

**Siuslaw News**  
P.O. Box 10  
Florence, OR 97439

# Opinion

## 125TH ANNIVERSARY FLASHBACK

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

**T**his 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. —*Editor*

## A TALE OF TWO COFFEE SHOPS

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED SEPT. 29, 2007  
THE SIUSLAW NEWS, 117TH YEAR, NO. 78

Two Old Town coffee favorites have recently changed hands.

Husband-and-wife team Julie Strecker and Mike Coulon took over Old Town Coffee Roasters, next door to the Port of Siuslaw office, earlier this summer. Kathy and John Stone bought Siuslaw River Coffee Roasters on Bay Street by the Highway 101 bridge in September. Their first day as new owners was Sept. 1, kicking off a packed Labor Day weekend.

Old Town Coffee's Strecker and Coulon came to Florence from Colorado in April. Strecker owned a bakery for 13 years and raised two children in the small town of Salida.

"Our youngest graduated from school in March," said Strecker. "We were ready for a big change."

The couple vacationed in Florence last fall and it was love at first sight.

Their last major move was two years ago, when they moved to Big Sky, Montana, and lived there for a couple of years. But they weren't happy in Montana.

"It's more important where you live, it's not about money and where you work," said Strecker.

Strecker and Coulon bought Old Town Coffee Roasters when they were looking for an art gallery for Strecker's work and noticed that the shop was for sale.

Strecker has been an artist for the past 12 years. She paints watercolors and pastels, and has sold or shown most of her award-winning paintings.

Strecker had wanted to be an artist since high school, but she got a late start when her children were still in school. They would be

sitting at one side of the kitchen table doing their homework, and she would be painting on the opposite side of the table.

"It was like drugs. I've been hooked on art ever since," said Strecker.

The couple thought a coffee shop would be a natural match for their experience and interests. Strecker served espresso back at the bakery in Colorado and she liked the store's "artsy" atmosphere.

"We thought it was a perfect fit with the art, the coffee and the baking," said Strecker.

Coulon's new specialty is going to be roasting, said Strecker. They roast all their beans at the shop every Sunday. When the Old Town Market is at the port boardwalk, they said people smell the coffee from outside and wander in the store.

They are featuring local artists at the shop. They have three new potters in the store: Linda Shaver, Patti Land and Anita Reekman. They have two new jewelers, Kelly Angeley and Kat Cunningham.

Strecker said she encouraged barista Amy Rickford to sell her photography, and now the budding artist is one of the shop's top selling artists.

They also sell jewelry, paintings, and other works of art, as well as feature an artist of the month. They are signing up artists and have space open in February.

Strecker wants to promote art groups and other weekly gatherings. She wants Old Town Coffee to become a meeting place for a variety of groups in town. She would like to host art workshops or gatherings for creative people.

Several groups already meet at the shop. Every Tuesday a group of veterans meets and swaps stories. Several local artists, including local beadlers, hold weekly meetings.

"Old Town Coffee is definitely all about the coffee, but the art makes it special," said

Strecker. "We love the whole idea of a coffee shop as a place to read a book, relax, to use free Wi-fi on your laptop, or to sit in the sun and talk with your friends." ...

John and Kathy Stone took over the Siuslaw River Coffee Roasters on Sept. 1.

It's their first experience running a coffee shop. Kathy's family owned Western Lane Furniture for a number of years and John is a real estate broker. He recently started a new job as a music teacher at Mapleton High School. John is a local musician in town, playing the trumpet as his main instrument.

Kathy has had experience as a barista at her church's coffee shop, Church on the Rock.

Kathy said the two features of Siuslaw Coffee Roasters that make it special are location and the building's historical significance to the town.

"We have a good ambience, a good product and a great Bay Street location," said Kathy. "Location is the big thing. Having the deck overlooking the river, people love coming here and sitting and drinking their coffee."

They thought owning a coffee shop would be a perfect change. Kathy said she loves meeting people for coffee.

"We thought it was a perfect place right on the river," said Kathy.

Their four children are all grown now, and they thought it was time for a change.

The building occupied by the coffee shop was once Bill's Auto. Bill worked on Evanrude outboard motors and drove a school bus. He has passed away, but his footprint remains in town.

When they were cleaning up the shop they recently uncovered Bill's workbench, as well as some of the corrugated tin siding, said Kathy.

"This was the place where the kids used to come," said Kathy. "The kids in town would

visit and sign the walls or the ceiling in crayon."

She said they want to maintain that ambience.

"We're trying to keep that historical flavor of an old garage," said Kathy. ...

The shop roasts all their own coffee on the premises. They get only the best quality beans from all over the world, said Kathy. People can place special orders and the shop can ship to any location.

"The roaster we have here is very efficient and smells wonderful," said Kathy.

Siuslaw River Coffee Roasters serves 12 varieties of coffee. They offer fresh baked goods every morning from local bakers. A new offering is jet tea smoothies. They serve all kinds of cold drinks, including iced chais and mochas.

They have changed some small things already, adding a leather sofa and an antique table, as well as putting in new Persian rugs. Overall, said Kathy, they won't make major changes to the shop.

"We want to keep the same flavor of this funky little shop," said Kathy.

She said a lot of regulars come to the shop, including several groups.

"They love our coffee and the feel of our building," said Kathy. "They love the ambience." ...

Kathy grew up in Florence and graduated from Siuslaw High School. Kathy and John raised their four children in town. Kathy has a large extended family, most of whom still live in Florence. ...

Customer Milana Peerson, from Florence, has been coming to the shop for a number of years.

"It's the local hangout," said Peerson. "It's the best coffee in town by a long shot — by two or three shots." ❖

### LETTERS

#### Car show

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the couples from Lebanon and Stayton for all their support in making the car show a success. The ice cream social (paid for by the Pyles and the Ruettgers) was enjoyed by the car owners as a chance to get together and talk cars.

The Chamber of Commerce knew about the event, but they did not add it to the list of events so all could enjoy it.

I don't understand the attitude of the merchants in our town. These couples go out and invite the best of the best to be in our invitational show and yet our town cannot even get enough items to put together a decent goody bag for the participants.

Yet, these participants can drive hundreds of miles to come to our town, spend two to three days at our hotels and motels, eat at our restaurants and spend money in our shops.

When I was walking around, I didn't hear one merchant thank any of these owners for coming to our town. I guess as they demonstrated before that it was owed to them for these

people to support their business. Wake up!

I really don't think most of these car owners will be back next year. Times could get lean during the winter, when with a little thought could have made your profits from this function even higher, which would help this winter.

Judy Burkhardt  
Florence

#### Energy loss at city hall

Vestibule: A small room or hall before the main entrance to a building. Perfect example of this is the main entrance to Florence City Hall. Its purpose is to moderate the temperature of the air before it enters the main building.

This purpose is defeated when both doors are open at the same time. About 23 seconds pass between the outer door being opened and the inner door closing. The inner door is open nearly 15 seconds and the outer door is open about 14 seconds. The left side doors of the main entrance (non-auto) are only open 9.5 seconds. Total both of them.

Now, I can understand the need for auto-opening doors. I am not a mathematician, but there must be some formula that can determine the amount of energy that is lost due to both doors being open at the same time. We all know that the energy being used to open them is electricity. The climate control at city hall has to be gas or electric. I am betting on electric though. Either way, a fan uses electricity. I'm in the belief that 40 percent of the energy Oregonians use comes from coal-fired plants.

If you have ever entered city hall, you know that with the slightest tug, the door will open. If the council really wanted to do something about green energy, they would disconnect this feature, if possible, and encourage those that can to open the door manually.

Should you be one of those lazy hypocrites who believes CO2 is the sole cause of climate change (demanding that the feds do something about), you should be opening doors manually without being encouraged. There must be millions of doors of this nature throughout the country. Tons of CO2 could be kept

from the air just by this act alone.

Here is a novelty idea — it will be a boon to mankind — remove the automatic door openers and hire a homeless person to be a doorman to open the doors for everyone. Then people will be able to go back to being lazy again and there will be no need for the vestibules. Well, at city hall anyway.

James Selby  
Florence

#### Unsafe begging

I was once a fireman in Santa Monica, Calif. If anyone had asked me to take a boot and beg for money in a busy intersection, I would have flatly refused.

I have regularly seen what I presume are volunteers risking life and limb for a few bucks in the busiest intersection in Florence on a holiday weekend. The chief who sends them there is out of his mind.

If one of these people gets run over and dies or is maimed, I highly doubt the insurance company will pay out for a non-emergency begging session. Why risk a multi-million-dollar

lawsuit for Florence?

If it is really necessary to beg, how about in front of Safeway or Fred Meyer's doors? Even Dairy Queen is busy.

Maybe they could team up with the state police who could pass around empty holsters?

Martin Cable  
Dunes City

### LETTERS POLICY

Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County. Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed.

All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification. 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. Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published. All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to:  
Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com

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## Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

John Bartlett  
Jenna Bartlett  
Ryan Cronk  
Susan Gutierrez  
Cathy Dietz  
Ron Annis  
Jeremy Gentry

Publisher, ext. 327  
General Manager, ext. 318  
Editor, ext. 313  
Advertising Director, ext. 326  
Office Supervisor, ext. 312  
Production Supervisor  
Press Manager

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Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

#### NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$71; 10-weeks subscription, \$18; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$94; 10-weeks subscription, \$24; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$120; Out of United States — 1-year subscription, \$200; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.  
Website and E-Edition: www.TheSiuslawNews.com

WHERE TO WRITE

Pres. Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
Comments: 202-456-1111  
Switchboard: 202-456-1414  
FAX: 202-456-2461  
TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213  
www.whitehouse.gov

Gov. Kate Brown  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court St.  
Salem, OR 97301-4047  
Governor's Citizens' Rep.  
Message Line 503-378-4582  
www.oregon.gov/gov

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510

202-224-5244  
541-431-0229  
www.wyden.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley  
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-3753/FAX: 202-228-3997  
541-465-6750

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (4th Dist.)  
2134 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-6416/ 800-944-9603  
541-269-2609/ 541-465-6732  
www.defazio.house.gov

State Sen. Arnie Roblan (Dist. 5)  
900 Court St. NE - S-417  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1705

FAX: 503-986-1080  
Email:  
Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us

State Rep. Caddy McKeown  
(Dist. 9)  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1409  
Email:  
rep.caddymckeown@state.or.us

West Lane County Commissioner  
Jay Bozievich  
125 E. Eighth St.  
Eugene, OR 97401  
541-682-4203  
FAX: 541-682-4616  
Email:  
Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us