

COME CELEBRATE WITH US!

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Siuslaw Public Library District, I invite you to celebrate the 100th year of library service in Florence by visiting the Florence or Mapleton branch soon. I don't remember my first visit to the library, as I lived just across Laurel St. from the Florence Public Library in my childhood and was a regular patron there. To this day, I am in love with our library, as it is a community treasure. The library offers something for everyone! So when it was suggested that I run for an open seat on the library board, I was excited to get involved. Like many municipal districts (Fire, Ambulance, Soil and Water Conservation and Schools to name a few), the Siuslaw Public Library District is a "special district" - separate from the city, county and state governments. The board of five directors is elected by the voting residents of the district to represent the community in library matters. We meet monthly in an open-to-the-public meeting to discuss the finances, policies, and the state of the district. Public attendance to our meetings is encouraged and appreciated and all public input is received with open ears and given meaningful discussion and appropriate action. I hope you'll consider attending one of our future meetings. Finally, I would invite you to learn about the Friends of the Library, who are instrumental in promoting the library, raising funds for special purchases and hosting many friendly receptions at the library. Enrich your life, come on in. Hooray for libraries!

IAN JARMAN

*President, Siuslaw Public Library
District Board of Directors*

History of the Siuslaw Public Library



Florence Library Circa 1936

"A reading room is one of the needs of Florence. Some place should be provided where strangers can go to spend a little time in reading when they happen to be in town, and where laboring men can spend their evenings quietly and pick up some information about current events or glean some knowledge on some subject in which they are interested... Who will take up the matter and see what can be done?"

*~Editorial by W.H. Weatherson in The West,
September 25, 1914*

In 1914, the Women's Conservation League took up W.H. Weatherson's challenge and the first forerunner to today's Siuslaw Library opened its doors on May 7, 1915. The next 100 years is the story of how that first library evolved in to a Library District that today serves more than 18,000 residents of Oregon's western Lane County, and how community support and forward-thinking residents began a legacy that remains vital to this day.

Florence's first library opened in the Commercial Club, a forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. John Safley was the first librarian. By the end of 1915, the library had received its first book donation from the state library (forty-two volumes of a traveling collection). This generous donation boosted the library's inventory to nearly 150 items, a collection of books and free pamphlets. The pamphlets included helpful information such as: "Removal of garlic flavor from milk and cream," "How to prevent typhoid fever," and baby and child care brochures. While the collection was small, the town wasn't much larger; Florence was a city of just 315 residents.

"Thanks to the Siuslaw Women's Conservation

League and the assistance of the Commercial Club, Florence can now boast of a public library. While the number of books is not large, yet a beginning has been made and the people will have a better chance to obtain reading matter than they would otherwise."

*~Editorial by W.H. Weatherson in The West, July 23,
1915*

In the early years, the library moved a number of times. In addition to its initial home in the Commercial Club the Florence Library served its residents from the Kyle building, rooms in the old bank building, the Masonic Hall, and the old grade school (later the Callison Building). The library was even moved once by wheelbarrow!

In 1936 the Library received yet another new home when the Oregon State Highway Commission donated two small construction buildings that the agency no longer needed once construction of the Siuslaw River Bridge was completed. The buildings were located in Glenada, so Florence city officials moved them by truck to an area behind the old Cooper building on Bay Street and paid \$600 to have the building connected for library use. The library was named in memory of long-time librarian Anne Dudley and opened with a reception on December 10, 1936. The library housed a 900-volume collection: much more than a wheelbarrow-full.



**Mrs. Ken Luce and Mrs. Alice Hanson
show off music records available for
checkout, early 1960s**

"This institution is a real credit to Florence and is largely due to the untiring efforts of the librarian who has kept at it until a small handful of books housed first here and there has developed into 900 volumes, properly cataloged and now in a commodious shelving where there is plenty of room to grow."

~ The Oar, December 11, 1936

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for your many
years of service to
our community!**

Congratulations!