

2014 YEAR IN REVIEW *continued*

Review from 6A

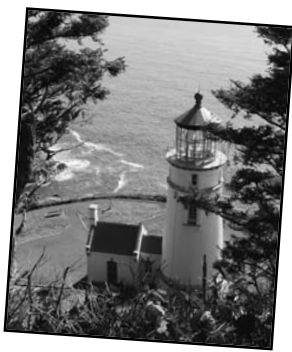
Big City Lights

After being closed for nearly a year, Florence Cinemas will soon reopen to area moviegoers under a new name and tenant as well as equipped with digital projectors, just in time for the tail end of the summer's biggest blockbusters. Michael Falter, program director for the Pickford Film Center in Bellingham, Wash., and his wife Susan Tive finalized a five-year lease with Campbell Commercial Real Estate to

take over ownership of the town's movie theater. The theater opened in August under the name, City Lights Cinemas.

Heceta Lighthouse named top 'destination'

The Heceta Head Lighthouse State Scenic Viewpoint, about 12 miles north of Florence, receives the 2014 Eugene, Cascades and Coast Destination Award by Travel Lane County at its annual celebration June 19 honoring regional tourism achievements. The award represents the countless



hours supporters put in restoring one of the most photographed landmarks on the Oregon coast. Work included replacing the tower's historic metal-work and masonry, installing new windows and repairing the lens rotating mechanism.

JULY

Stranded 'sailors'

Thousands of Veella veella, a distant cousin to the jellyfish, mysteriously wash up on Oregon beaches. Commonly known as "by-the-wind sailor," the blue-to-purple-bodied species are typically an offshore creature that lives on the ocean surface and moves by way of wind with its clear, triangular fin acting as a sail. But, when winds are strong, Veella loses its 45-degree tracking ability and is pushed to shore.

Paul Revere's long-lost message

A letter dated Dec. 14, 1774, owned by a Florence resident, reveals the long-lost message that Revolutionary patriot Paul Revere delivered from Boston to Portsmouth that led to attacks on the colony's arsenal, Fort William



Veella veella, a distant relative of the jellyfish, washed to shore by the thousands in July, including on Heceta Beach in Florence.

and Mary in New Castle — four months before his legendary ride to Lexington to warn the colonists that the British were coming.

Sea star die-off reaches Florence

Sea stars, commonly referred to as starfish, have been dying off in alarming numbers along the entire West Coast, from Baja, Mexico, to Alaska. According to reports from the Seattle

Aquarium, some parts of Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands have seen population declines of up to 80 percent. CoastWatch, an organization that monitors the entire Oregon coast via a network of volunteers, reports that sea star wasting syndrome is waterborne, but still do not know if it is bacterial or viral.

Man takes flight

The sight of a man shooting into the air from the Siuslaw River was a showstopper July 23 near the docks at the Port of Siuslaw. Jason Hardy, 47, demonstrated to a growing crowd — and a bird or two — the breathtaking new sport of flyboarding, in which a uniquely designed flotation device is attached to his feet and a hose connected to a modified Jet Ski-type watercraft that lifts him into the air to do all kinds of flying tricks.

Littlest library

"Take a book, leave a book" is the simple motto of the

Little Library concept. Inspired by an article in a Eugene paper, 9-year-old Ava Glowacki and her mother, Ella,



Ava Glowacki

decide to build one in Florence. The focus is on books children would be interested in, but the Little Library will have books for all ages. The idea is to get families and even grandparents to take young people by and have everyone find a book.

AUGUST

Tourism on the rise

According to Cal Applebee, executive director of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, "We count the visitors coming through the door at the visitors center. At the close of our fiscal year, which ended June 30, we are up more than 250 people over last year." These visitors are staying and spending money, which is good news for many Florence-area businesses and organizations.

Relay For Life

The 15th annual Florence Relay For Life raises more than \$82,000 for the fight against cancer in early August at Miller Park. The 24-hour event is the culmination of almost a year's worth of planning and preparation.

Canine remembered for healing presence

Local celebrity Robbi, a 12-year-old greyhound, dies Aug. 5 of age-related causes. A therapy dog since 2008 until her retirement in 2013, she visited scores of local schoolchildren, nursing home residents, hospital patients and staff. She had the honor of being Peace Harbor Hospice's first therapy dog.

Residents say 'no' to Rhody multi-use path

After nearly a decade in the planning, a project to begin development of a multi-use path along Rhododendron Drive has derailed. Some 2,500-plus people signed petitions to halt the development, and many of those voices were present at the Aug. 18 city council meeting.

Local gas tax on the horizon

Florence Mayor Nola Xavier addresses the pressing need for a local fuel tax, which would help pay for more than \$5 million in street repairs. Voters, however, do not approve the tax in the November election.

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