

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

OVER 1,500 VIEW FLY IN

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For over 1,500 people it was "eyes up" in Florence last Sunday at the Florence Airport Dedication and Fly In. Spectators for the event began arriving at the field during the morning and the drone of the airplane engines continued to draw visitors to the field during the afternoon.

Pilots from Oregon cities, Washington and California arrived at the field before it was closed at noon for the aerial show.

A total of 32 planes lined both sides of the taxi strip at noon when Florence Mayor Stuart Johnston officially dedicated the airport, backed by members of the city council and the Airport Commission.

Following the short dedication ceremony, the aerobics and flybys began.

"Ohs and ahs" were the order of the day as Lanny Boone of North Bend opened the three hour show by making his Pitts Special fly every way but normal.

Cameras, binoculars and eyes followed his every move in the clear blue sky as the small experimental airplane looped, dove and flew upside down.

After Boone landed, Frank Geeland of Salem took off in his AT-6 and, as announcer Bill Gleason of North Bend said, made the plane do everything the designers didn't intend for it to do.

As Geeland put his aircraft through its



Airplanes lined the taxiway at the Florence Airport while spectators and their cars filled the parking areas and viewing areas at the Florence Airport Dedication and Fly-In. Over 1,500 people were on hand to view the static displays of aircraft and to thrill to the aerobatic show. They were joined by pilots from Washington, California, and other Oregon cities who flew in with their families to help Florence pilots and residents dedicate the improved airport which features a new 3,000-foot runway, new taxiway and improved tiedowns.

paces, adults and children could be seen sweeping their hands through the air in a landbound imitation of his maneuvers, complete with sound effects.

The only mishap of the day happened when Major Ralph Hess, of North Bend, landed his home-made plane, "Jeanie's Tiny." Hess had flown the Volkswagen-powered plane past the field to the delight and amazement of the spectators and was landing when the plane's nose wheel collapsed. Hess was uninjured, but the plane suffered a broken nose wheel and propeller.

Additional thrills were provided by Harry Eyerly of Eyerly Volkswagen in Salem and another Pitts Special.

Eyerly and Boone also teamed up and took

to the air together in their 180-mile-an-hour planes and flew aerobatics in tandem.

Between aerobatics flights, representatives of Mooney, Piper and Beech aircraft companies flew demonstration fly-bys in 1969 model planes. They were joined by a Heliocourier, which demonstrated its ability to fly slow and make short field takeoffs and landings.

Also flown was a 1940 Aeronca Cub, one of only two in existence.

One of the highlights of the show was a flying lesson given by Fly In Chairman Vic Anhoury to a non-pilot, Jim Higgs.

The lesson was given in a Piper Supercub. As Anhoury spun the prop on the plane to get it started, the student took off.

Higgs then put on an aerobatics show in the Supercub, directed by announcer Gleason.

After landing, the joke was explained and Higgs was introduced as one of the owners of Coos Flying Service in North Bend, a well-qualified pilot.

Comments from spectators ranged from excellent to unbelievable when the afternoon was completed.

Out of town pilots also commented on the excellent facilities now available in Florence with the completion of the 3,000-foot runway and improved taxi strip and tie downs.

Federal Aviation Administration monitor for the event was W.A. Van De Wark, supervising inspector of the General Aviation District Office, Portland. ❖

NEIGHBORS



Just a resurrected gas pump

BOB JACKSON
NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENT
For the Siuslaw News

The memories of bygone days slip ever further behind in an intangible, impenetrable fog, and it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when a memorable event occurred — especially when it was oh, so long ago.

It may have been around 1970, we had been living back in Westlake for close to 10 years, when someone who knew my obsession with anything automotive told me that there was an old, abandoned gas pump at Ada resort on the far side of Siltcoos Lake. A telephone call was made, and a "sight-unseen" offer of \$20 was made and accepted.

After driving close to 20 miles over a narrow, crooked, county road on the back side of the lake, I and son Rob found it lying there exactly as described. A badly deteriorated, double-sided sign on the 10-gallon glass tank read: "Gasoline 18, Taxes 6-1/2, Total 24-1/2."

We found the owner to be a middle-aged lady. She had been calling

around and was reluctant to let it go for our agreed on price.

However, after some discussion about a "gentleman's agreement" and the difficult trip we had made, she let us load the nearly 10-foot-long and very heavy pump into the bed of Rob's pickup truck.

Arriving back home, we discovered that it was too tall to store, even in the woodshed out back. We managed somehow to angle it inside, but not completely out of the weather, and there it would stay, rusting away and untouched for another close to 45 years.

The interim years seemed to pass quickly as a wink, what with building docks and boathouses and rock retaining walls on the lakefront, the old gas pump remained out of sight, neglected and nearly forgotten.

Reluctantly, when both our energy and resources had dried up, we sold our home and mini-marina at Westlake, and after over 48 years had moved into a gated community called Greentrees on the Siuslaw River in Florence. During the pressure of a

major move, we left a lot behind, like salmon rods, collectible peaveys and crosscut saws, etc.

And when I finally remembered the old gas pump, too much time had passed and I was embarrassed to any longer lay claim to it — although the new owner gallantly offered to deliver it to our new home.

Fast forward a short interlude. Sadly, after a considerable amount of work and money had been invested, our new friends were unable to make a go of it. The bank took over, and the

marina was for sale again.

When the home and docks changed hands again, this time to another Jackson (David; no relation), I enquired about the old gas pump, which was still out back in the woodshed. Not having any interest in the relic, he too gallantly offered to deliver it to me in Greentrees.

This was a major effort for him and his helper, as it was 10 feet tall, very heavy and fragile because of the rusty condition. And additionally there was the 10-gallon glass tank to

worry about.

Peggy, my long-suffering wife, took one hard look at my prize and loudly commented: "What can you possibly hope to do with that old, rusty gas pump?"

I had hoped to wire brush it, apply some Rustoleum paint and it would be "good as new."

But, like the pump, I too was rusting away and unable to bend over or stand for any length of time. It seemed like a hopeless situation!

More to come.



LETTERS POLICY

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.

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Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com

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John Bartlett
Jenna Bartlett
Ryan Cronk
Susan Gutierrez
Cathy Dietz
Ron Annis
Jeremy Gentry

Publisher, ext. 327
General Manager, ext. 318
Editor, ext. 313
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Office Supervisor, ext. 312
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Press Manager

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WHERE TO WRITE

Pres. Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414
FAX: 202-456-2461
TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213
www.whitehouse.gov

Gov. Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court St.
Salem, OR 97301-4047
Governor's Citizens' Rep.
Message Line 503-378-4582
www.oregon.gov/gov

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

202-224-5244
541-431-0229
www.wyden.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753/FAX: 202-228-3997
541-465-6750

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (4th Dist.)
2134 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6416/ 800-944-9603
541-269-2609/ 541-465-6732
www.defazio.house.gov

State Sen. Arnie Roblan (Dist. 5)
900 Court St. NE - S-417
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1705

FAX: 503-986-1080
Email:

Sen.ArnieRoblan@state.or.us

State Rep. Caddy McKeown
(Dist. 9)
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1409
Email:

rep.caddymckeown@state.or.us

West Lane County Commissioner
Jay Bozievich
125 E. Eighth St.
Eugene, OR 97401
541-682-4203
FAX: 541-682-4616
Email:

Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us