and learning place for our region since 1915. In Mapleton, we have another gem that serves residents all the way up the Siuslaw River to Deadwood.

Over the past year and a half, nothing has changed, and everything has. I still love my job (and patrons and staff!) but COVID-19 dramatically altered how the library operates.

Since March 2020, the library has added services to respond to the new reality: curbside pickup; virtual programming; purchasing additional downloadable books, magazines and reference resources; issuing temporary online library cards; increased Wi-Fi access in our parking lots; online story time and take-home kits for kids; and in-person computer access.

On April 1, the library also reopened for in-person browsing during limited hours at both library locations. In that single month, we were visited more than

3,000 times and circulated more than 5,500 physical items.

It has been a challenging time. I have hated not seeing patrons in person. It has been hard to close our doors and then to say "no" or "not yet." There have been new cleaning and occupancy requirements that sometimes changed faster than we could.

### GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Meg Spencer

Director of the

Siuslaw Public Library District

Now, however, things are improving. Case rates are declining and guidelines are relaxing.

I am proud that this library is offering in-person service without an appointment — one of just three libraries in Lane County offering that level of service. We are ahead of systems like Multnomah County and Springfield Public libraries that just began offering in-person appointments on June 1. Others are open with hours nearly identical to their pre-COVID service. That is because libraries across the state are responding to everything from local access to janitorial services to liability insurance while adhering to recommendations from the State Library of Oregon and OSHA requirements.

And while Oregon continues to open, we aren't back to normal. The last 15 months have dramatically impacted organizations and businesses throughout the community in ways that won't be erased when the county risk-level decreases and restrictions are lifted.

The historic labor shortage expected

with the retirement of Baby Boomers has been magnified and sped-up as millions of lives were disrupted. Help-wanted signs around our region tell that story. At the library, six of our substitute and permanent employees have retired or reduced hours. We are operating with just a few of the more than 100 hundred volunteers that generally re-shelve our materials to maintain workplace safety.

As the new budget year begins on July 1, and as our remaining staff has capacity to train employees while maintaining new services and procedures, we will hire. We will welcome volunteers back as we increase staffing and guidelines ease. We will keep expanding hours and services while adhering to changing guidelines from the state and recommendations from the State Library of Oregon. We will start saying "soon" and "yes." It won't be tomorrow, but we are working hard every day to serve you.

On a personal note, in March 2020 as the shutdown began, I wrote into the *Siuslaw News* about how much I loved the library and this community, and how I was also in love and engaged to an amazing man named Will Yurman. When you read this, I will be on a short trip to the Four Corners region to be married to Will. It feels like another amazing step forward in my life as COVID-19 slowly recedes. More than anything, I hope you are having moments like that as well.

When I am back on June 9, please stop in or call or email if you have more questions. Until we get a chance to talk, please take care, and please visit the library.

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## 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.

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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 noon.

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.  
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 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:

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