

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

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on these and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

BOATING ON THE SIUSLAW RIVER

Summer is upon us and salmon season is around the corner.

Using the Siuslaw River is a privilege and should be enjoyed by ALL, whether you are boating, hanging out on a dock or enjoying it from your home. It should not be ruined by a few boaters that think that just because there is no speed limit they can behave recklessly and do whatever they want.

Based on an incident by one boater, he thought he could do whatever he felt like while operating his boat and we had no right to ask him to slow down. We do not have that right and the right to enjoy ourselves just like you.

I enjoy relaxing on my dock while watching the wildlife and watching boats go by. It is not enjoyable when boats go by full throttle and rock the dock so violently that I can't even stand up.

Some fishing charters are a huge problem during salmon season. They are out there to make money, and I understand that, but by observation, most don't care who or what is around them. I have personally witnessed some of these boats zig-zagging in and out of boats so they can get to where they are going faster. I know of several dock owners that have had damage done to their docks, i.e.: piling snapped in two, bolts sheared off, cleats ripped out of a dock while attached to a boat, etc. I understand, especially during salmon season, some of the boaters are out on the river making a living. I hope you catch a lot of fish.

However, that doesn't give you the right to disrupt others. It's fun to sit on the dock or deck and watch boaters catching fish.

While technically there is no speed limit on the river except for in front of marinas and boat ramps, these speeding boats can damage docks, erode the embankment and can also capsize other watercraft. I've seen all of these happen.

Also, for general information, boaters can be held financially responsible for the damage they cause. Keep that in mind when you go speeding by private docks and other boats.

All we are asking is that you please slow down! We would like to enjoy the same river as you. Is it really worth ruining someone

else's day and having to pay for damages just so you can go fast?

It would be nice if boaters showed some respect and consideration for those of us using or living on the river. Slow down in front of private docks and other boats and just enjoy the river like we are trying to do.

A big thank you to those boaters who do slow down.

— M.S. Mapleton

NO FACTS ON WESTERN LANE AMBULANCE

In response to Clara Kuhn's Guest Viewpoint (Aug. 14, "Know the Facts about Western Lane Ambulance"), she unfortunately shared no facts. Her meeting with three WLAD employees served her and their built-in bias, not the concerns of the taxpaying public and business entrepreneurs.

Though Clara was an elected official in Florence in the 1990s, we now, two decades later, face a very different set of circumstances in all phases of government, not just the WLAD.

I wonder if she read in the two-page privately paid advertisement that, "This special ambulance district is \$3.4 million in debt to the State of Oregon. Western Lane Ambulance District charges us two extra property taxes on top of the normal charges for a single ambulance ride."

To these points, I have heard no refutation and this was not mentioned in the piece praising the district.

Also, there is a part that says, "The reason why the government officials want this merger so badly is pretty clear: it's the money. Ambulance and fire district administrators and government employee unions who want this merger are banking on higher pay and benefits — and taxpayers will foot the bill."

Welcome to reality for the business community and Joe Sixpack.

Did you know that a 93-year-old Florence great-grandmother named Marion Patton took a four-mile ambulance ride and had to pay \$250, even though taxpayers are charged twice on their property taxes for ambulance service? Not fair, but that's the way today's WLAD seems to be operating.

Maybe for the good of the Florence community and elsewhere, we all need to reevaluate whether in many cases the private sector is equipped to deliver service much more efficiently than government. It seems to me that Clara took the line of the WLAD staff instead of investigating the other side of the issue.

It is my hope that the public and the business community will join hearts and hands to reverse course when it comes to the WLAD.

— Joel Marks
WLAD Budget Committee Member

(Editor's Note: This Letter to the Editor is a continuation of a Siuslaw News Opinion Page discussion dating back to March. Marks was one of three original authors prompting Kuhn to respond with her Guest Viewpoint.)

TO 'HEART' DEMOCRACY

I ask myself tonight, after spending another hour on another Saturday afternoon standing at the corner of Highways 101 and 126 in Florence, Ore., a sign in my hand, this one saying "heart" voting rights—my red heart takes up half the sign — What the hell am I doing?

How did this girl, from Burbank, Calif., in advanced but still fully competent age by more than my own estimation, find herself spending Saturday upon Saturday at a busy intersection waving at drivers who either 1) do not see her or the dozen or so standing with her, 2) see her smile and return it with a friendly wave or give thumps up, mouth a "thank you" or otherwise react positively, or 3) turn pent up and visceral rage her way? Over a heart sign that values everyone's right to vote and be participants in this democracy?

Well now, we appear to have split into factions.

As I see it, some believe they are one with everyone and everything else in this survival game. Some think they are special and entitled to do as they please, including dominating everyone else.

I fall into the first category. I want to invite everyone to at least consider joining me there.

I regret all pain. I feel it and want to relieve it. It is no wonder we are distracted. I appear to be unable to love you enough this way! I am joyful and full of hope for us all.

Hey people! My brothers and sisters in this life. Did you notice we have a climate problem? How about a coordinated attack on our democracy involving violence, disinformation and lies, by enemies of the people, against this nation? Russia. China. Others who do not wish to be seen and do not wish us well? Are you sure you want to be part of an all-out democracy collapse involving everything you might hold dear?

Give it a good think. I grieve the loss of folks I love over this!

— Darlene Norwood
Florence

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The *Siuslaw News* welcomes Letters to the Editor and Guest Viewpoints as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level. 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.

Email letters to cmeyer@thesiuslawnews.com

TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION:

Letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large. In addition:

- Letters reflect the opinion of the writer. The *Siuslaw News* cannot verify the accuracy of all statements made in letters. Authors should ensure any information is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay, and include sources where possible.
- Letters have a suggested 300-word limit and may be edited for grammar and clarity.
- Authors must sign their full name and include their street address (only city will be printed), as well as a daytime phone number and/or email address for verification. The person who signs the letter must be the actual author. *Siuslaw News* does not accept anonymous Letters to the Editor.
- *Siuslaw News* will not print form letters, libelous letters, business promotions or personal disputes, poetry, open letters, letters espousing religious views without reference to a current issue, or letters considered in poor taste. Letters also may not be part of letter-writing campaigns.
- Writers are limited to one published letter every two weeks.

TO SUBMIT TO THE SIUSLAW NEWS:

Emailed submissions are preferred. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed.

The newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

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