

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

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. —*Editor*

Hospital to be dedicated Sunday afternoon

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The dedication on Sunday, Aug. 12, of Western Lane Hospital will mark the culmination of many dreams and much planning and hard work.

The formal program is scheduled at 2 p.m., with Director A.E. Ellingson, of Western Lane Hospital district board of directors, as master of ceremonies.

Since pioneer days, people in western Lane County have had to "make do" when illness of accident struck. Many critical patients were cared for in private homes as the hazardous trip "outside," by boat or transfer to horse-drawn litter, was resorted to only in extreme emergencies.

After Southern Pacific passenger services was instituted, patients were transported by train to either Coos Bay or Eugene.

However, it was not until the 1930s, when roads were sufficiently improved, that ambulances

from Eugene and Reedsport began making trips into the area. The time elapsed in making the round trip often meant the difference between life and death.

With improved roads came community growth — population trebled, lumbering activities stepped up and the incidence of severe accidents increased.

In 1939, Mrs. N.J. Dunn, wife of the area's only doctor, began taking emergency cases to the hospitals on a stretcher in the family car. Since that time, Coast Ambulance has outgrown two ambulances and, at the present time, has a new long wheel-base Green-Pontiac fully equipped to meet any emergency. It will work closely with the new hospital.

It was 1948 when the Siuslaw Pioneer Association formed a committee to work toward establishing better medical facilities in the area — specifically a hospital for western Lane County.

In September, the Florence Hospital Association

incorporated with charter members including Laura Dahlin Erlandon, chairman; Ella G. Waite, vice chairman; Wayne Morgan, secretary-treasurer; Mathilda Thomas and Archie Knowles, directors. Mrs. Lenna Ragan was very active in this charter organization, lending money without interest to secure property and actively assisting in a series of rummage sales.

This group worked with untiring efforts to stimulate interest and acquire financial means whereby a hospital could be provided. They were successful in acquiring several thousands of dollars in money and property which later financed the formation of a tax district and contributed materially to the construction of the building.

Western Lane Registered Nurses (WLRN), a fairly new organization in the area, appointed a committee in 1952 to study the needs of and means whereby a hospital tax district could be formulated. The following year, 1953, saw voters of

the area overwhelmingly approve formation of Western Lane Hospital District, with the boundaries including the school districts of Florence, Mapleton, Ara and western Linslaw.

It was June 16, 1954, when voters approved a \$200,000 bond issued for the new hospital with Hill-Burton funds then being applied for. The project was approved and approximately one-third of the total cost, or \$93,000, will be so derived.

Through the cooperation of the Lane County Board of Commissioners, the City of Florence and Martin Petersen, a five-acre tract of land on 12th Street was acquired without charge. ...

The facility will have 22 adult beds, four children's cribs and six infants' bassinets. It is designed with surgery, emergency surgery and delivery. Oxygen is piped to every room and telephones can be plugged in by every bed. There is also an X-ray laboratory, kitchen and laundry facility. It will be ready to receive patients Aug. 18. ... ❖

NEIGHBORS



The Old Whoopie — Part II

BOB JACKSON
NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENT
For the Siuslaw News

The 1925 Chevy, or "Old Whoopie," as it had been called, was to be my very own car. I had earned it the hard way by cutting up that old stray log with a crosscut saw, and I could hardly believe my good fortune. Shortly before this, my Uncle Dewey had taught me how to drive in his 1929 Chevrolet coupe, and now I would have a car of my own.

However, when I went to claim my prize, I was really in for a shock!

Like a dying animal, it had been shoved far back into a tangle of brush and trees and, for many stormy winters, left to slowly rot away and die. Its empty headlight buckets stared balefully back at me as I desperately tried to hand crank the four cylinder engine, but it was obviously rusted solid and hopelessly frozen in place.

Had it not been for Uncle Dewey, the old whoopie would have eventually dis-

appeared, melting like so much detritus into oblivion amongst the ferns and toadstools on the brushy hillside. But my uncle had been watching my feeble attempts to rescue this old junker, and being a natural born mechanic and a steam-engine donkey engineer, he knew just what to do.

The first step was to remove the cylinder head and pour coal oil (kerosene) into the holes and let it soak for a few days, which seemed like years to me. Then we put one end of a long timber under the edge of the frame and over the top of the crank sticking out from just underneath the radiator.

The rods and crankshaft were tough, and after a few hearty jumps on the timber, the crank began to move. Soon by turning the crank, the pistons were slopping up and down as they were supposed to do.

After the cylinder head was tightened onto the engine block, spark plugs and wiring hooked back up, a battery was

placed underneath the floorboards, gas was poured into the tank, and at last it was "the moment of truth."

Starting a 1925 Chevy was a little different than firing up a new Impala today. On the right side of the steering column was the throttle lever, which was always pulled about halfway down. On the other side was the spark lever that had to be positioned just so, to keep the engine from backfiring and breaking your arm as you cranked.

Hanging onto the crank in the proper way also lessened the chances of getting hurt. It was also a good idea to make sure the long, floor-mounted gear shift lever was in neutral so the car wouldn't run over you when it started.

It seemed like a miracle when Uncle Dewey's mechanical genius brought this old rusty beast back to life. It was like Dr. Frankenstein's reincarnation of life into exhumed, sewn-together body parts from the graveyard; or when the witch Mombi in Frank Baum's children's book "The Land of Oz" created a flying creature called "the Gump" by sprinkling the powder of life onto a bedstead that had a mounted deer's head on one end and palm fronds for wings.

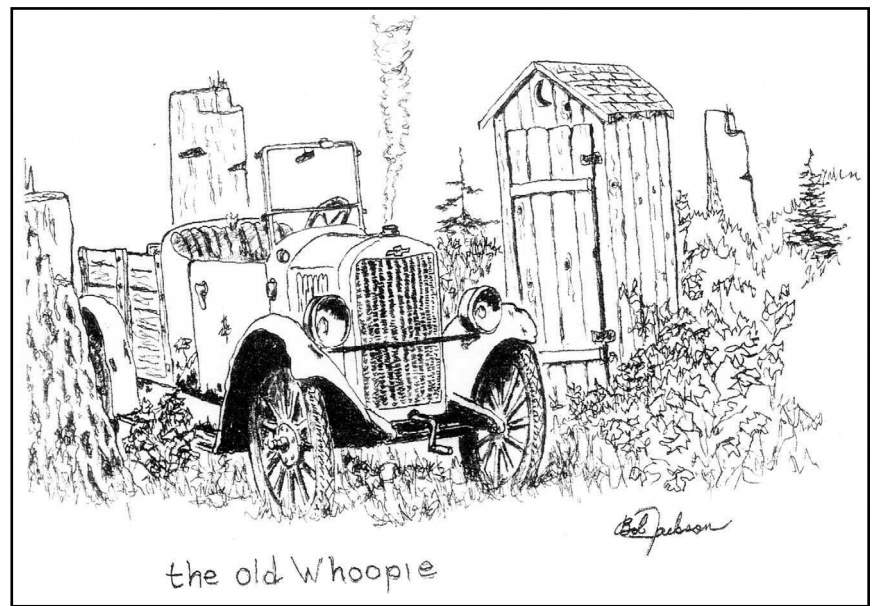


ILLUSTRATION BY BOB JACKSON

Lacking a muffler, the rebirth was startling. Like a baby's first cry, the string of explosions were like a celebration. The overhead valves were actuated by exposed, spring-loaded tappets that caused the old girl to have a whee-whee sound when idling, which turned into a clattery whine at full throttle.

The whoopie had not evolved far from a horse-drawn buggy.

With the protection of a high, straight up and down windshield, it was an improvement, but the seats and springs were not that much better than that of a farm wagon.

More to come...

LETTER

Fortunate for CERT

I am writing to commend the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training I have received here in Florence and to thank the local CERT leadership team for volunteering their time to provide this valuable service and training to our town and its citizens.

I also thank the members of our local ham radio club, the Central Oregon Coast Amateur Radio Club for the education and mentorship that provided me the opportunity to obtain my FCC license and become a ham radio operator.

Both of these disciplines were invaluable aids as I traveled north on Highway 101 this past Friday, Aug. 7. I encountered traffic stopped in a remote area at Strawberry Hill, due to an overturned FedEx delivery van.

Drivers had stopped to assist in traffic control and to aid the driver of the van, who was out of the truck and conscious on the embankment. Official emergency responders had not yet arrived and the persons who had stopped to assist were unable to call out due to lack of cell phone coverage.

I was able to contact one of our local ham operators on the radio, who in turn called local dispatch to alert them to the accident. Then, because of the training and preparation techniques I learned at CERT training, I was able to provide safety vests and assist those directing traffic on a very busy highway until professional help arrived.

We are so fortunate to have these agencies and services provided free of charge to help our communities prepare for unexpected and possibly catastrophic events. I urge everyone to participate and be prepared. I am certainly glad I did!

Renee Dickerson
Florence

Big disappointment

I have always been a fan of Megyn Kelly from Fox News, even before she had her own show, "The Kelly File."

I have always had the opinion that she played fair and operated with integrity. On Thursday evening, when Megyn moderated at the Republican debate, it was a disgrace and big disappoint-

ment the way she went for the jugular to confront Donald Trump.

She knew exactly what she was going to create in the Republican party and she became a media prostitute herself, just like the liberal media. She lost my respect.

Donna Dobson
Florence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County. Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received. Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published. All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to: Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com

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