

# 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)

## PHOENIX RISING FROM THE ASHES

*Speech given at the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Siuslaw Awards on July 22 and submitted to the Siuslaw News by Chamber President/CEO Bettina Hannigan this August*

Thank you, Florence Area Chamber of Commerce for this award that carries a long tradition of upholding community service in our region. I also want to recognize all the important work the other candidates are doing to give vital support to children and adults. Thank you, for your service.

Tonight's theme of a "Phoenix Rising from the Ashes" is certainly fitting after many months of isolation and uncertainty. During the pandemic, we've had to be flexible, creative and resilient. I've lived through some times in our country where we had to navigate hard times and persevere with determination.

My father, Prokop Olienyk, came from the old country and spoke only Ukrainian when he arrived at Ellis Island in 1906. He filed for homestead rights and started a farm in North Dakota. He taught himself to read and write English. He became a U.S. citizen. He loved this country and was grateful.

Our family survived the dry decade of the Dust Bowl, the Depression and 10 successive years of crop failures. Those times were hard. And yet, despite all the weather and economic hardships ... every spring when the snows melted and the frost left the ground, I watched my father out in the fields driving a team of horses to plant seeds with the enduring hope for a new harvest of wheat.

That to me was a true witness of faith, a symbol of my father's strong work ethic and enduring belief that with God's help... we would survive hard times.

In 1946, I enlisted in the U.S.

Army in World War II, Post-War Japan. I was assigned to Sugamo Prison, 8th army unit. My job was to guard Japan's top war criminals awaiting trial for crimes against humanity at the Far East Tribunal.

When I served in Tokyo at Sugamo Prison, I was deeply affected

### GUEST VIEWPOINT By Steve Olienyk

*On being named the Florence First Citizen*

by the intense poverty and devastation of the Japanese civilians around me. I still remember while escorting a visiting U.S. Senator to view Nagasaki, we stood in silence looking at the deserted landscape left after the atomic bomb. The magnitude of destruction and suffering was beyond words.

Later, I met with my Army Chaplain and made a promise that, "If I were to return back home alive, I would dedicate the rest of my life to serving others and try to make things better."

And that is what I have tried to do.

When we moved to Florence in 1983, I was impressed by the spirit of the local people. It felt like home. Florence was a place of strong and kind folks. As a banker, it was rewarding to help our customers who worked hard to build a livelihood and contribute to our economy.

After many years of living in Florence, I still see folks helping each other in ways that they can; caring and collaborating in good times and bad.

It's more important than ever that we reach out across generations and work together. Because in today's tough times, I can assure you there's someone near you who's hurting. In Florence, when someone needs help, we step up.

For me, it was honoring veterans on Memorial Day or serving as Chairman of the Board. It was painting a preschool, hosting a stilt walking contest, selling candy for scholarships or serving soup. You speak at the Veteran's Park for

second graders. You cut firewood to donate to families. You move a veteran into assisted living. Or you simply stop and listen when someone needs to talk at the Post Office.

Big or small acts of kindness, they are all important.

I'd like to thank the Kiwanis Club Membership and Board for this nomination.

Around 1995, I prevailed upon the Kiwanis Club to take over the previous flag program I was working on. Back then, I was working alone, putting out 35 flags, and I knew we needed more volunteers. Kiwanis stepped up big time, sold flag sponsorships and recruited volunteers. Today, Kiwanis displays nearly 550 American flags on national holidays.

Thank you to Flag Program Coordinator Shannon Sheets and our Flag Teams for going "above and beyond." When the COVID lockdown started, Kiwanis was determined to keep our program running with new safety measures. We wanted citizens to know, that just like our national anthem says, "Our flag was still there!"

May the colors of our country's flags waving on Florence streets remind us that we are all connected to each other as proud citizens of our fine nation.

I leave you with the inspiring words from General Douglas MacArthur:

"Americans never quit. Duty, honor, country ... those are three hallowed words that reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be ... what you will be!"

May each of your community service projects inspire within you a deep sense of hope, purpose, promise and pride.

Thank you, Florence Area Chamber of Commerce for this honor!

**(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.)**

## LETTERS

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### JUST DO IT

My wife and I are members of the Last Resort Players board and I also serve on the FACE board. Both organizations have close ties to the Florence Events Center and have been planning our participation in the FEC 25th Anniversary celebration.

I have reluctantly notified our fellow board members that we will not be participating in this event due to the skyrocketing cases in our zip code over the last couple of weeks. As we are fully vaccinated, we understand that a serious problem with breakthrough cases is extremely rare.

Our concern is that, in the event either of us became an asymptotic case,

we could easily pass this virus on to others, particularly the parents of children who themselves might be asymptotic breakthrough cases.

Our hospitals have reached near capacity and our healthcare workers are reaching burnout status.

It is high time to meet our responsibilities as a community, county, state and nation and take all necessary actions to win this war against an invisible enemy. You know the right thing to do. As the Nike ad says: JUST DO IT!

— Kenneth Janowski  
Florence

**(Editor's Note: The Florence Events Center's anniversary event was ultimately canceled by the City of Florence on Aug. 23.)**

### ARRIVAL OF CANCEL CULTURE?

It is on rare occasions

that I respond to letters that I see in the Letters to the Editor. Only when I read something as absurd as a recent article by Ms. Spradling ("In Response to an Excruciating Letter," Aug. 11) has inspired me to do so now.

First, it is sad that reading articles in the paper are so excruciating and obviously distasteful for her. Has she never learned or heard that, up until now — reading any articles or news — so far, are NOT mandatory? We still have a choice of our reading material and TV viewing — one of our great freedoms in this country.

In her critique of Mr. Denton's letter (July 31), she pointed out 22 lies in his article. Who determined that they were lies? She herself? Something she had read somewhere? Some coverage on the news media, either cable news, social media or radio?

These days, it is difficult, if not impossible, to categorize information we receive through the public media. Each network seems to have their own "take" on happenings in our world and very little tolerance for anyone with an opposing viewpoint, which results often in being labeled a "racist."

And then, of course, there are networks that pick and choose which "newsworthy" stories they air, depending on their management political leanings. As a result, we — the reading, listening and watching public — are free to choose any media that is available for us.

I am in my late 80s, and an overall look at this great country of ours at this point in time makes me yearn for "those good ol' days."

God Bless America!  
— Sue Hale  
Florence

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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](mailto: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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