

## Letters to the Editor:

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## OPINION

WEDNESDAY

JANUARY 28 • 2015

## 125TH ANNIVERSARY FLASHBACK

1890 | THE WEST ❖ FLORENCE TIMES ❖ THE SIUSLAW OAR ❖ THE SIUSLAW NEWS ❖ SIUSLAW NEWS | 2015

This year marks Siuslaw News' quasiquintennial, our 125th anniversary, a remarkable achievement for any business in a small community like Florence. To commemorate this milestone, throughout the year we'll feature some of the town's history as originally published in the newspaper, including historic articles and photos from more than a century ago.

## Beachcombers hit jackpot after storm

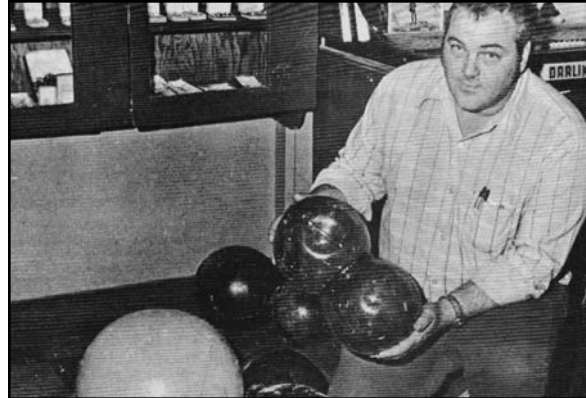
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Beachcombers hit jackpots over the weekend on the heels of a storm with westerly winds gusting to around 50 knots with finds ranging from glass, plastic and Styrofoam floats to mute reminders of a sinking near Coos Bay a week ago.

Parties of beachcombers working the beach south of the south jetty Sunday night found a life ring, hatch cover, raft and other gear from the Mary Jo, commercial fishing boat which sank near Coos Bay with two men aboard. Personnel at the

Coast Guard Siuslaw River Station said no bodies have been recovered.

Other scavengers found more pleasant trophies, including a wide range of fishing floats and other debris driven ashore by the wind and waves.



Larry Dier holds one of the treasure trove of fishing floats he gathered from the beach after the storms over the weekend. Although all the floats are good specimens, the one he's holding, fashioned of two floats fused together, is one of the most prized. ... Florence residents found floats encrusted in Japanese long-necked barnacles, floats bound in thick fishing nets and another rare double float through the end of January.

## NEIGHBORS



## Hawaiian adventure — Part II

BOB JACKSON  
NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENT  
For the Siuslaw News

Peggy's family had been allowed to board the Mariposa with us for an all too brief look at the interior of this luxury ocean liner that would soon be our home for nearly a week, and then, way too soon, we are hugging and saying our goodbyes, for the loudspeakers are telling us, "All ashore that are going ashore!"

All the pampered passengers stand at the polished railings and wave to family and friends on the pier far

below as the crew casts off bow, stern and spring lines, both fore and aft.

So, at 11 a.m., on a day blessed with bright sunshine and no wind, two harbor tugs back us out into the bay. It is like something out of an old movie, with long paper streamers and confetti floating through the air, while the ship's band is playing.

The atmosphere is charged with excitement and sadness in equal proportions — excitement for us, and sadness for those we are leaving behind. There is a fleeting sense of

shame that we should be so fortunate, a strange but inescapable emotion we had not foreseen.

As we gradually get underway, the legendary city of San Francisco is sprawling over the hills on our port side, while Alcatraz Island, Oakland and the entire east bay metropolis fill our senses on the starboard. A very large helicopter appears and hovers close alongside, they seem to be taking pictures, so we may be appearing on the evening news.

It has been nearly 40 years, and yet the memories remain as poignant and vivid as if it had happened yesterday!

I remember telling Peggy what a contrast it was to be passing underneath the orange colored Golden Gate bridge on a luxury liner instead of

that dark gray warship U.S.S. Indianapolis in World War II. I also told her that I had ridden across it on a hitchhiking trip in 1939 when it was only two years old.

The weather at sea was great, with only a light NW wind chop. We were told that this ship was very stable because of being fitted with nine foot stabilizers to dampen the roll.

Everywhere we went on this ship, we were impressed with all the happy, friendly passengers and crew. There were around 300 passengers and the same number of crew, which meant we were going to be very well cared for.

Like a couple of excited kids, we explored the decks over and over from stem to stern.

Around four in the afternoon we passed a tugboat towing a lumber barge. I scoped it with my binoculars and could make out her name; it was the Kokua, a Sause Brother's sea-going tug. I had once hired on her as second engineer. We towed a lumber barge from Davidson's mill in Mapleton to Long Beach, Calif., there had been cars and boats secured on top of the lumber.

What a contrast there was between the steady opulence of this 632-foot "floating palace" and that 97-foot, pitching, rolling tug out there, that had once been my workplace. I lowered my binoculars, and at that very moment I was fervently counting my blessings.

More to come.

## LETTER

## Police professionals

Having just had an opportunity to read the Jan. 7 Guest Viewpoint by Florence Police Chief Lamm, I would like to heartily endorse the many good points raised therein.

Over a period of 18 years I worked very closely with law enforcement, on a nationwide basis, in the design and implemen-

tation of computerized support systems.

Interacting with literally hundreds of police officers in 35 different departments, ranging in size from the 50 officers of Hercules, Calif., to the 30,000-plus of the New York Police Department, I came to understand not only what a terribly difficult job these men and women face each day, but also how dedicated they are to the public safety of the citizens they protect and

the integrity with which they provide that protection.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are some 780,000 police officers in the United States. To judge the entire profession on the basis of a few isolated incidents is the exercise of fools and pandering media.

Jimmie Zinn  
Florence

## Fee from 1A

Public Works Director Mike Miller presented on the condition of Florence's roads.

In his results, 87.1 percent of city roads are in "very good" to "good" condition. It is the 12.9 percent in the "poor" category that will need the most maintenance in the coming years.

However, even the roads in better condition will need to be maintained at a consistent level.

"Our investment in the

street network is \$77.6 million. It's what the community has invested in these streets," Miller said.

The VRF would ensure that the city has a fund set aside exclusively to protect Florence's investment in its roads.

"It's like changing the oil in your car," said Bozievich.

"It's a lot cheaper to change the oil in your car every 5,000 miles than it is to replace an engine in 20,000 miles. That's the way asphalt works, too."

"The roadways are the backbone of our system," said County Engineer Morgan.

"We strongly feel that road maintenance and preservation is a regional issue. Because it really doesn't matter where you travel, you're going to be driving on roads. Road maintenance is a regional issue. ... The public wants a functioning system," he added.

Both Bozievich and Morgan advised that, "A dollar spent today extends the roads' current life, rather than needing \$12 down the road to rebuild."

"It will be a long-term source of revenue and a very stable source of income," Bozievich said.

The VRF could compete with a local gas tax, which may appear on a ballot again after failing to gain a majority vote in Florence last November.

Councilor Joshua Greene said, "I will support this personally and come out for it, which is something we needed to declare with the gas tax. Maybe we didn't make it quite clear enough or work at it hard enough before."

"What this does is empowers us locally," Bozievich said. "We're taking local control of our road system with this. And it's fiscally responsible."

## Arson from 1A

The fire started at approximately 5 a.m. on Dec. 7.

According to Barrett, it took 15 minutes from when the fire began before the fire department arrived. Gerber's wife had to call him home.

"I was actually on a hunting trip in the local area. I got a call from my wife and she said 'You need to come home right now. ... The building's on fire.' I came back and the building indeed was on fire."

By the time Gerber arrived on the scene, much of the fire had

been contained.

Barrett said that firefighters had the fire under control in one hour, but it took four hours to fully extinguish it.

Gerber said, "There was still some fire around the edges but the entire roof system was gone and all the ceilings."

Austin said, "It's just a devastating thing. The building is completely totaled."

The damages to the building, located at the corner of 19th and Pine Streets, was estimated at more than \$300,000.

"We're going to tear down what's left of the building and rebuild," Gerber said.

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