

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*

NOW AND THEN — BY A SIUSLAW PIONEER

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED OCT. 2, 1896
THE WEST, VOL. 7, NO. 33

Ten years ago, the Siuslaw was but a name, meaningless to all save a few brave pioneers who, strong in their faith that this was a land of promise, struggled against odds and endured hardships and privations now almost forgotten.

Florence consisted of three or four tumble down cabins and a small structure of rough boards that serves as a salting house for salmon. The nearest schoolhouse was 15 miles away. The only highway was the river, and skiffs and canoes afforded the only means of transportation.

I well remember my first visit there, and the impression the barren solitude of the place made upon me — the desolate wastes of sand, the cold winds, the dark storm-twisted

pinces and the lonely river. I little dreamed how dear these were to become to me through association.

The wind that chilled the stranger cheered the dweller on the shore with wild sea-songs of wondrous sweetness. The sands, on close acquaintance, changed from barren wastes to endless hills of gold. The river became a friend that gave new joy every day.

Before I had lived a month in my tiny cabin under the pines on the Siuslaw, I was in love with the loneliness. Ah! It was a free life!

Nature had her own way there and we fell in with her ever-changing moods, and felt her great true mother-heart beat close against our own. We ceased to remember that there was a world outside of this charmed spot to which we belonged — and to which we might some day return. There was never a day that was

not perfect, never a night but brought new joy.

Still, there were times when we were reminded of the outer world. On those days when the mail came in we walked up to the post office, going along the narrow river beach when the tide was low, and across the marsh to get our letters and magazines. There was something unreal about that marsh; we often spoke of it and of the strange feeling we always had when crossing it, as if we beheld ourselves from some far-off post of vantage two lonely dark figures amidst the solitude of sea and shore.

But all of this was 10 years ago.

It is very different now on the Siuslaw. The dim and dingy cabin with its low eaves and tiny windows, where the mail was handed out over piles of calico, blue overalls and red flannel shirts, is no more.

In its stead are handsome stores, elegant dwellings, a church, a schoolhouse, a big square hotel in Florence and sidewalks. The small salting house has grown into a great cannery that sends its products out over all the world.

There are steamboats on the river and a sister-town across the bay. There is a WCTU, a Shakespeare Club and The West, whose able editors hold no small place among the memories of those far days.

The Siuslaw of today is a recognized locality and a factor in public affairs.

Yes, there have been changes.

In dreaming of those fruitful months spent down there on the edge of the world, I can recall only the dear delight, the beauty, the freedom and charming associations. If there was hardship or deprivation, I have lost the recollection of it. ❖

LETTERS

Resist the sale of Ocean Woods

Lane County Parks Department proposes to sell Ocean Woods, 40 acres of local parkland. Reference the Lane County Parks Department Draft Master Plan. Approximately 20 years ago, the state of Oregon deeded 40 acres of land called Ocean Woods, located just outside the Florence city limits, to be only used as parks land. This 40 acres is pristine forest land that has eagles, bears, deer, birds and many other species of animals some on the endangered list.

Lane County has done nothing with this property since they have had it. They are now proposing to sell the property, most likely to developers, versus developing the property as a park as originally intended by the state.

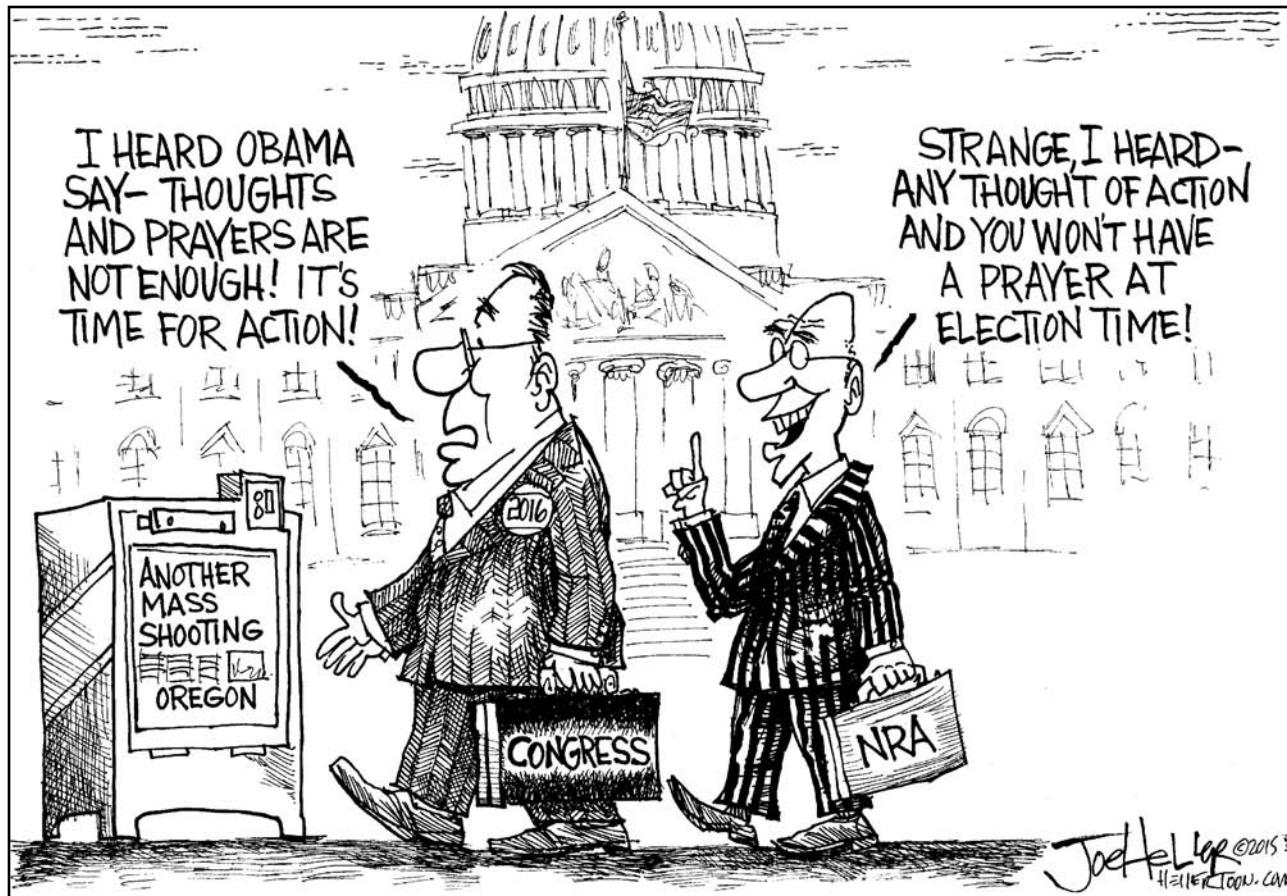
I propose that Lane County develop the property as originally intended to serve not only the residents of the Florence area, but also the many Lane County residents that visit the coast, especially when the temperatures become unbearable in the Eugene area, and also the tourists who provide income to our county.

The parks department recommended selling this property in 2004; however, the wisdom of the county commissioners prevailed and it was voted down 5-0. Here it is again proposed to be put up for sale.

I solicit all residents of Lane County to contact their commissioners and resist the sale of this pristine property named Ocean Woods and ask them to either develop it as a park or return the property to the state. I have registered my opposition to the sale of this property to the county commissioners; however, to date, only Commissioners Pete Sorenson and Jay Bozievich have immediately responded.

Visit the Lane County home page and express your views to the parks staff as well as county commissioners.

Charlie Campione
Florence



Make a difference with Salvation Army

The people of western Lane County have been very supportive of The Salvation Army. Our nearest offices serving Lane County are in Eugene and Springfield. There are also offices in Newport and Coos Bay. However, to make a difference in western Lane County, we need to get organized.

There will be a gathering of supporters and interested persons on Monday, Oct. 12, at the new Riverside Restaurant, 1340 Bay St. During a "Make a Difference" dinner of soup and salad, we will discuss ways to help bring The Salvation Army's resources and services to western Lane County.

A Red Kettle Campaign is being organized and volunteer bell ringers will be sought for shifts at local grocery stores. Some supporters want to help keep our existing food pantries stocked

for the winter. And, discussions are underway to create a Salvation Army Donor Advised Fund with Western Lane Community Foundation.

If any of these subjects interest you, or, if you would like to explore options you may have to give more locally to The Salvation Army, please come. Call 541-991-3363 to attend the dinner.

A suggested donation of \$15 or more will cover the costs of the dinner. If the limited space calls for it, there will be two seatings — one at 5 p.m. and one at 7 p.m.

Bill Olson
Florence

Co-op needs our help

"Organic food! Or as our grandparents called it, 'food.'"

This is my refrigerator magnet, and it's a reminder of how far we have come from growing food naturally and how dependent we are on food shipped

from all over the world.

After World War II, chemical pesticides and fertilizers enabled corporate farms and a burgeoning population. These chemicals are now ubiquitous in our air, water, soil and our bodies. And the amount of fossil fuels used by truck, train and boat to get these foods to us is some of the cause in rise of CO2 in the atmosphere.

The United States has strict organic standards. But many of the organic farms absorbed by corporations are structured to serve chains whose additional "organic" sources are Canada, Mexico, South America and China. Labeled "organic," they are often grown in unregulated conditions.

Corporate chains will not soon lose their place in our society. But we are remembering the importance of our grandparents' food, and how critical farmers' markets and organic food stores are to the availability of sustain-

ably produced crops.

Organic farms in our area, including Whiskey Creek and Greenfields Farm, supply Florence's Real Food Co-op with fresh and nutritious food, and we know how it is grown. Not only has the Co-op served local farms and shoppers for many years, members have given their time to help school children grow gardens, create two community gardens and hold free classes in such things as mushroom identification, cooking and preserving foods.

Recently, there was an article in the Siuslaw News about Real Food Co-op facing the challenges of competitive economic changes ("Real Food Co-op Faces Financial Crisis," Sept. 26, A1).

We are in danger of losing a valuable asset. Shopping there and volunteering will help keep this important resource viable. But more than that, we need a community willing to have a hands-on involvement in its growth and structure, and a way to support our local sustainable farms.

We invite you to bring your energy to this effort. We need ideas, creativity and involvement to make good food an ongoing part of our community. Now more than ever, the good things in our lives need support. The Co-op is one of those good things.

Joann Henderson
Florence

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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