

Gallery hosts poetry contest

On Saturday, March 7, Kenneth B Gallery, 1458 First St. in Old Town Florence, will host its first monthly "Florence Spoken Word Poetry Contest," which offers a \$250 cash prize for the winning poem.

Each participating poet may read one original poem for no longer than three minutes, and there is a \$10 entrance fee for poets to participate.

Registration starts at 3 p.m., and the readings begin at 5 p.m.

The public is welcome to attend for free.

JOEL FUHRMAN, MD

Negative effects of soda on children

The standard American diet, chock full of soda and other sugary drinks, fast foods and other low-nutrient foods, can have a major impact on the health and lives of our children.

Rising rates of childhood obesity driven by this way of eating have received much attention; however, low-nutrient foods are still having negative effects on the physical and mental health of children who are not overweight.

Children are not immune to the damaging health effects of the standard American diet, which can set them up for a lifetime of poor health ranging from heart disease to behavior problems and lower cognitive performance.

On average, U.S. children and teens consume over 200 calories a day from soda and other sugary drinks, and it is

estimated that about 14 percent of their calories come from fast food. As a result of the poor diets of American children, more than one-third of normal-weight teenagers (and about half of overweight teenagers) have at least one diet-related risk factor for heart disease.

These dietary patterns have the potential to dramatically affect not only public health but the productivity of our future adult population; studies have implicated poor diet in limiting intelligence and academic performance, and also has drawn parallels between consumption of sweets during childhood and violence in adulthood.

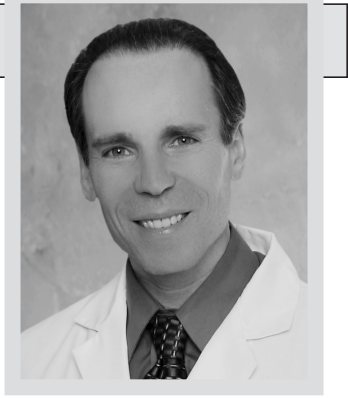
A study on soda consumption found an increase in behavior and attention problems in five-year-old children (as assessed by their mothers)

with increasing daily consumption of soda.

Forty-three percent of the five-year-olds in the study drank soda at least once a day. The authors adjusted their results for potential confounding factors that might affect behavior, such as hours of television and a stressful home environment, and still found a significant association between soda consumption and aggression, withdrawn behavior and poor attention.

They proposed that caffeine and/or fluctuations in blood sugar might be responsible for the association between soda and behavior problems.

Blood glucose levels do affect the workings of the brain, and habitual high sugar intake has been shown to impair cognitive function. Several previous studies on



high school students have also associated soda consumption with aggressive behavior, as well as depression and self-harm.

Plus, higher sugar sweetened beverage consumption is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancers.

In addition to soda, higher fast food consumption in fifth grade (four or more times per week) has been associated with poorer academic progress in math, reading and science between fifth grade and eighth grade.

Children who ate fast food one to three times per week—a common level of intake—compared to those who ate no fast food had lower scores in math. These results suggest that children eating fast food frequently could slow their academic progress.

The food habits children develop in their early years have a substantial impact on their physical health and mental well-being throughout the rest of our lives.

Parents need to know this information, so that they can help their children to live healthfully, maintain a positive mindset, and reach their full cognitive potential.

Dr. Fuhrman is a New York Times best-selling author and board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine.

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Accepting New Clients

IN BRIEF

Soroptimists selling roses to benefit local students

Tickets for the annual Soroptimist Rose Sale are available now through March 25, for \$20 per dozen.

Delivery will be April 29. Proceeds fund the scholarships awarded to local students.

Roses can be delivered to the recipient at home or work.

Tickets can be purchased from any Soroptimist or by calling Jo Hine at 541-997-2233.

British Car Club rolls into Florence today

The Central Oregon Coast British Car Club will hold its monthly breakfast meeting, rain or shine, on Saturday, Feb. 28, starting at 9 a.m., at Kozy Kitchen Restaurant, 820 Highway 101 in Florence.

Come and meet the club officers and friends. Anyone with an interest in British vehicles is welcome.

For more information, call 541-997-7354.

Elvis will enter Elks building today

Florence Elks Lodge No. 1858 will open its doors to the public for a special show, "Elvis and Friends," today, Feb. 28, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Clint Ingbreton and Ila Selene will charm the audience with their music and impersonations.

Tickets will be available at the door for \$10.

The Elks Lodge is at 1686 12th Street in Florence.

SSWCD meets at new location Monday

The Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District (SSWCD) will hold its regularly scheduled board meeting Monday, March 2, at 1774 Laurel Place, Ste No. 4, in Florence, at 6:30 p.m.