

Cottage Grove Sentinel

116 N. Sixth St.

Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

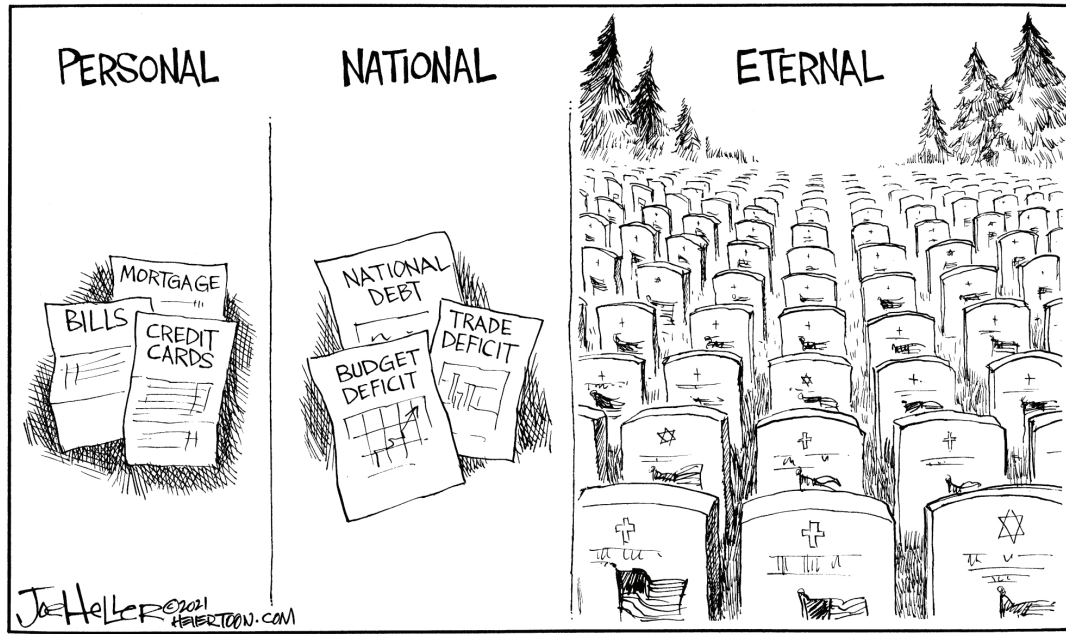
# Opinion

## 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)

## The debt we owe



## Passing the torch

and I quickly accepted. That moment changed my life and launched 23 years in journalism — first as a sports editor, then editor-in-chief and, three years ago, as managing editor of *The Sentinel*.

Days, its roots in cinema classics and the many beautiful covered bridges spanning the area's long history. It reflected many of the things I loved most about growing up in a small Oregon community just over an hour away on the coast.

had the dedication, eye for detail and sense of commitment needed to be in the position he will now hold as editor. For me, as I leave the field of journalism after more than two decades, I can honestly say there's no one better to carry the torch for community journalism here in the Cottage Grove area — and nothing makes me happier than being able to hand it off to someone of his caliber.

### From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

Over the last three years, we've made a lot of changes — from the look and layout of the newspaper itself, to the way we cover the community and even our publication day. However, the most significant change is happening this week with lead reporter Damien Sherwood assuming his new position as editor-in-chief. Damien has been the heartbeat of *The Sentinel* for more than two years now, so his taking on the role as editor is not only a natural progression but a well-earned one. Damien began with me at *Siuslaw News* as an intern at the end of 2017 and I knew then that he

In late October 1998, I sat across from the same desk I'm now sitting behind, back when Bob Serra was editor at *Siuslaw News* in Florence, where I began my journalism career.

I had applied for the sports editor position earlier that week and, being up against two journalism grads from the U of O, I didn't hold out much hope.

No journalism background. No degree of any kind, just a high school diploma.

I'd spent the last 10 years as a corporate chef coordinating restaurant openings throughout the Deep South for Morrison, Inc.

However, I'd been writing most of my life and had a few things published in magazines.

Maybe it was my youthful optimism; maybe it was my writing samples; maybe it was sheer pity.

Whatever the reason, he offered me the job

When I became managing editor in late 2018, I understood the responsibility and obligation to the community that came with it. On the surface, a newspaper is a time capsule chronicling life in our community — informing those of today and offering its history for those tomorrow.

But it's more than that.

A newspaper is also a member of the community it serves, contributing what it can to its neighbors and the community conversation in the same way we each do as individuals.

When I came to *The Sentinel*, I was no stranger to Cottage Grove's dynamic art and music scene, Bohemia Mining

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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.

### Send letters to:

nhickson@cgsentinel.com

## HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPS

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900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Ore. 97301  
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- **Rep. Peter DeFazio**  
(House of Representatives)  
405 East 8th Ave.  
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Eugene, Ore. 97401

### Oregon federal representatives

- Email: defazio.house.gov/contact/email-peter  
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- **Sen. Ron Wyden**  
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- **Heather Buch**  
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