

# 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 their Government for a redress of grievances.



### LETTERS

#### Caring community made 'Relay' possible

Bohemia Park came alive Saturday for the annual Relay for Life to fight cancer. It was made possible by caring people and sponsors of our commu-

nity. It takes many hours of planning, contacting sponsors, setting up and taking down.

Twenty-five members of our family who attended thank all of you.

Cancer is a heartbreaking disease that affects

most families. This is a time to celebrate the survivors and remember the many who lost the fight.

The luminaria ceremony is so heartfelt, silently walking around the pool reading the names and messages on candlelit lu-

minaries is so beautiful and touching.

The only thing lacking was more people to enjoy this event.

Thanks to everyone that made it possible.

—Pat Couturier  
Cottage Grove

#### Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. 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.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

#### Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

#### Send letters to:

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## Payment for convenience of plastic is quickly becoming 'past due'

China, which has been the recipient of nearly a third of America's recycle waste, banned the import of 24 different kinds of assorted paper and several types of plastic.

When we lose electricity in our home, I still walk into every dark room and flip the switch because it's second

• The average "working life" of a plastic bag is 15 minutes, after which it "retires."

• In 1996, 3.8 billion plastic water bottles were sold in the U.S. By 2014, that number had grown to 57.3 billion.

• It's no small irony that the process of producing a water bottle actually requires

are jeopardizing the progress we've made as a county, and ultimately as a society.

While our dependence on plastic is a global issue, the solutions will need to be implemented one community at a time, with the first step in that process being education.

Before we can solve the plastic problem, we need to fully understand its scope and the ways it is intertwined not only among those of us who use it, but how any changes we make could impact us economically.

The impact of plastic on our planet's oceans is a community conversation that needs to happen if we are to find solutions in dealing with what we once embraced as an element of everyday life that was too good to be true.

And which we have now discovered was exactly that.

### From the Managing Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

nature. I'm so used to it being there that I don't even think about how often — and in how many ways — I use electricity without giving it a second thought.

The same can be said for our use of plastic. Here are a few statistics to help illustrate the scope of how plastic has become a second-nature element of our lives:

• Worldwide, more than 500 billion plastic bags are used each year, or more than 1 million bags every minute.

six times as much water as there is in the actual container itself.

In Lane County, our goal was to recycle two-thirds of our waste products by 2025. We were making great strides, leading the state in this campaign by being the only county in Oregon to send more waste to recyclers than we did to landfills.

However, restrictions that we began to feel late last year, and which became official at the beginning of January,

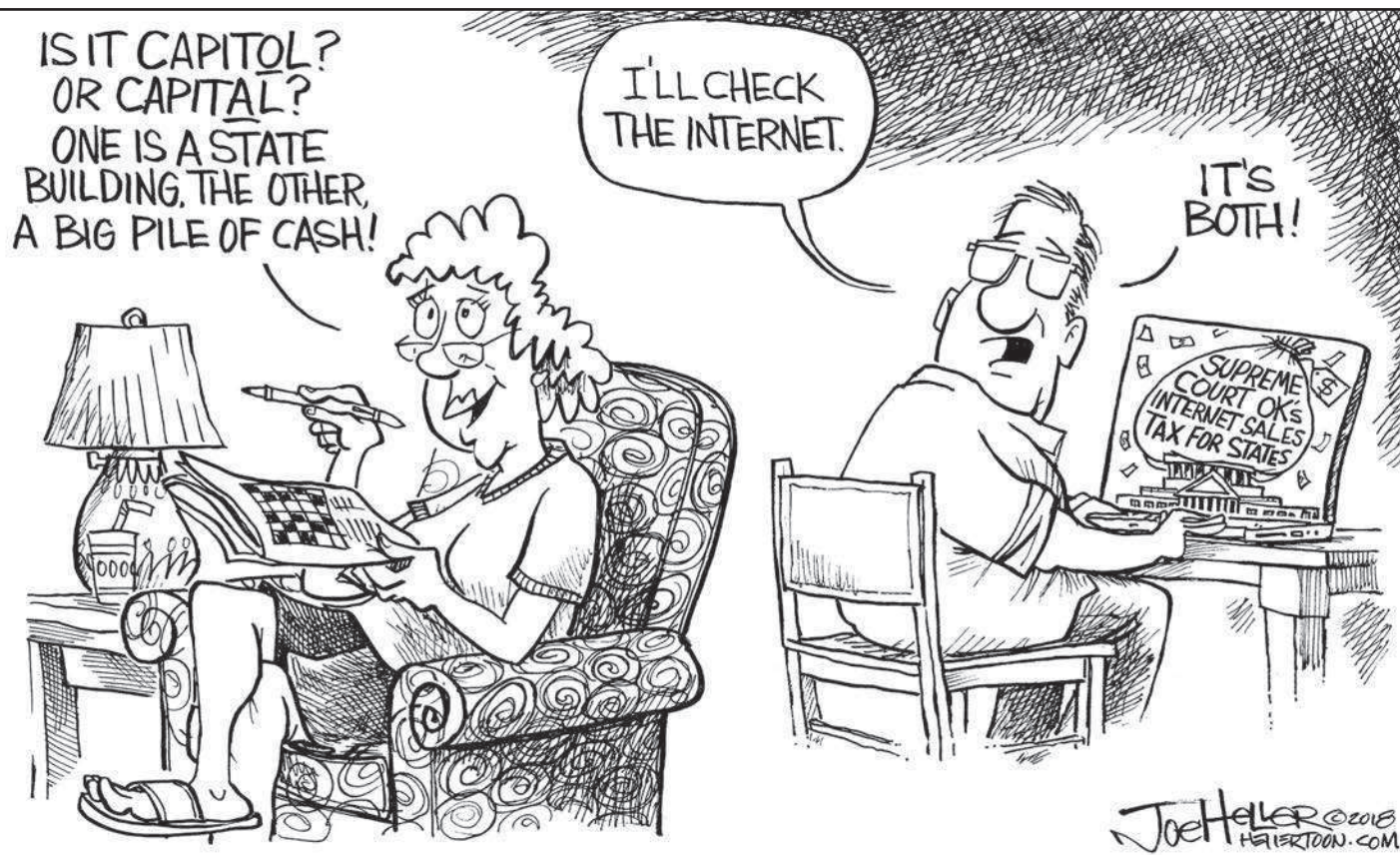
The inclusion of plastic in our lives has grown exponentially over the past 70 years, making our lives easier, more convenient and often at a significant cost savings almost too good to be true.

As we have begun to realize, that's exactly what it was; the interest rate on the cost of convenience has come due with an unexpected balloon payment.

We produce nearly 300 million tons of plastic products each year, nearly half of which is designed for single-use purposes in what has increasingly become a disposable society.

Despite our efforts to educate the public about the importance of "Reduce, Re-use and Recycle," each year more than eight million tons of plastic is dumped into our oceans.

And that was before



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