

**Siuslaw News**  
 P.O. Box 10  
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# Opinion

## VIEW FROM UPRIVER



## Autumnal voices

WESLEY VOTH  
 For the Siuslaw News

We have a lot of birds here that produce auditory stimuli this time of year, though only a few like dipper birds, winter wrens and chickadees do so in a lyrical manner. Fishing for salmon has gotten me to spend more time along the river, and I heard a couple of American bitterns the other day; these make a repetitive glunking boinking that is about as unbirdlike as anything around. And then there is the raucous croak of the great blue heron expressing dissatisfaction at being interrupted in its fishing by interlopers.

As a boy I once was greatly spooked by one of these landing on me in the dark while I was fishing for catfish; probably I was sitting in what was its favorite pond side patch of cattails. I saw this enormous cloaking blackness between me and the stars, heard a sudden croaking cry that sounded like what I imagined an attacking pterodactyl would, and then a great rushing of wings and the flailing rasp of its scaly legs and nails in my face as it lifted rapidly away.

The noisiest feathered residents though by far this past month have been the pileated woodpeckers. Nearly the size of a crow, and black with white patches and a bright crimson crest or topknot, hammering horrendously on dead wood and this interspersed with ludicrously crazy calling, it is not easy to miss nor to mistake for anything else. This time of year they supplement their usual fare of carpenter ants and termites with blue elderberries and apples. These must have some alcohol or other inebriating effect, because the birds get quite noisy and behave erratically, sometimes falling to the ground, crashing into things, and losing their fear and usually more distant nature.

There is an incredible resource available to anyone with access to the Internet. Cornell University has a laboratory dedicated to the study of birds, and they archive video and sound recordings. From their website it is easy to identify birds and to learn more about the ones you already know. The website is <http://macaulaylibrary.org/search>. For one of my favorite examples of what is available, go to this website and type in "American Dipper." Choose the second of the recordings there, the song of a dipper bird recorded on an October afternoon on the Elk River here along the Oregon coast.

Dipper birds seem to freely harmonize with the river; both male and female birds do it,

apparently not to communicate with other birds but just for their own enjoyment. I have observed them do this behind our house, crouched on a small midstream rock at dusk, sounding different every time. It is one of my favorite things to listen to, a dipper bird and the river.

I used to hear spotted owls in the woods near here, especially late in the day while mushrooming, but it's been a while. Lately I've seen and heard barred owls instead, a recent arrival to this area. For thousands of years the territories of barred and spotted owls were separated by the Rocky Mountains and the Plains, but barred owls have moved westward over the past hundred years, perhaps in part because of human changes to the landscape — the planting of shade trees in towns and suburbs where there used to be prairie, and fire suppression.

Now the more aggressive and adaptable barred owls compete for territory with the resident spotted. Recent studies show spotted owls go quiet and then leave an area when barred ones move in. If barred owls are removed-shooting them may be the eventual plan for a study area just upriver of Brickerville — some displaced spotted owls move back in. More information can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/species/Data/NorthernSpottedOwl/BarredOwl> and by following the links, but the local study area isn't detailed online as it was in a presentation by Robin Bown of the National Wildlife Service to Siuslaw Watershed Council in May.

Who would have dreamed birds would become such a political issue?

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

### MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On Nov. 5, 1775, Gen. George Washington condemns his troops' planned celebration of the British anti-Catholic holiday, Guy Fawkes Night. Guy Fawkes had been charged with placing gunpowder under the Houses of Parliament to trigger a deadly explosion that would have killed King James I.

- On Nov. 6, 1854, "the March king," John Philip Sousa, is born. The instantly recognizable sound of Sousa's timeless pieces — such as "Stars And Stripes Forever" (1896) — are well-known to many Americans, even if they don't know the names of the pieces.

- On Nov. 4, 1928, Arnold Rothstein, New York's most notorious gambler, is shot and killed during a poker game in Manhattan. When policed asked the bleeding Rothstein who had shot him, he reportedly put his finger to his lips, keeping the gangsters' code of silence.

- On Nov. 7, 1943, singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell is born in Canada. A bout with polio as a child had left Mitchell unable to form guitar chords with her left hand, so she experimented with non-standard tunings that would become part of her signature sound.

- On Nov. 3, 1957, the Soviet Union launches the first animal into space — a dog named Laika — aboard the Sputnik 2 spacecraft. Laika survived for several days, kept alive by a sophisticated life-support system. She died after the batteries ran down.

- On Nov. 2, 1960, a landmark obscenity case over "Lady Chatterley's Lover," by D.H. Lawrence, ends in the acquittal of Penguin Books. The publisher had been sued for obscenity in publishing an unexpurgated version of Lawrence's 1928 novel.

- On Nov. 8, 1994, for the first time in 40 years, the Republican Party wins control of both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. The empowered GOP united under the "Contract with America," a 10-point legislative plan to reduce federal taxes, balance the budget and dismantle social welfare programs.

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## LETTERS

### PEO's wonderful event

In October, I had the pleasure of attending a wonderful event. It was organized by PEO Chapter FQ. Being a newer member of the community, I learned that the purpose was to raise funds for scholarships for Oregon women who are pursuing degrees in higher education. It was called "Wine, Women and Who Knows What?"

Oregon wines were served with appetizers prepared by the culinary arts students from Siuslaw High School. Their pairings were the caliber that I would expect from a high-end restaurant.

There was fantastic local art, a multitude of auction baskets and raffle bags containing a bottle of wine along with other surprises. Plus it was enjoyable for me to visit with many interesting Florence folks.

I encourage everyone in the community to attend the fourth annual event next fall. You will have a great time while supporting a very worthwhile cause.

Barb Giudici  
 Florence

### Support music fest

To the greater Florence community, I am writing to express my support for the Winter Music Festival, held each year since 2003, at the Florence Events Center.

In the fall of 2010, my family and I moved to Florence from the Portland metro area. We presumed that life in a small, isolated town would provide few cultural opportunities for our young family. That first year, we were quite thrilled to discover that this town has a wide array of offerings — primary among them is the Winter Music Festival and especially, its unique Kids Concerts.

Year after year, the Winter Music Festival draws a talented pool of performers. While Florence is generally considered a retirement community, the festival producers take great pains to showcase talent that appeals to all ages. During the dreary winter months here on the coast, families can find an engaging and



educational refuge, right here at home.

Every fall, the Winter Music Festival coordinators plan an outstanding outreach event for our community's students. Our Siuslaw Elementary School's first through fifth graders receive part of the program in advance, and our music teacher incorporates the program into her curriculum.

Siuslaw students, along with those from the surrounding Mapleton, Reedsport and North Bend school districts, are then treated to a special performance at the FEC main theater. It is both heart-warming and awe-inspiring to see several hundred students bouncing, singing and clapping along with the music.

The best part: this live theater concert is provided free to our students. The only cost to the Siuslaw School District is providing bus-ing to the event.

The Winter Music Festival is the major cultural event of the season, for every age and every economic level, in Florence. As such, it deserves our support.

Mike Harklerode, Principal  
 Siuslaw Elementary

### Helping hands

On Oct. 23, my husband, Buck, and I were down on the river loading our boat. However, we couldn't get our boat motor up.

We didn't know what we were going to do, in terms of getting our boat out of the river, without tearing the skag up. Fortunately, David Huntington and fishermen Craig, Bill

and Bob all came to our rescue.

They all put their heads together and came up with a plan — and it worked! In addition, the construction men working on the condos next to the dock helped out with boards and screwdrivers, as did Bridgeport Market. And a special thank you to Jeannie for moral support.

It's a nice feeling that in our time of need there were some really nice folks out there to help.

Buck and Karen Buckmaster  
 Florence

### Good friends in Florence

Thanks so much for all your calls of support. I didn't know my son, Shawn Morgan, had so many friends. All of the calls were from shocked people and had the same response, "He's the best cop in the city."

A lot of folks went on to say how helpful he was with their young drivers and elderly parents. Even some DARE people called with their stories.

Thank you for your good thoughts.  
 Karen Morgan-Loren  
 Florence

### Compassion in action

At the end of one of the worst weeks I've had in years of business in Florence, I had the joy of witnessing love and compassion being poured out by one veteran to another who was in need. I got to see firsthand the brotherhood that connected them to their very souls be a healing balm — a connection that transcended one's wealth and the other's desperate needs as they spoke of their service to their country.

Being from different branches of the military was the source of good-humored banter with an undercurrent of deep respect. Needs were discussed and met by the FAVRA representative and a grass-roots effort gave support and the necessities of life where our VA has failed. God is good.

Liz Breon, owner  
 Coast Jewelers

## 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.

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