

Local organizations help with Christmas baskets

Florence Rotary Club members once again raised enough money to purchase turkeys and chickens for the community Christmas baskets. This year's goal was to raise \$6,800 to purchase 325 turkeys and 100 chickens to go in the baskets.

Turkeys were in short supply due to West Nile disease and the drought, causing them to be very expensive this year. Thanks to \$2,000 in donations from the Florence Kiwanis Club and Banner Bank, the Florence Rotary Club was able to raise the money to buy the turkeys and chickens.

The Soroptimist Club of Florence purchases the rest of the food that goes into the food baskets. The food baskets contain enough food for each family to last a week.

The list of items included canned vegetables, cranberries, peanut butter, jam, applesauce, fruit cocktail, a bag containing potatoes, carrots, apples and oranges, oatmeal, crackers, stuffing, eggs, milk, margarine, dinner rolls and a chicken or a turkey.

The food baskets were given



COURTESY PHOTO

Carol Bennett from Soroptimist of Florence, Rotarian Ron Caputo, and Florence Rotary President Crystal Farnsworth

away at the Siuslaw Middle School Dec. 19.

Florence Rotary has applied for and received a matching grant from Rotary District 5110 for \$900.

Club members donated the rest of the money necessary to purchase the turkeys and chickens. The Florence Rotary Club

each year donates its time and resources to help others in the community.

The Rotary's annual auction raises enough money to provide more than \$40,000 in scholarships for Siuslaw and Mapleton high schools and

Lane Community College.

Anyone who would like to donate to the community Christmas basket program or would like to know more about Rotary International can contact Ron Caputo at 541-997-4961.

'Stormy Weather' through February at Backstreet

Backstreet Gallery, 1421 Bay St., invites everyone to enjoy "Stormy Weather" from January through February, when gallery membership will join together as they create their own "Stormy Weather" art pieces.

Greet the New Year with the reception Saturday, Jan. 9,

from 3 to 5 p.m.

Local singer-songwriter Stephen McVay will bring his soulful violin into Backstreet's New Year's mix, along with his fine guitar.

The gallery will be loaded with great food, unique art, and live entertainment in celebration of 2016.

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City Council grant program seeks applicants until Feb. 15

The City Council Grant Program will be accepting applications Jan. 1 through Feb. 15 at 5 p.m.

Applicants can apply for up to \$1,000 and the program will be awarding a total of \$5,000 for fiscal year 2015-16. Applicant funding requests need to relate to at least one of the City Council Goals.

In order for an application to be eligible, it must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Organization is a recognized nonprofit organization or affiliate of such an organization; and
- Organization is located

within the City of Florence or serving City of Florence residents; and

- Provides assistance for essential utilities, food, clothing, or shelter; or
- Provides educational or recreational opportunities for children or seniors; or
- Generates/supports economic activity in Florence.

Applications, eligibility information and submission instructions are available on the City of Florence's website at www.ci.florence.or.us.

For information, contact the City of Florence at 541-997-3437.

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Local Dining

Ring in the New Year with festive party ideas



Although New Year's Eve parties tend to be similar from year to year, hosts can explore the many ways to make their celebrations stand out from those of years past. This handy guide provides ideas to your get creative juices flowing.

- Establish a color palette. Many people equate New Year's Eve with the gold and silver hues of champagne. However, you can use any festive color for your party. Use the same colors on everything from invitations to dinnerware to take-home favors.

- Encourage guest input. Guests understand the cost of hosting and the amount of planning necessary to throw a festive party, and many will likely reach out to ask what they can do or bring. Figure out in advance which aspects of the party you want your guests to take care of so you have a ready answer when the inquiries start rolling in.

- Keep musical tastes in mind. A fun party usually includes an array of familiar songs and music

that appeals to the masses. When compiling a party playlist, choose songs guests are sure to know and love. Mix these in with a few of your favorites. You can even ask guests to provide the names of three favorite songs when they RSVP.

- Dim the lights. Bright lights can make guests feel intimidated and awkward. Set the mood by turning off overhead lights, opting for ambient lighting instead. For a fun effect, string holiday lights around the room or use a portable disco ball to spread sparkling colors on the floor and ceiling. Candles are another option for intimate affairs, but should be avoided as a safety measure if you're having a large crowd.

- Set out New Year's fill-in-the-blank cards. Encourage guest participation with an entertaining idea. Print out small cards that guests have to complete. Phrases like, "The bad habit I want to quit is ___" or "___ was the silliest thing I did last year," can be fun to do and share. Guests can take turns guessing whose card is being read.

- Have the party catered. Unless you want to spend the evening in and out of the kitchen, invest in catering. Guests of a late party won't expect a three course meal. However, platters of sandwiches, appetizers and other little munchies will fit the bill. Remember, caterers may book up fast this time of year, so be sure to reserve service well in advance of your party.

- Create a specialty drink. In addition to toasting champagne or sparkling wine, serve a specialty drink creation. This can be a beverage that ties into your color scheme or the theme of the party. Dessert drinks, such as chocolate martinis or vanilla cake-flavored vodka mixers, may be the right flavor for your affair. As the host, you should remember to provide non-alcoholic alternatives as well.

- Consider more substantial food after midnight. Encourage guests to eat more and drink less once the clock has struck midnight. Casseroles and other baked dishes are easy to make in advance and have on hand. A breakfast buffet of pancakes, toast and omelets also will fill guests up with something more substantial than chips and dips.

New Year's Eve parties are a great way to reflect on the last year and look forward to a new one, and hosts can take steps to make their parties memorable for all the right reasons.

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Every Month Mo's has brought in special "Motivation for Kids" tables which raise money for local charities that are devoted to helping the wellbeing of local children. This month Headstart of Florence is the local charity being honored.

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