

**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)

## SLOW DOWN DURING SALMON SEASON

**(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.)**

We live on the Siuslaw River and every year during salmon season we have to sacrifice the use of our private dock because of a few unruly, inconsiderate, disrespectful and selfish fishermen. They go by our docks at full throttle with no thought of the damage it is doing to our docks, the embankment, wildlife habitat and other boats.

I've been knocked off my feet on my dock because of the violent motion caused by the speeding boats. Also, two bolts have been sheared off of my boat lift. A neighbor had his dock pole snapped in half and another neighbor had his tie down cleats ripped out of his boat house while they were attached to his boat. Yes, docks are designed to move with the flow of the water, but they are not designed to take excessive abuse. We keep our dock maintained but still have damage from these boaters.

We have spoken to a number of boaters and the general response is, "We can do whatever we want because there is no law that says we can't."

We have even been verbally abused after asking boaters to slow down. Some of the guide companies are the worst offenders. I called one of the guide outfits and nicely asked them to slow down in front of our docks. I was rudely told, "No, we don't have to slow down because you don't have

### GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Mitchell A. Sloan and Mary K. Hayes  
*Siuslaw River Residents*

six or more boats on your dock." And then I was hung up on.

The majority of these fishermen come to the Siuslaw River area for a short period of time as guests of the area and should show some respect to those of us that call this area home.

Most of them do. The fishermen that don't act like they own the river and should not be allowed to act like they do. The Lane County Sheriff's Department is patrolling the river (thank you for that) but it does not seem to make a difference.

We have personally witnessed a canoe get capsized by a speeding boat, other residents of the river yelling at boats to slow down while their families — some with small children — try to enjoy their docks and other boaters getting tossed around like dolls, again some with

small children, while trying to ride out the huge wake these speeding boats cause.

We understand that the salmon fishing season brings revenue to the area and that these fishermen are trying to feed their families or make a living. We hope they do well. But, why does it have to be at the cost of the residents that live on the river or boaters that are using the river?

We are not asking for the boaters to stop fishing or doing business on the Siuslaw River, just show some consideration and respect for those of us that live on and/or use the river. Why can't everyone share this river in a friendly and civil manner? Are we waiting for someone to get killed or seriously injured until the river is made safe for everyone?

We understand that this is a federal waterway that was once used for logging, but it is now used for recreation and fishing. Something must be done to make the river safe and enjoyable for everyone. As it stands, it is not a safe river to be on or enjoy from your dock during salmon season. There are plenty of stretches on the river where you can increase your speed without disrupting other.

We want to thank those boaters that are showing respect and consideration and slowing down in front of our docks and other boats.



## LETTERS

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### I STAND WITH WESTERN LANE AMBULANCE DISTRICT

I had the honor of serving on the Board of Directors of Siuslaw Fire and Rescue (SVFR) for the previous four years. Although my governance responsibility did not cover Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD), I grew to greatly appreciate the level of skill these first responders provided, and with such amazing commitment and love for our community.

There has been discussion regarding the salaries of the WLAD Paramedics and EMTs. I really do not want to debate whether they are overpaid. What I am willing to debate is the value proposition WLAD provides and what it means to this community.

Most people know that we are predominantly a retirement community. This is evidenced by our median age of 61 (compared to 35 in Eugene). From an economic standpoint, Florence's two main industries are Tourism and Wealth

Transfer (retirees moving to Florence). Both require a solid and quality hospital and first-responder infrastructure to sustain and grow our local economy.

Fortunately, we have this in Peace Harbor Medical Center, SVFR and WLAD. I believe Florence's ability to economically thrive rests on the quality of services provide by these organizations.

Our community needs both industries and we should do whatever is necessary to protect and support them. A large portion of our residents above our community's median age have moved here, purchased homes and spend money locally that create jobs. They have done this because they know that when an emergency happens and they were to call 911, quality care will arrive promptly.

Quality and reliability are the factors that save lives and what sustains Florence and the surrounding Western Lane County region.

During my four years on the SVFR board, my fellow board members and I received countless letters and cards from local citizens, thanking the two districts for saving their loved one's life, exhib-

iting local kindness and love and, above all, for being top-notch first responders; validating why they feel secure and love living here.

I do not know if the staff of WLAD are overpaid compared to the alternative operating models. I suppose it is possible considering what it would cost to run a for-profit private ambulance service. However, if they are overpaid compared to their direct peers, then the value we receive in exchange for the cost as taxpayers is worth it.

I am a firm believer in "you get what you pay for." Could these services be provided for less cost? Probably. Would you want to save a few dollars in exchange for the risk of lesser quality and reliability? The answer should be no.

I stand with Western Lane Ambulance District as they are currently organized and encourage you to do the same. I am proud to see the dollars on my property tax statement go to support their levy. And when it comes up for renewal, I will vote to support it within the blink of an eye.

— Ron Green  
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](mailto: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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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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