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OPINION

WEDNESDAY

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The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

LETTERS

Police officers

In reading the article from Lynn Lamm, Chief of Police, in the Jan. 7 Siuslaw News, it truly saddened me to learn how often police officers are misrepresented in our society and country today.

When people are running away from dangerous situations to spare their own lives, the police, the fire department, the EMTs with an ambulance, the sheriff and the military are all running to dangerous situations to save our lives. In my book they are our heroes.

When we hear sirens, our first response should be to offer a quick prayer that God would help and protect these men and women who are putting their lives on the line for all of us. At what time any one of us is in trouble, who do we call? It's 911 for the police, and whomever else the police determine is needed in the situation presented, and then the police dispatch help. Thank God they show up if we call.

This week I had a bad fall in my house and was trapped and having difficulty breathing because my ribs were being squished and I could not get myself out of the position I was in. I was really stuck and alone at the time. Fortunately I had put my cell phone in my pocket and I was able to reach it and call 911. The police came right away and so did the EMTs with an ambulance.

All of these men were incredibly professional, concerned and helpful.

I for one have every bit of respect they deserve for the job they performed for me and



anyone else who calls the police and is in trouble. The police, firemen, EMTs, sheriff and military have been and are continually in my prayers because they are here day and night no matter the time or situation, if we call them they show up to serve all of us. They are not running away if we call.

We are a people most fortunate and blessed to have these dedicated men and women at our disposal just by picking up the phone and call-

ing 911. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your service to all of us.

Lindy Gessaman
Florence

City steps up, as always

Dear Siuslaw News staff,
Thank you so much for the article about the Florence Free Lunch program. Since it was

published last week, we have had a dozen new volunteers!

All this new human energy will do wonders to invigorate the program and support the preparation and serving of lunches every Tuesday and Thursday at the Methodist Church at Second and Kingwood.

All the board members, volunteers and clients appreciate the wonderful way the Florence community "steps up!"

Thank you, volunteers! Thank you Siuslaw News!

Suzanne Mann-Heintz, Co-coordinator
Florence Free Lunch Program

Editor Baer

I have known Theresa Baer since she was hired to replace me at Oregon Coast and Northwest Travel magazines back in June 2002 when I retired from the magazines — for the first time. We have been friends ever since.

When she went to work for the Siuslaw News in 2006 as a reporter, I appreciated the way she made complex stories easy to understand. Later, when she became editor, I watched her grow into a perceptive, wise and mentoring editor who could handle whatever came her way. She was a good fit for the newspaper and good for the town.

I know that I won't be the only one to miss her. I wish her the very best as she starts this new chapter of her life.

Judy Fleagle
Florence

Emergency warming shelter on firm ground with new manager

BY GEORGIA C. DUBOSE
Special to the Siuslaw News



Julian Laney

Interview with Julian Laney, manager of the Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter

Working as the manager of an emergency shelter for homeless people draws on Julian Laney's previous experience in the Army in Afghanistan and Europe, his experiences growing up in Florence, and his hopes for the future. Asked what drew him to apply for his new job, the Lane Community College student responded, "I think this town has needed a program like this; it's the first shelter like this I have heard of here. In the long run, I have ambitions to go elsewhere, but I want to be a part of something positive while I am here and thought this was a great gig."

The shelter opened New Year's Eve and New Year's Day night at the Masonic Lodge south of Florence.

Laney has been hired by the Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter board of directors to oversee operations at the shelter during spells of bad weather.

Life in the Army — four years — taught Laney a lot about leadership.

"When I applied, I was convinced that the job would suit me because I have been in leadership for some time now; this is a new way to learn to be a leader. For the most part, leadership in the military is leading by example, trying to do the next right thing; others are inspired by that. I think I can contribute that to the Cold Weather Shelter, show them what good leadership looks like."

Laney, 24, found a strong example of leadership in his father, who died when he was 12.

"My primary mentor was my father — he passed away when I was 12 —

and could only be here two months a year because he worked at a casino in Las Vegas. He crammed a lot of guidance and knowledge and expectations into a limited time."

Laney hopes eventually to become a screenwriter and filmmaker.

"After deployment, I felt like I had a story to tell. I want it to be truly experienced by the people I tell it to. I think the best way for that to happen is to have it done well on screen. In today's society, films make a really strong statement."

The inspiration to seek leadership roles, and to try to have a good influence on others, came from people other than Laney's father.

"My art teacher, Kim Pickell, was first to inspire me. I was kind of a troubled youth without my dad being around, just doing my own thing in school. Ms. Pickell showed me what kind of potential I could have. Also, Trace Tucker, an English teacher with whom I had several courses throughout high school, enlightened me about how smart I am. I thought I was an uneducated statistic. Finally, Tim Dodson, the football coach, taught me

how to push myself in all aspects."

Laney started doing part-time landscape work when he was about 12.

"I did a lot of landscaping with a family friend's business. I worked at restaurants as dishwasher and busser. Most recently, I did an internship with an art gallery on Bay Street, helping to open and run a dinner movie theater as well. The whole art world is pretty neat."

Laney also found the first two nights of having the Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter an inspiring experience.

"To see all the volunteers working very well together without a lot of instruction was pretty amazing. Everyone worked so well—all the moving parts were moving, everyone was trying to help. What stood out for me, as well, is that the homeless people had such diverse personalities and situations; for the most part, the guests were really appreciative."

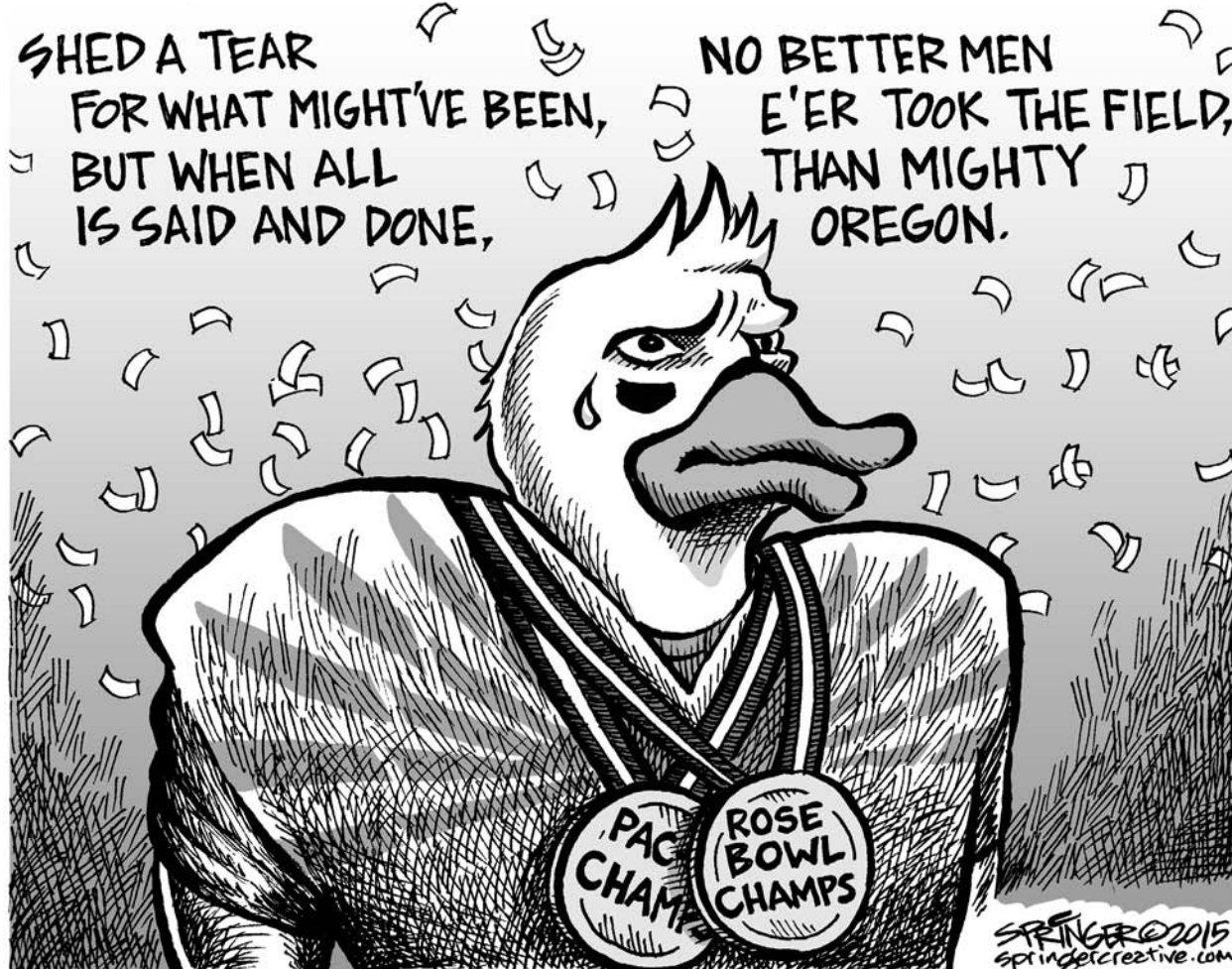
Laney says he has one hope for the future of the shelter:

"I'd like to see that this community really understands and supports what we are trying to do here. I hope we'll

see support for the shelter branch out, because the community will understand the need, get together, and make a real difference in the situation. A lot of people have worked hard to get it off the ground, but we will need consistent help from a wide variety of churches and organizations to sustain the effort."

The emergency warming center is at 84910 Highway 101, south of the Siuslaw River Bridge.

For more information about the center, call Robert DuBose at 304-620-8685.



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