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# OPINION

WEDNESDAY

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## 125TH ANNIVERSARY FLASHBACK

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

**T**his 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.

## New Florence development taking shape

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Del Phelps surveys the property at his planned unit development like a proud father. He points to a natural depression in the land that will soon be the site of a 6,000-square-foot clubhouse surrounded by tennis courts and swimming pools. He watches excitedly as construction crews ease Florence's first log modular home onto its foundation.

Phelps has reason to be proud. He and his partners last week saw the first fruits of over two years of planning and a \$4 million investment in what currently is Florence's largest property development in nearly two decades. The development, called Florentine Estates, is located on 70 acres of land at the north edge of the city.

Last week, phase one of the two- to three-year project was officially underway as road crews applied finishing touches to the asphalt road coursing through the subdivision, and the construction workers set the first home on its concrete pads. The planned unit development is the largest development to take place within the Florence city limits since the 120-acre, 560-lot Greentrees Village Mobile Home Resort was completed along the Siuslaw River in the early

1970s, according to Florence Planning Director Laura Gillispie.

Phelps, mill superintendent at Davidson Industries and a former city councilman who holds the title of vice-president of Florentine Enterprises Inc., along with his partners, conceived the plan in late 1987. Fellow developers are corporation president Eric Voutilainen, a former AT&T executive, and Secretary Randy Miller, a certified public accountant. Other corporation board members are Anthony Giangrande and Robert Murheade.

Plans call for the development and sale of 221 lots for manufactured or modular homes in four phases to take place over the next two to three years. Lots range from 6,000 to 11,000 square feet with a price range of \$20,900 to \$29,400. Phase one consists of developing 94 lots on 24



Developer Del Phelps (center) checks progress on a modular log home at the Florentine Estates development.

acres of land. Munsel Creek courses through the west side of the development, and a bike path will follow once the planned unit development is completed. ...

Only modular homes will be allowed in the

development with a covenant limitation of at least 1,000 square feet of living space per home. The developers say they are targeting retired persons who have demonstrated a desire for modular housing, since it is generally less expensive than conventional, stick-built housing.

In addition to the recreational facilities on the site, retired persons will be attracted by the security gate leading into the development, Phelps said. The state of the art of equipment will include a computerized entry system which can be programmed with digital entry codes for residents, as well as an in-home video system for viewing visitors and phone-activated security gate.

Gillispie said ... statistics show that many retired persons prefer modular homes to site-built homes, since they feel they can control their assessment and obtain "instant housing." She said that an estimated 40 percent of the city's future will be manufactured homes.

The developers broke ground for the subdivision last September. Seven lots have since been sold, with the first resident due to move in soon.

## NEIGHBORS



## Hawaiian adventure — Part IX

BOB JACKSON  
NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENT  
For the Siuslaw News

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 1977, still aboard the S.S. Mariposa, we have survived several days of relentless stormy seas. Some members of the ship's crew have remarked that it has been one of the roughest crossings they could remember. However, our last day at sea was beautiful with flying fish popping out of our bow swell to flutter for incredible distances above the wave tops. This morning as we came out on deck, the surface of the ocean beneath the bright sunlight had become, almost magically it seemed, a hue of an indescribably intense blue.

This peacetime voyage had been such a contrast to my years spent aboard a warship; the sight of porpoises

and flying fish were much preferred to deadly torpedoes. And no more long hours spent at the shield of a gun tub watching for periscopes, no more chilling bugle calls for air-raid defense, and no more chipping paint and swabbing decks — count your blessings!

We were savoring the amenities of shipboard life, desperately clinging to what little remains of this cruise, which had been a unique experience in our lives. An added bonus was the outgoing friendliness of everyone on board. From the time we left our stateroom in the morning, whomever we met, from a room steward to the captain, we were always greeted with a smile and a readiness to indulge in

conversation. Because of the rough crossing, we were behind schedule and would arrive in Honolulu in the afternoon instead of the morning as planned. Around 10 a.m., we spotted Molokai dead ahead, and soon Oahu appeared off our starboard bow.

Everyone became excited as we came ever closer and spotted the famous landmarks of Diamond Head, the Waikiki Beach hotel strip and the ever present outrigger canoes and surfboards. As we entered Honolulu harbor, the huge Boeing Seafite hydrofoil inter-island passenger boat flashed by — what a spectacular sight! With a long "rooster-tail" stretching far behind, it looked like a two-story motel on a take-off run like that of a flying boat. Powered by two Rolls-Royce gas turbines, it could carry 240 passengers to the outlying islands at speeds up to 47 knots.

At 14:30 (2:30 p.m.) we were eased alongside pier 10, Honolulu, Hawaii,

and were greeted with a royal serenade by a large Hawaiian band, paper steamers, hula dancers, the works! It was sad to leave the ship, with all its activities and all the friendly people on board. Beautiful, long-haired muumuu-clad hula dancers draped fresh flower leis around our necks and then we were on our way via taxi to the Sheraton Surfrider hotel, which is alongside the famous "Pink Palace" Royal Hawaiian. Now nearly hidden by towering high-rise hotels, it was once a dominant landmark on Waikiki beach.

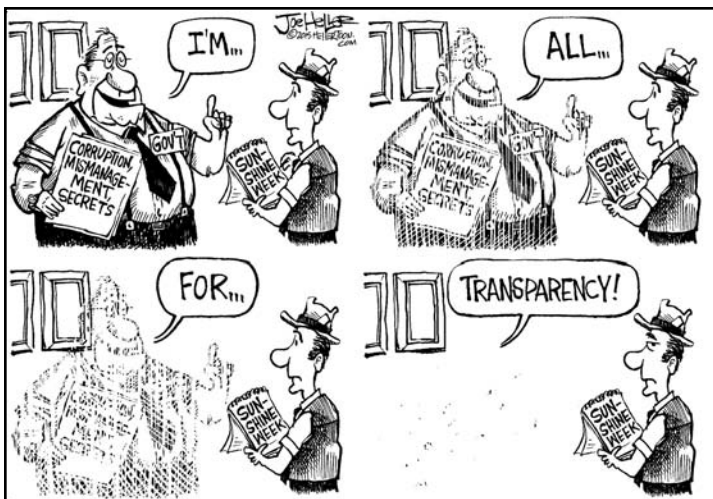
We had reservations for a \$45 a night ocean-view room; however, we were informed at the desk that the room was not available and they had upgraded us to a \$95 a night, ocean-front suite for the same price. A few years ago I checked, and the price for staying overnight in this same suite was listed at over \$650. I wonder what it would cost now?

Stepping through the door of suite 595, we were looking up a long hallway that entered a large, luxuriously furnished living room with 20-foot sliding glass walls opening onto an outside private lanai. It looked like a porch to us. There was even a fully equipped wet bar in one corner of this big room.

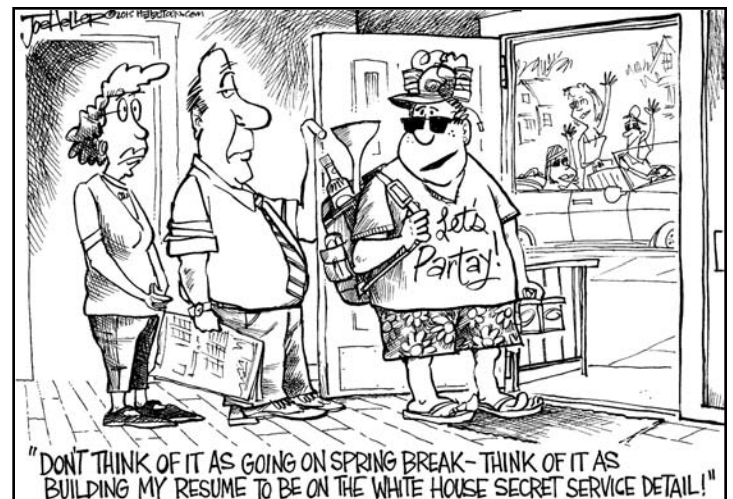
Amazingly, the oversized separate bedroom had its own lanai with ocean view. Looking over the top of the tall palm trees, we could see Diamond Head in the distance, and somewhere on the beach below, the sound of Hawaiian ukelele and drum music was drifting up to where we were.

We were mentally pinching ourselves, trying hard to believe this was really happening, for no amount of seemingly excessive superlatives could even begin to describe the euphoria we were experiencing at that moment.

More to come.



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