

This year marks Siuslaw News’ quasiquicentennial, 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*

THAT TIME OF YEAR — HEAVY RAINS CAUSE SLIDES

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Let it rain, let it rain, let it rain!
One could very easily substitute the word “rain” in place of “snow” and have the popular winter song apply to our area.
“It seems that everything is sliding that is above bedrock,” said State Police Corporal Cliff Elledge after returning from a long shift on duty in the Mapleton area last Monday.
In the wake of one of the worst mud and rock slides since “the big one” of 1964, residents of Mapleton and other areas of Western Lane County were cleaning up after receiving from between two to five-and-a-half inches of rain over the weekend.
In the area worst hit, the Mapleton water supply reservoir was damaged, resulting in temporary emergency water being trucked in by the Oregon National Guard.
The reservoir and pipeline had been hit, breaking the pipe and partially filling the reservoir itself with rocks and debris.

With available water supplies getting low, George Brunk of the Lion’s Club said on Tuesday that the Lions would be providing additional water to anyone who needed it.
Several homes were damaged by the slides and many roads blocked, coupled with the water problem, led to the closure of the public schools on Monday morning as well.
South Bank Road, Sweet Creek and Highway 36 were all blocked and/or damaged by slides. The worst slide occurred at Farnum’s landing just two miles east of town on Route 36. There a slide some 200 yards wide came down the hillside, tearing up phone and power lines and covering the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks.
Extra state highway crews were called in to help clear the debris and restore utilities.
County Maintenance Foreman Bob Heile said that in several places on South Bank Road, half of the 35-foot road had been washed away, leaving only one lane.
Fortunately the water level did not hamper the cleanup.

Only one family on Riverview Street had to be evacuated because of high water. Had the storm come later in the season, when melting snowpack adds to the runoff, more severe problems would have occurred.
In the immediate Florence area, slides blocked workers from getting to jobs. One of the worst slides came down a hillside near milepost 10 on North Fork Road, burying both lanes. By midmorning Monday, crews from Berry Creek Construction Company were out clearing the road.
“Our entire crew has been out since 1 p.m. Sunday,” said Heile. “We ran out of men and equipment and had to hire out some of the work.”
By Tuesday, crews were freed to work on Big Creek and Ten Mile. Fiddle Creek, Mercer Lake and North Mercer Lake roads were blocked partially as well.
Travelers were trapped between slides on Highway 101, between Sea Lion Caves and Yachats. Four slides covered both sides of the highway by early Monday morning.

The worst one occurred at milepost 174, according to Elledge.
“There was mud and rock 15 feet deep in some places,” he said.
Yachats ambulance service attendants went to the scene of the slides Sunday evening to assist motorists stranded between blockage points. They hiked to it to see if everyone was all right and offered to help.
All the motorists chose to stay with their cars and wait for crews to clear the path.
By Tuesday morning, State Police officials reported that all was clear and no further blockages had occurred in the night.
“It looks like we’ve got ‘er whipped unless we get more rain,” said Elledge.
Mapleton announced that the water system was repaired by Friday.
Water District Superintendent Bob Hyett said the damage to the main water lines was more extensive than first thought, requiring 200 feet of new mains.
The community will continue on emergency water. ❖

LETTERS

Unwanted phone calls

The other day I received four unwanted phone calls. And one, irritatingly, was on my cell phone. I signed up some years ago to not get these; maybe I need to update that. I also have caller ID, but often I grab the phone on the last ring before the answering machine kicks in and don’t see who’s calling.

About 9 a.m., I discovered that I was being sued by the IRS. And that it was urgent to call a specific number right away. The voice was most insistent. I jotted down the number, but haven’t called back. Actually, it’s the third time to receive this call, and nothing has arrived in the mail yet from the IRS.

Mid-day, I received a call — actually the final call they reiterated more than once — regarding my credit card balance and how this was my positively last chance to get it changed to lower rates. This is about the 25th time to receive this “final” call. They’ve called when I’ve owed nothing and when I’ve owed more than I want to admit to. Hmm!

Later, I learned that I had won a few days stay at great lodgings. It took a couple of minutes into the call to find out where: Orlando! But they didn’t say anything about getting there. This is not the first time for this call either. No doubt, it would be in the summer when it’s humid and hot.

The last call came after dinner from a medical alert company. Apparently, there’s a unit already paid for ready to send me, and I just need to approve it and pay the shipping costs. While I think these devices are good, I don’t need one yet. My mom has one, but she’s 103. I’ve been getting this call so often I can recite it right along with the caller.

I’m a natural skeptic and know that if it sounds too good to be true, it is. These calls are all scams, I’m sure. You’ve probably received some or all of them too. They prey on a specific demographic — those of us who are closer to the finish line than the starting line.

Judy Fleagle
Florence



Volunteer with Salvation Army

The Salvation Army — Western Lane County needs your help before it can help others. We are so fortunate to live in the Florence area. We care so much for others year round. Now, we need each other again for a good cause and a great organization.

More volunteers are needed to “stand kettle” at the major retail stores in Florence, in Old Town and Mapleton.

This Saturday, Dec. 12, Pop’s Smokehouse BBQ in Mapleton offers a special promotion and live music. Later that evening, Darlings Marina and RV Resort will host the first Lighted Boat Parade with the help of the U.S. Coast Guard and local fire department. A benefit dinner will follow.

On “Make a Difference” Monday, Dec. 14, come to the Old Town Barbershop on Bay Street from 4 to 6 p.m., or all day across the

street at the Riverside Restaurant, where 10 percent of the proceeds will go to The Salvation Army. Other merchants are creating their own promotions.

All proceeds from these efforts will be used to create a special “agency fund” for restricted use in western Lane County. After \$10,000 is in this fund, a fixed percentage each year will be made available to The Salvation Army’s officers in Eugene to use in our local area.

Local civic leader Sam Spayd donated \$1,000 in November to get this fund started. Big donations are still needed, but every gift counts and makes a difference.

You can donate to the local red kettles or by sending a tax-deductible check to The Salvation Army — Western Lane County, P.O. Box 1041, Florence, OR 97439.

To volunteer to “stand kettle,” call Janet Snow at 559-289-3063.

Bill Olson
Florence

Accepting facts as facts

Last Saturday’s edition contained a letter poo-pooing those of us that are against allowing mass Syrian refugee immigration into our country, that in doing so, as the author stated, it is dangerous to the American ideals that she holds dear (“Justice For All,” Dec. 5).

Her sentiments are what all of us have felt for centuries, but recent events in the world have caused many of us to become realist and accept facts as facts.

The idea that most all refugees are harmless and just looking for a better life while escaping a turbulent former homeland, with only a few in the possible category of being a radical Muslim terrorist, makes me think of the recent e-mail gone viral that shows a jar with supposedly 100,000 M&M candies within and the question that if only 10 of the 100,000 are possibly poisoned, would you want that jar in your home with your family?

A pretty poignant point I think.

Tony Cavarno
Florence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 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.

Write to: Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com