

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)

How to Help Homeless Youth in Our Area

(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.)

This week, I had a heartbreaking experience. I was contacted by a youth caseworker to ask if Safe Shelter for Siuslaw Students could find accommodations for a homeless student. This diligent caseworker also contacted schools and other “helping” agencies.

We have no youth shelter. People under 18 cannot stay in motels or rent apartments. In spite of Safe Shelter’s efforts to develop a cadre of Host Homes, we had none for this student. I had to tell the caseworker, “No.”

On Oct. 29, I attended the State-wide Symposium on Youth Homelessness. Oregon has invested in a statewide assessment of Youth Homelessness. This assessment found that statewide, 3,383 students ages 14-18 need housing. Four thousand ninety-five young people

between 18-24 need housing. The statewide total, then, is 8,278. I also learned that Oregon ranks third highest in the country for youth homelessness.

The assessment also surveyed homeless adults and discovered that 70 percent of homeless adults sur-

GUEST VIEWPOINT
By Suzanne Mann-Heintz
*Executive Director,
Safe Shelter for Siuslaw Students*

veyed were homeless as youth. This tells me that not addressing youth homelessness means we are developing a whole new crop of homeless adults.

Does this warrant your attention? The vast majority of homeless youth are not there by choice, but research shows that after two weeks of homelessness, young people are likely to adopt a homeless lifestyle. Thus, there is a nationwide program called 15th Night. The preferred type of shelter for young people between

14 and 18 is Host Homes.

Safe Shelter has aligned with a wonderful, international Host Home program called Safe Families for Children and has formed a West Lane County chapter of same. Many of you have heard presentations and are thinking about being a Host Home, or a member of a Host Home team. If that’s you, please act now!

Safe Shelter is hopeful that each faith community will support one Host Home team. If you are not a part of a faith community, any three people can form a Host Home team.

If you want to know more about the program, please contact me at 541-590-0779 or email safeshelterk12@gmail.com.

Put yourself in the shoes of this local teen: no place to sleep, no place to do homework, no place to bathe or do laundry, no transportation ... and no people who care enough to take them in.

Learn more online at safeshelterforsiuslawstudents.org.

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.)

LET THIS DEATH BE A ‘CHANCE’ TO DO BETTER BY HOMELESS

Let’s not forget Cindy Chance, a homeless woman who passed away Oct. 25. I am still saddened that she died alone on the ground in the entrance to a closed restaurant.

Our paths crossed over the last 10 years. I remember her coming to Helping Hands dripping wet and happy to find a warm place out of the rain. She came to the cold weather shelter at the Presbyterian Church the last time it was opened before the COVID-19 pandemic. I had seen her other times as well and worried about her safety and health.

In Florence there is little help, other than a meal, a coat or an occasional voucher for a night at a motel. Some folks would like to have the homeless move on to another place.

There are conversations going on in our town to figure out a way to be of service to our vulnerable neighbors. This is a needed conversation to help find more ways to provide shelter to those who continue to be left out in the cold and also to provide specific services that are more than a bandage to those who want and need help.

— Jane Hirsch
Florence

Program. We passed by three gated communities: Shelter Cove, Mariners Village and Fairway Estates. The cleanest section was in front of Fairway Estates and the section with the most trash was in front of Shelter Cove.

Previously, I asked Florence Mayor Joe Henry who lives in Shelter Cove and residents in the other gated communities to encourage their neighborhood associations to regularly pick up the trash on Rhododendron Drive. I gave the very same message to the City’s Environmental Management Committee (EMAC) asking them to reach out to all the neighborhood associations in the city as part of an anti-littering campaign.

As it was Halloween weekend, we expected to find candy wrappings along the road, and we did. The most popular candy was Snickers. We also found for the second time a drinking cup that came from the Three Rivers Casino Resort. The rest of the trash, as always, included cigarette filters, bottles and cans, and plastic wraps of all sorts.

I was pleased when our City Councilor Sally Wantz gave her EMAC report at the last City Council meeting. Councilor Wantz pointed out that we are finding a lot of trash from our local businesses on the roads. She reinforced my call for an anti-littering campaign that included the businesses, particularly fast food restaurants.

The next City of Florence Newsletter will include a report on the Adopt A Street program. I encourage you to join us and become a participant.

We thank you Sally Wantz for your great liaison job at EMAC. I ask all of you to send Councilor Wantz an

email thanking her for her outstanding support in helping keep our community clean and healthy. You can reach her at: sally.wantz@ci.florence.or.us

— Mike and Pat Allen
Florence

WATER DISTRICT DILEMMA

I see that we are back in the news with the Mapleton Water District. I was on the board when all these problems occurred, and I am the only one that quit because of them. The other member that quit had a tragedy in her family. I have heard many half truths about what the problem was and people have been told!

Our superintendent, Terry Saubert, served the people of this town for 30 years. There was never much of a problem except with the usual grippers.

We had been trying to get a grant for three years while he kept the plant going, barely. It gave out and we had to boil water — which made some people practically hysterical.

Saubert had also made it clear to us, the board, that he was ready to retire for the last three years. He would stay until he got the new plant working.

However, many other things happened and it went from bad to worse. He was doing the job of three people and getting blamed for things he had nothing to do with.

There is a lot more to be said about this. I think it is time for somebody to interview our previous superintendent and get some things straight, rather than all these stories that are floating around.

— Linda Jensen
Mapleton

TRICK OR TREAT TRASH

On Halloween day my wife Pat and I picked up trash on a one-mile section of Rhododendron Drive from 35th Street to Rhodowood Drive as part of the City’s Adopt A Street



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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

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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