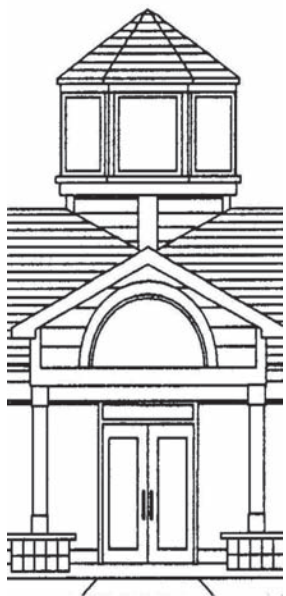


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Born to read

New library director encourages lifelong learning.



Meg Spencer, Director, Siuslaw Library District

STORY AND PHOTO BY RYAN CRONK
Siuslaw News

Books were prohibited at the breakfast table, a hard order for a young girl whose passion was reading. Instead, bending her parents' rule a bit, Meg Spencer would peek at the back of the cereal box, catching up on the latest ingredients.

"I can't get enough. I love to read," said Spencer, who began her tenure as director of the Siuslaw Public Library District last November.

Now five months on the job, the 36-year-old reflects on her decision to move to Florence from Salt Lake City, Utah, and her vision for the library to become the community's primary site for lifelong learning.

Living in a small town is nothing new for Spencer, who was born in Hemet, Calif., a retirement community known for its square dancing in Southern California near Palm Springs. Her family moved to Salt Lake City when she was about 3 years old.

As a teenager, she would often spend the summer-time with her grandparents, who liked to travel the country. One summer, when she was 14, they visited Florence, and she adored the area, especially the carnivorous plant *Darlingtonia californica*.

"My mom told me that I talked about *Darlingtonia* — the bug-eating plant — for months afterward. It was like my favorite thing," Spencer recalled.

See SPENCER 6A

LIKE A TROOPER



PHOTOS BY RYAN CRONK/SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw Elementary School students take the stage Thursday and Friday evenings to entertain audiences during the annual Florence PTA Talent Show at the Florence Events Center. Dozens of students performed a variety of songs, dances and gymnastics in addition to the local Cub and Boy Scouts, who presented the opening flag ceremony. Above, Rhys Fleming plays a tune from *Star Wars* on a cello while displaying his "dark side" by wearing a stormtrooper costume. At right, the school's choir sings a song about countries. More photos will soon be available on the Photo Gallery at www.TheSiuslawNews.com.



Graham honored for Power of One project



PHOTO BY RYAN CRONK/SIUSLAW NEWS

Kaylee Graham, an eighth-grader at Siuslaw Middle School, receives an engraved silver medallion Wednesday evening at the Siuslaw School Board meeting to recognize her selection by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards as one of Oregon's top two youth volunteers of 2014. Graham, above with board members Tammy Butler, Paul Burns, Michelle Rose, Deena Mitchell and John Barnett, is the founder of the annual Power of Florence, a citywide day of volunteering. Graham was also awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. She will take an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in May for national recognition events.

OSP reminds drivers to not count on luck St. Paddy's Day

St. Patrick's Day is Monday, March 17, and Oregon State Police (OSP), local law enforcement agencies, ODOT and traffic safety partners are reminding drivers not to get behind the wheel if they've been drinking.

For many people, St. Patrick's Day has become synonymous with drinking.

Unfortunately, that means that drunk drivers have made the celebratory day very dangerous. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in many communities, large and small. Whether in the Portland metropolitan area, The Dalles or at the 32nd Annual A Wee Bit O' Ireland weekend celebration in Heppner, authorities urge everyone to remember that "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving," so pledge and plan now to drive sober.

"If you celebrate St. Patrick's Day, or on any other day, just be smart about it. If you know you are going to drink alcohol — whether with friends at a pub or attending a local event or party — designate your sober driver ahead of time, use alternative transportation, or call a taxi to make sure you get home," said OSP Major Travis Hampton.

According to ODOT's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), over the years 2007-2013, there have been four traffic fatalities (one in 2007, three in 2012) of which two deaths were in alcohol-involved crashes.

No deaths were recorded 2008 through 2011, or in 2013. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports more than 269 people were killed by drunk drivers on St. Patrick's Day between 2007 and 2011. There were 45 people killed in 2011 alone.

On average, every 53 minutes a person is killed in a drunk-driving crash in the United States. Most of these crashes involved drunk drivers who had blood alcohol concentrations of .15 or higher, almost twice the legal limit of .08.

See ST. PADDY 6A

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Your Weather			
TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly sunny 57 46	Partly sunny 55 43	Rain 52 39	Partly sunny 55 39

