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OPINION

WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 18 • 2015

125TH ANNIVERSARY FLASHBACK

1890 | THE WEST ❖ FLORENCE TIMES ❖ THE SIUSLAW OAR ❖ THE SIUSLAW NEWS ❖ SIUSLAW NEWS | 2015

This year marks Siuslaw News' quasiquintennial, our 125th anniversary, a remarkable achievement for any business in a small community like Florence. To commemorate this milestone, throughout the year we'll feature some of the town's history as originally published in the newspaper, including historic articles and photos from more than a century ago.



Old Sol

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Old Sol seems to bring out the urge to get out and do something such as riding the dunes near Florence. Large amounts of sunshine over the weekend proved a magnet to many people, drawing them to favorite summer recreation areas during "Summer in February" on the Oregon coast.

DEAR READERS: Share your story

Do you remember a significant or interesting story that we should feature again, or want to share your favorite memory of the newspaper? Write an email to Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com with the subject line "Anniversary."

NEIGHBORS



Hawaiian adventure — Part V

BOB JACKSON
NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENT
For the Siuslaw News

After leaving Los Angeles harbor, the palatial prow of our Far East Lines cruise ship Mariposa was finally pointed toward Hawaii, and many, many identical horizons would be confronted before making landfall again. Peggy found it increasingly hard to take in the reality of the vastness of an open sea, and how, she wondered, could we plow on day after day at around 20 knots and still see nothing but water in every direction?

As for myself, I was accustomed to the seemingly never-ending immensity of this ocean, having

spent long-time combat duty during World War II off the Aleutian Islands in the North Pacific and the Bering Sea, and an even longer time in the South Pacific, where we crossed the equator and the international date line many times.

But this ocean liner was very different from the Spartan indentured slavery we had experienced as deck hands on an armor-plated warship, bristling with guns pointing in every direction. Mere printed words cannot begin to adequately convey the contrast to the euphoric, hedonistic and sybaritic luxury aboard this big ship. It is the job of a writer to vicariously transport the reader into another

realm; be it awe or fright or romance, these emotions are fleeting and have to be fully confronted lest they escape and be lost in time.

In my journal I had noted that we were always nonplussed by the evening menu spread before us. However, we never failed to overindulge in the process of satisfying our curiosity, for we were continually ordering expensive and strange sounding dishes that we had never heard of before. There were no prices on the pre-paid menu, and we found that although the presentation was always impressively artistic, the rich food usually never tasted any better than something from a stew pot back home.

After our evening meal, Peggy sat in the very warm lounge playing a horse-racing game. The ship was pitching somewhat, and her stomach did not feel all that good, so she

retired early. I was hoping she would feel better in the morning. The next morning we had big ground swells and she missed breakfast. The ship's nurse gave her a shot and some pills. It helped and she was able to eat a big lunch at the pool buffet.

Cold and overcast all day, no ships, planes or any living thing. We joined in calisthenics and hula lessons in the morning. We were really living up this tourist role. Dressed up for the captain's champagne party, we met all the ship's officers. What a memorable occasion, with a beautiful ice sculpture, table centerpieces, waiters constantly at our elbows pouring more champagne than we cared to drink.

Later, we went to a dance in the Southern Cross lounge with many fun contests, such as the lemon dance, where all couples dance with their hands behind their backs and a

lemon pressed between their foreheads. Whenever they lose the lemon they must drop out, eventually only one last couple remains on the dance floor, and it wasn't us — for I had shoved the lemon into Peggy's eye socket!

It was a strange sensation, dancing on a floor that sometimes drops away, then abruptly lifts against your feet, only to fall away in one direction or the other.

There was a gourmet buffet set up next to the Southern Cross bar from 10 p.m. on, with a chef in attendance who delighted in creating imaginative sandwiches by placing slices of ham, turkey, beef, etc., on bread slices, then trimming away the crust with his big, machete style knife. With the deftness of a magician, he is able to do this without touching anything with his fingers — incredible to watch!

LETTERS

For the record

It seems that a comment in a recent article ("March Marks End of Marijuana Moratorium," Feb. 7, page A1) on the marijuana moratorium taken out of context has caused some misunderstanding as to my position on medical marijuana in the City of Florence.

For the record, I am not against medical marijuana nor for that matter recreational marijuana. If anyone has taken remarks made at a recent city council meeting to infer that I am against it, that is unfortunate as I have a very close relative that uses medical marijuana rather than prescription drugs, and the benefits to her health are obvious. Any comment that was made to the effect that "I don't share your views" was in reference to the suggestion that medical marijuana was the driving force for economic development, or that the council needed to go to a marijuana facility to learn all about the business.

The City of Florence issues several business licenses each month, and to my knowledge no one from the council has visited those businesses to learn the ins and outs of the business. My suggestion was that if anyone wanted to do that on their own time, that was fine, but that the purpose of the council meeting was not to extol the merits of medical marijuana but rather to decide where to put a facility.

In a subsequent work session, I helped the council to reach consensus on actually expanding the locations available for such



a business by a substantial amount from the original guidelines set by the former council.

To recap, I am not against either medical or recreational marijuana nor am I against any business that might locate to Florence to market these products. I view these businesses as I would any other business that might bring jobs and revenue to the city.

Joe Henry
Florence Mayor

Alarming school dropout rate

This morning, Feb. 13, reading the Washington Post, I was taken quite aback by a most troubling fact.

According to statistics recently released by the U.S. Department of Education, the State of Oregon has distinguished itself with the highest high school dropout rate in the nation. Thirty-one percent of our students do not complete four years of high school.

To condemn the school system and our teachers for this deplorable situation is, I believe, largely unwarranted considering the success our schools have with providing a good education for a large number of students.

Every year we see a substantial number of students graduating with honors and a clear majority of them finishing school, having performed at or near the median level of accomplishment.

That being the case, is it not reasonable to conclude that a decent education is indeed available for those who want it? And does that not indicate the problem lies less with the schools and teachers but more with the social environment from which the individual students approach education?

I would contend, quite frankly, it all starts at home.

Jimmie Zinn
Florence

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