

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.)

FOOD NEWS

I'm disturbed about the latest news from a University of Michigan study ("Small Targeted Dietary Changes Can Yield Substantial Gains For Human and Environmental Health" by Katerina S. Stylianou, Victor L. Fulgoni III and Olivier Jolliet, published in "Nature Food" in August 2021), losing 33 minutes for every hot dog I've eaten. I did a quick calculation and it's scary, I died 2.5 years ago.

I'm making up for lost time, however; now, rather than ketchup and mustard, I'm sprinkling my hot dogs with peanuts and cashews, on a whole grain bun to make up for lost time.

— Tom Payn
Florence

FREE FROM NON-CONSENSUAL MEDICAL TREATMENT

The "Right to Health" at the World Health Organization states that we have the right to be free from non-consensual medical treatment.

The Nuremberg Code requires respect for informed consent, without "the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, over-reaching or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion ..."

The UN Universal Declaration on Bioethics declares "Any preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic medical intervention is only to be carried out with the prior, free and informed

consent of the person concerned."

The American Cancer Society's Patient Bill of Rights states, "If you are an adult and you're able to make your own decisions, you are the only person who can choose whether to get treatment and which treatment to get. This is done through a process called informed consent."

The current practice of forcing people to take an injection or lose their job is a dystopian practice that ignores these guidelines.

— James Sherwood
Florence

OF MASKS AND MEN

I was dismayed to see the people demonstrating on Saturday, Aug. 21, for the right to not get vaccinations and to not to wear masks during this current COVID-19 Delta variant surge here in Florence.

When I was a child, the only vaccination we had was the smallpox vaccine. Before the vaccine was developed, smallpox had killed 300 million people worldwide. During my early school years, I contracted measles, mumps and chicken pox, and when I was in high school, rubella and the Asian flu. Later on in life, I was found to have tuberculosis scars on my lungs for which I required treatment for one year.

I remember vividly being extremely sick with all but the TB.

Another scare in my younger life was polio. Eventually the Sabin oral vaccine was developed, but then a more effective vaccine, the Salk vaccine, was discovered and we were all re-vaccinated. Those who got a mild case of polio and recovered were left

with "post-polio syndrome," with symptoms that lasted the rest of their life.

When I had children and vaccines were available, I made sure that they were protected so that they would not have to go through what I went through.

People today are dying unnecessarily of the COVID virus because they think getting a vaccine or wearing a mask is a "violation of their rights." They do not understand that this worldwide virus is a humanitarian crisis — a "mass extermination event," if you will.

More than 600,000 people in the world have already died and the numbers increase every day.

Those people who think that getting a vaccine or wearing a mask is a violation of their rights must also think that other people's rights to not get sick and possibly die are not of equal value or concern.

I agree that masks can be a nuisance and sometimes uncomfortable, but it is the very least we can do for each other and to help stop the spread of this deadly disease.

— Pat Allen
Florence

CONSIDER THE OVERWORKED

To the vaccine protesters pictured on the front page of the Aug. 25 edition of the Siuslaw News: Please don't come to Peace Harbor Hospital for treatment if you become dangerously ill with COVID-19. Feel free to suffer without the interference of the overworked nurses & doctors there.

—Lori Janowski
Florence

Anti-vaxxers and backward officials

(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 was speaking to a friend of 54 years whose stepdaughter is an anti-vaxxer. My friend called me from Tucson with her concerns two weeks ago. My friend's husband is in the Philippines on business. He's furious with his daughter, because she and her family have avoided vaccination.

The stepdaughter, a professional, works for a school system near Clear Lake, Calif. She, her husband and mother-in-law are anti-vaxxers, so the grandchildren, in their late teens, have not gotten shots either.

They contended that being anti-vaxxers is their business.

I got hold of the school district, since the woman should not be around students when she refuses to abide by precautions. So a week later I got a call back from my friend. Her son-in-law was by then in an ICU in Clear Lake. Her stepdaughter and grandchildren were all ill with the virus, as is the husband's mom. Circumstances have worsened. Her son-in-law was transferred to a hospital in Vacaville a week ago, and he's been on a ventilator all that time. His prognosis is extremely poor.

When I spoke to another friend, I compared an anti-vaxxer to a drunk driver. It's the drinker's prerogative to take a few drinks — but driving after four within an hour is criminal.

The difference is, while drunk drivers usually only kill themselves, too often those in a car they're driving die as well.

The drinking drivers may even kill some other motorists, but it's limited to that, though they may leave children without parents and families without loved ones.

Anti-vaxxer superspreaders can be infinitely more lethal. Near the start of the epidemic, a Korean churchgoer to a U.S.-based church in that country infected 89 people in a few days. The church believed that illness was a product of sinfulness, not viral conta-

gion.

Taiwan's government, after keeping COVID-19 deaths down to just ten for 2020, through social distancing, contact tracing and quarantines, failed to obtain or use a vaccine supply. They let down their guard. Now, after a Lions Club convention this year where the

A COMMUNITY MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE

By Frank Smith
Florence

superspreader leader may have infected more than 100 attendees, they have had 15,939 cases and 830 deaths.

In Vietnam, with a population of 98 million, and employing vigorous social measures, they limited deaths in 2020 to just 35. They relaxed this year, and now have had 381,363 cases and 9,349 fatalities.

Contrast that with New Zealand, which had 25 deaths nationwide before they locked down. They have had only one single person die this year. They have pushed vaccinations this month, given what's happened elsewhere in the Far East, and quickly got to 20% fully vaccinated.

I've had some experience with deadly viruses. In 1957, I wasn't given the vaccine for the "Asian flu" because I was told that it was cultured in egg yolks, and I was thought to be allergic to eggs. I got that flu, the only one from the 172-man crew on my ship who did so. I wound up spending weeks in a military hospital. I got a whopping case of the Hong Kong flu in Viet Nam. In 1968, was horribly feverish for days. It did some permanent damage.

Later, I ran the third largest outpatient alcohol and drug abuse treatment, prevention and education program in Alaska from 1988 through 1990. I had been horrified to find out that in Wasilla, there was no HIV counseling and awareness program. IV drug use had been common in the halcyon mid-1980s pipeline construction bonanza. I went to get tested for HIV to experience it, so I could incorporate it into my program, then pushed the state to require it as a treatment component throughout state

grantee programs. I bought and circulated copies of the definitive book on the epidemic, "And The Band Played On," by an old acquaintance, reporter Randy Shilts. In 1989, I went to an AIDS conference in San Francisco where a former employee of mine was presenting on needle exchanges, chatting there with Shilts.

A few years later, after Hepatitis C virus was identified, I networked on creating national awareness of that virus as well, writing an article about treatment, education and prevention for Counselor magazine, a trade publication.

This brings us to now.

Friends of mine in Florence were extremely cautious about not getting the coronavirus at work. Yet they caught it after a cautious year when they went to their church for a no-mask, superspreader event.

PBS had a wonderful show on Wednesday, Aug. 25, about the beginning and spread of the Wuhan virus in China. The major problem was denialism.

We've had our fill of it here, with then-President Donald Trump saying last year COVID-19 would "go away, like a miracle."

He held Rose Garden superspreader events, touted quack remedies, injecting bleach, inserting UV light tubes and taking hydroxychloroquine. He's finally come around, but many of his acolytes are angry now with him for getting his shots in January, and now with him emphatically recommending the same for everyone this week. But he can't get that genie back in the bottle.

Douglas County Sheriff Hamlin feels that the situation of reckless, maskless, non-vaccinated people who work with the public are different from those drinking drivers who are in denial about the potential consequences. He says he won't enforce that law.

I know that drunk driving is against the law, but those masks are mandated as well.

So, maybe their sheriff will tell us how those situations are actually different?

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Email letters to cmeyer@thesiuslawnews.com

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

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- 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.

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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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