

**Cottage Grove Sentinel**  
 116 N. Sixth St.  
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

# 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)



## Today's fireworks aren't what they used to be

My kids don't believe me when I tell them this. That's because, each July Fourth, they are handed "sparklers" that are basically sticks of incense that smell like sulfur.

No crackle. No

- 1) If a skyrocket is longer than your boat trailer, it must be flagged during transport.
- 2) You must, by law, inform neighbors when using any fireworks that require a dynamite

- 5) Any and all sky-rockets capable of leaving southern air space must be pointed north.
- The fact is, even though I whine about having wimpy fireworks here in Oregon, at least we have them.

**From the Managing Editor's Desk**  
*Ned Hickson*

shower of sparks. Just a momentary flame as the paper wick ignites and then, upon reaching its climactic flash point, fizzes into a puff of flatulent-smelling smoke.

Those who live in Alabama or Tennessee have no idea what I'm talking about. That's because they have *real* fireworks. The kind that childhood memories (and a good portion of our nation's first-strike capabilities) are made of.

In addition, the only real restrictions they have are as follows:

- 3) Though there is no limit to the number of M-80s you can join together with a single fuse, the Department of Homeland Security warns it can't be held responsible should your area, as a precautionary measure, be swept with heat-seeking missiles.
- 4) If you have studded tires, you must remove them.

(This has nothing to do with fireworks; it's just a friendly reminder from the folks at the Highway Department.)

And lastly,

In Georgia, they are illegal. This means watching public fireworks displays or, as many Georgians do, going outside and facing toward Alabama.

Even though these displays are beautiful, it's still not the same as being knocked unconscious by a runaway ground flower. Being as I lived in Atlanta for six years, I can tell you illegal fireworks do make their way across the Alabama border.

This, of course, is a huge problem. Especially if your boat trailer isn't big enough.

All joking aside, best wishes to all of our readers for a fun and safe Independence Day celebration tomorrow.

First, the good news: According to the National Council on Fireworks Safety (NCFS), fireworks-related injuries have dropped by 75 percent in the last decade.

The bad news? Anyone over the age of 30 can tell you that today's fireworks are about as exciting to watch as a pile of smoldering socks.

For example, it used to be that "sparklers" actually sparkled. They showered the air with tiny crackling embers so bright you could see them through your eyelids.

The bravest kids would spin them like propellers, knowing full well their eyebrows would grow back by mid-summer.

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### 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.

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