

Siuslaw News Sports & Recreation

Silent auction set for next STEP meeting

A silent auction, featuring new fishing tackle and gear, will be held at the Wednesday, Dec. 2, meeting of the Florence Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) with proceeds benefiting the STEP Hatchery improvement fund.

The silent auction will begin at 6:30 p.m., prior to the 7 p.m. start of the group's monthly meeting.

The auction will close about 15 minutes after the end of the meeting.

New fishing tackle has been purchased from local vendors, including Bridgeport Market and North Country Lures and Flies.

"It's the perfect time to find that special gift for your favorite angler," said Craig Brandt, who is organizing the auction for the club. "Not only will you get a good deal on some great fishing gear but you'll be supporting STEP's local hatchery, which provides the winter steelhead fishery on the Siuslaw River."

Several members of the STEP group are members of Thrivent Financial, a not-for-profit membership organization whose mission statement is "connecting faith and finances for good." The organization provides seed money to its members which members can use to benefit the communities in which they live.

Thrivent representative John Thurlow will be in attendance and will explain the company's purpose and commitment to supporting

See **STEP 3B**

Learn to 'Speak Whale' for annual migration

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) will hold the first of three Whale Watching Spoken Here volunteer trainings Dec. 5 at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport.

There will be an additional session is set for Jan. 9, 2016, at Oregon Institute of Marine Biology near Charleston. The Feb. 6, 2016 training at Cape Lookout State Park near Tillamook is full.

Limited seats remain for Newport and Charleston.

Priority registration will be given to new volunteers. The trainings will teach volunteers how to locate and



NED HICKSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

Whalewatching sites will be set at several viewpoints along Highway 101 during annual gray whale migrations in late December and March.

identify whales, as well as how to help visitors spot whales during the watch weeks. Training is free if you pre-register and sign up to volunteer at one of the watch sites for at least two days during either the Dec. 27-31 or March 19-26, Whale Watch weeks.

Prospective volunteers can

learn more about the program and register for the upcoming training sessions at www.whalespoken.org.

Look for the "2015-16 Volunteer Registration and Training Schedule" link for information about the training and the registration form.

OPRD coordinates both the winter and spring Whale Watch Weeks in partnership with Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center, Oregon Institute of Marine Biology and Washington State Parks.

More information about the Whale Watching Spoken Here program is available at www.whalespoken.org or by calling 541-765-3304.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE



NED HICKSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

Mapleton girls team coach Jesika Crook and boys team coach Will Crook go one-on-one during Monday's practice, where the coaches — and married couple — trade duty as head coach and assistant for their programs.

Mapleton coaching duo shares more than love of basketball

BY NED HICKSON
Siuslaw News

You could say that Mapleton High School's girls and boys basketball programs are a true marriage of coaching. And if you were to say that Jesika and Will Crook share more than a love of basketball, you'd also be correct.

That's because after the final whistle blows after practices, the discussion about their individual programs and how to best improve them often continues off the court.

In the car.
On the way home.
Sometimes even over dinner.

After nearly a decade together, and a year-and-a-half of marriage, the couple is well versed in each other.

"We love each other and we love coaching together," says Jesika, who just finished her second season as Mapleton's volleyball coach and has stepped in to helm the girls basketball program this year. "We are truly best friends, and spending this kind of time together is like the perfect fit."

"And she knows the nuts and bolts of basketball," adds Will, now in his second season as head coach of the boys program. "Together, we have a yin-and-yang thing going on that works really well."

In fact, when they aren't coaching their own teams, they serve as assis-

tant coach to each other's programs, switching roles to support each other on and off the court.

The two spent several years in a long-distance relationship after Will, a graduating senior at Jewel High School when he met Jesika, then a freshman, left for college.

"Verizon was our friend," jokes Jesika. "For the next three years it was phone calls every night starting at 9 p.m. on the dot, when the rates were cheapest, and on weekends."

Eventually, the two were reunited on a permanent basis when Jesika graduated from Jewel and began attending Western Oregon University,

See **LOVE 4B**

Public input on special park pass for veterans

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) is seeking public comment on proposed rule changes to the Special Access Pass program.

This program grants veterans with a service connected disability a fee waiver for up to 10 days per month in standard campsites at Oregon State Park campgrounds.

The proposed changes will: allow these reservations to be made online;

simplify the stay limit to 10 days per month; add showers to the list of fee waivers available to pass holders; add a \$5 fee for replacement of a lost pass; clarify when a pass can be revoked or temporarily suspended; add penalties for failure to cancel; and impose a penalty for leaving early without letting park staff know.

More details, including the proposed rule language can be found at www.oprd.gov/Veterans_Pass_Rules.

OPRD will accept comments until 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 18.

Comments can be emailed to oprdr_publiccomment@oregon.gov, and written comments can be sent to Richard Walkoski, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, 725 Summer St. NE, Suite C, Salem OR 97301.

On the Bite

A WEEKLY FISHING REPORT FOR THE LOCAL REGION

www.dfw.state.or.us/RR

MID COAST LAKES
Fishing for the various warm water fish species can be productive during the spring months as lake temperatures start to rise and fish begin spawning. Anglers will start finding more fish up in the shallows over the next month.

Trout stocking continues
The rainbow trout stocking program is in full swing and most water bodies have been stocked recently or will be soon again. Most areas will be stocked multiple times until early June. Be sure to check out the 2015 trout stocking schedule for the most up to date information.

SIUSLAW RIVER:
Steelhead
The river, above tide-

See **FISHING 3B**

SPORTS

Calendar

Winter basketball season openers

Dec. 2

• MHS BOYS BB
AT POWERS
7 P.M.

Dec. 4

• SHS GIRLS BB
HOST COQUILLE
6 P.M.
• SHS BOYS BB
HOST COQUILLE
7:30 P.M.

Dec. 10

• MHS GIRLS BB
AT BROOKINGS
6 P.M.

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148 Maple St.
Florence
541-997-3441