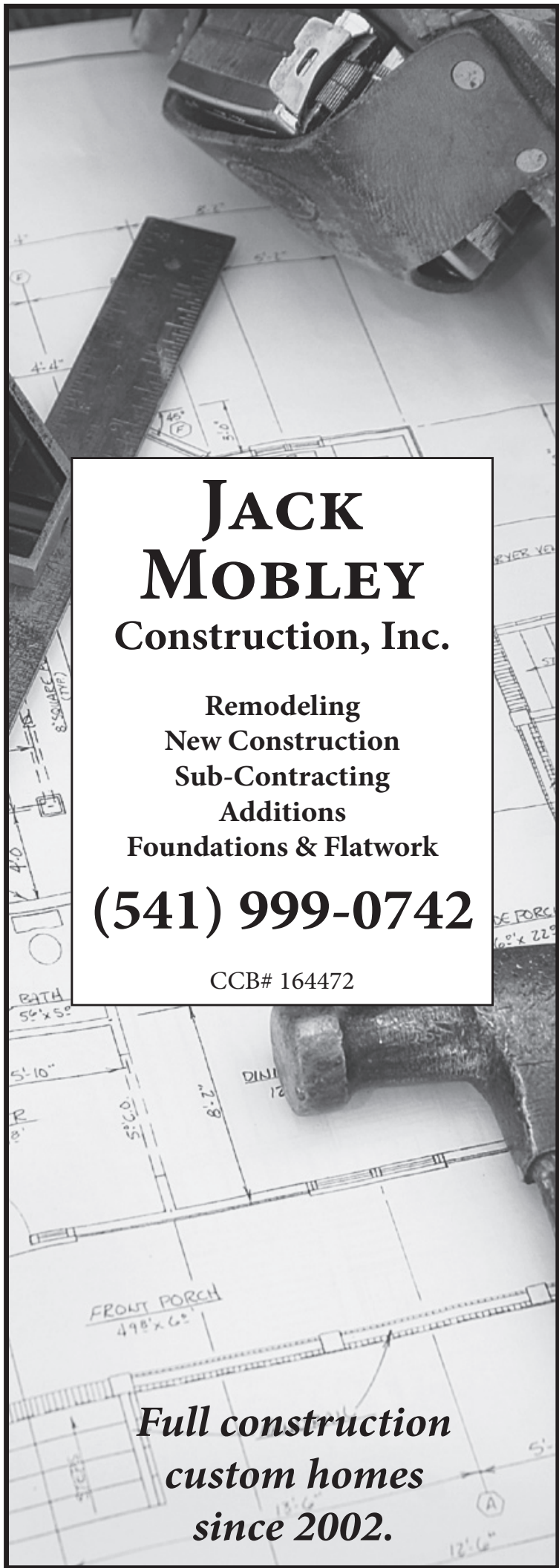




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Greentrees hosts council candidates' first forum



Ron Preisler, Clarence Lysdale, Councilor Joe Henry, George Lyddon and Mayor Nola Xavier comprised the panel that addressed voters on Aug. 27.

STORY AND PHOTO BY THERESA BAER
Siuslaw News

Last week a number of Florence City Council candidates lined up to meet the public at a forum hosted by Greentrees homeowners' association. It was an opportunity to take a look at the unusually long slate of candidates, although four were no-shows. Invited were Alan Burns, Joseph Henry (both mayoral candidates), Shayne Burnem, Susy Lacer, George Lyddon, Clarence Lysdale, Ron Preisler, Dr. Mildred Rowley and Florence Mayor Nola Xavier. Burns, Rowley, Lacer and Burnem were no-shows, although Rowley submitted a written statement to be read to the audience.

The audience turnout was a bit mediocre, too, approximately 40 in a room set up for at least 100. Several participants were surprised with the small attendance, especially since the recent furor in the area around Greentrees over a proposed multi-use path on Rhododendron Drive.

Regardless, a lot of ground was covered during the two-hour meeting. Following are summaries of each candidates' introductory statements as well as their responses to audience questions.

Look to future issues of the Siuslaw News for further comments from all candidates.

Ron Preisler

Preisler has been a resident for more than six years, during which he has become involved with a number of organizations, including hospice, homeowners' association and the local Democratic Club of which he is currently president. He has also worked with AARP for the community tax service and with Habitat for Humanity. Before retirement Preisler owned small businesses.

"I've never been in politics," he said. "It could be a good thing, it could be a bad thing. That's up to you to figure out."

He added, "I do believe in some things very strongly: working together to get goals accomplished; we have a problem with poor people here ...; starting a warming center. It's things like that we need to focus on, as well as educating our kids, providing a quality education at all levels and a path to jobs after that."

Preisler said that he believes the proposed fuel tax seems the best way to pay for road maintenance. He pointed out that the federal gas tax of 18 cents has been in place, without increase, for 30 years. It's not keeping up with real costs.

Clarence Lysdale

Lysdale has been a resident for 20 years and lives in Wildwinds where he served on the homeowners' association board of directors. He served for 10 years on Florence Planning Commission and was involved in other projects for the city, including the riparian inventory assessment and a guide, "Native Vegetation and Rhody Preservation for the City of Florence." He is known as a long-time advocate for wild rhododendrons. A professional engineer, he was co-founder and president of a marine controls company that employed 40 and did business around the world. He has also volunteered as a math tutor at Siuslaw schools.

He stated that while in business he believed in hiring locally and promoting from within. He still

See **FORUM 7A**



PHOTO BY THERESA BAER/SIUSLAW NEWS

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Vicar Georgia DuBose and Clare Hawkins are drenched with ice water by Ernie Doud and Jo M'Gonigle as part of an international fundraiser, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. The church raised more than \$500.

COOL CHALLENGE

BY MOTHER GEORGIA DUBOSE
Special to the Siuslaw News

There are much worse things than having a bucket of ice water dumped over your head.

On the other hand, it is not an experience that people normally find entertaining. (That is not to say that those who watch others being soaked don't find it amusing.)

When Clare Hawkins of St. Mary of the Dunes Catholic Church and Mother Georgia DuBose of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church took the Ice Bucket Challenge, they did it not for fun, but to raise money for the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.

So far, the international Ice Bucket Challenge has raised over \$100 million for the ALS Association. The more than \$500 raised Saturday, Aug. 30, in the Labyrinth at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church is, truly, a drop in the bucket, but it was a meaningful moment for the participants, the observers, and, it is hoped, for the people it honors.

Until this challenge was initiated by Pete Frates, a former professional basketball player in Boston who now has ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a disease that destroys the nerve cells that make muscles work), the disease was underfunded and under-researched.

Earlier in the summer, the congregation of St. Andrew's invited Mary Rebar of the ALS Association of Oregon and Southwest Washington to speak at a church forum on the impact of the disease locally. They already knew about its personal impact: Jo M'Gonigle's brother, Bob Hawkins, of Florence, died of the disease

in 2013. He was Clare Hawkins' husband. (Clare's friend, Ken Stone, was buried as a result of ALS on Saturday, Aug. 30, the day of the Ice Bucket Challenge at St. Andrew's.) Mother Georgia's friend, Father Rick Rutledge of Oak Hill, W.Va., was struggling with ALS, as was another friend of hers, Marcy Handsfield, of Atlanta. Mother Georgia also knew of the story of Mother Jennifer Durant, the assistant rector of Church of Our Savior in Charlottesville, Va., who contracted the disease not long after being ordained in 2011.

The plan at St. Andrew's was that congregation members would support ALS research with individual checks. But then, along came the "viral" Ice Bucket Challenge, and along with that, considerable resentment about the amount of money raised and stories about how the ALS Association was misusing the funds. An annoying Internet meme went around, showing some guy sitting at a table with a bottle of bad Mexican beer, with the headline, "When I support a charity, I write a check, and ice and water are not involved." It was a beer commercial that also slammed a successful fundraising effort for a killer disease.

That was when Mother Georgia decided she had to do more than write a check. She announced at church on Sunday, Aug. 24, that she would do the Ice Bucket Challenge. Clare Hawkins, who had already done the challenge, offered to do it again with Mother Georgia when she heard about it. Checks to the ALS Association began to come in, and many more came on Saturday, Aug. 30. Jo M'Gonigle

See **ALS 7A**

Florence real estate market on the mend

*Current outlook is
moderate but positive,
says local analyst.*

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

The roller coaster ride of Florence-area residential real estate prices over the last several years appears to be leveling out, according to certified residential appraiser and real estate market analyst Tawfik Ahdab.

"Median sale prices have remained relatively stable for the last five quarters. That is an indicator of stability. The median sales price right now is about \$162,000. Median sales price means half the sales were above that number and half were below that number. It's the number we like to use the most," Ahdab said.

Ahdab, who has been an appraiser in Florence since 1993, is a partner in Pacific Valuation Group, a company that specializes in residential appraisals and residential market analysis.

The volatility of the Florence-area real estate market began shortly after USA Today rated Florence the best place to retire in the country in August 2004.

"After that article was published," Ahdab said, "Realtors' offices had phone calls from all over the country. People wanted to purchase properties sight unseen. It was a disaster. The hyper-inflationary trend that was created by the artificial demand of the early 2000s was magnified by the reputation of Florence being the best place to retire. The net effect of the article was to aggravate a

See **MARKET 11A**

Free meals for all Mapleton school students

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Breakfast and lunch will be offered free to all Mapleton School District students because the district has been approved to participate in the Oregon Department of Education's child nutrition service.

The federally funded four-year program will run from July 1, 2014, to July 1, 2018. All students in the Mapleton School District are eligible, and do not need to sign up for the program.

The program is the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. It is designed to provide schools with high percentages of low-income children the option to offer free school meals without collecting applications.

The school district is required to record the number of breakfasts and lunches served. The school district is then reimbursed for the cost of the meals.

According to Mapleton School District Superintendent Jodi O'Mara, the district will be able to apply for a four-year extension at the end of the program.

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