

Sisson to speak about benefits of kombucha

Do your New Year resolutions include beginning or continuing a healthier lifestyle in 2016? If so, have you discovered Kombucha?

Florence Herb Enthusiasts invite all to kick off the new year by learning about the wonderful healing properties of kombucha.

Kombucha can help with what ails you, from arthritis to indigestion.

Join the enthusiasts for a fun hour with local culinary favorite Gayle Sisson as she explores the making and tasting of kombucha.

Whether you are a beginner or expert on this fermented tea, Sisson's presentation will be loaded with valuable information.

Attendees will learn about everything from the benefits of the popular probiotic, what flavors best suit individuals and what equipment is needed to start making kombucha at home.

Attendees will receive valuable information about

online, local, and other resources for sourcing products and continued education.

Very little is required to make kombucha and it is quite affordable. There will be scobies (starters) to share for those who are ready to try. Just bring a baggie or plastic or glass container if you want to take a starter home — but remember, kombucha doesn't like metal.

The Florence Herb Enthusiasts will be gathering for its first presentation of the year, on Thursday, Jan. 21, at 11 a.m., at the New Life Lutheran Church on Spruce Street, next to Florence Food Share parking lot.

Members, remember to pay your annual dues of \$10 this month.

Exact change is appreciated. Through monthly meetings and special events, the Florence Herb Enthusiasts explore, experience and learn about culinary, craft, folklore and medicinal use of herbs.



Gayle Sisson

CAR CHRONICLES —

The journey begins



BY CAL APPLEBEE
Special to the Siuslaw News

We're beginning a new journey — another trip back through time — here in the pages of the Siuslaw News, this time dealing with automobiles.

The Florence community enjoys the existence of at least four car clubs and an older population of retired baby-boomers, many of whom have the dream rides from their youth, so we thought it only fitting to run a series that journeys back in time and visits some of those rides.

Over the years, I have attempted to keep count of the many vehicles that have come and gone from my driveway, and at this point in my life that number totals nearly 90 vehicles. I have to confess, that number does include a few projects that never left under their own power, but were towed away to become someone else's project. But it does include a lot of memories, mostly good, some not-so good!

From time to time I'll reach back into the trunk of my memory and pull out some anecdotes that will hopefully entertain you as well as demonstrate a point in regards to cars. But for starters, we'll begin this journey as with any journey — at the beginning, and for a car buff, that means the first car.

Of course I was like a lot

of kids growing up in the 1950s — a car nut. I had older brothers and sisters who brought friends with cool cars into our life from time to time. I had a model car collection like all the other kids in the neighborhood and couldn't wait to get that first car.

In my early teen years, I ended up living with the Hill family in Idaho, purely a voluntary arrangement and not as a formal adoption or ward of the state, but they did also take in teenaged boys officially as wards of the state. During those years, I actually started learning how to drive: first, old Ford tractors — there are some stories there as well — and, eventually, the farm truck in the field hauling corn and hay, then the family pickup and occasionally the family car. In Idaho at the time, because of the heavy farming and ranching economy, state law allowed a youth to get a daytime-only driver's license at age 14 to help out on the farm.

One of the other kids staying with the Hill family had enough time on his hands that he began working for a neighboring farm lady at the princely sum of \$1 an hour, working towards one of two old cars she had parked in the farm yard. For the price of \$30, when he finished working off his debt, he could have his pick between a 1950 Chrysler and a 1953 Chevy, both four-door sedans.

When he reached \$23 towards his quest, he was transferred to another foster family in another part of the state, and he bequeathed to me his \$23 credit towards the car of his dreams. Being the savvy business planner I thought I was at the time, I took \$7 from my milk money allowance, a brother and a tow chain, visited the neighboring farm yard and towed home my first automobile, a

1953 Chevy 150, four-door sedan.

Chevrolet offered three levels of passenger cars during that time period — the top-of-the-line Bel Air, the mid-line 210 Deluxe and the low-level 150 Special, which was my car. The 150 series was the basic model at that time that didn't have much exterior trim other than the gravel shield. The interior was pretty basic as well — in fact, mine had no back seat. I was told by the neighbor lady that her husband had removed it since he had worked at one time as a traveling salesman and replaced it with a plywood shelf to stack supplies on.

My particular faded blue car had the 235 six-cylinder and three on the tree. Since I had been driving the family Chevy sedans and truck that were similarly outfitted, driving it was a piece of cake. It wasn't fast, wasn't pretty — didn't even have hubcaps — but it was basic transportation and my very own first car.

I think I was toward the end of my sophomore year in high school at the time and that car lasted through the summer months and into the start of my junior year before its demise, when it left me stranded on the side of the road coming home from school one day — something that would become a pattern over the decades.

When new, that car would cost a consumer around \$1,670, depending on options, if any. Today, Internet shopping indicates that car would fetch about \$3,000 for decent and complete untouched examples, and upwards of \$6,500 or more for prime specimens.

For 1953, Chevrolet produced 1,109,718 vehicles, including 300 Corvettes, according to one online resource. Seventeen percent of those were the 150 Series of which mine was, and the

four-door model represented 28 percent of that Series. My particular first car would be one of several Chevrolet products I would own and drive over the years.

Some readers may recall that in the past I have stated that I am not an expert on anything — largely because I am not, but also because I recall Dad Hill telling me during those early formative years that one definition of an "expert" is a "has-been drip, under pressure." So, while I am an enthusiast and passionate about a lot of things, expert I am not, and that certainly applies to automobile mechanics.

On that hot summer afternoon while driving home, my little blue Chevy developed a slight knock in the engine, and since it was only eight miles from Marsing to the farm, I was certain I could nurse it along and make it home so Dad Hill could figure out the problem and solve it as usual.

Of course, I was wrong, another emerging pattern for later in life.

About a mile and a half away from home, a rod went through the side of block and I coasted to the side of the road in a cloud of blue smoke. I hoofed it home, grabbed the farm pickup, a chain and Dad Hill, and we towed it home to the growing boneyard on the farm. That first car would become a donor car to another vehicle in the collection eventually.

So the journey begins — and I hope you'll ride along over future months as we travel back in time and visit some of my vehicles and follies, and along the way, hopefully you will also re-live some of your vehicle ventures.

In the meantime, travel safe.

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Last chance to enroll without health care penalty

SALEM — The month of January is the last opportunity for Oregonians to enroll in health insurance plans for 2016. Open enrollment lasts through Sunday, Jan. 31.

It is the time of year to change plans and, for those who do not have insurance, to buy a plan. If you don't get covered before the deadline, you could go a year without insurance. You could also pay a significant penalty when you file your 2016 taxes.

The penalty for not having insurance in 2016 is the higher of these two numbers: 2.5 per-

cent of your yearly household income or \$695 for every adult in your family, plus \$347.50 for every child under 18.

The penalty could potentially be as much as \$2,085 for a family of four, with two parents and two children younger than 18, earning \$50,000 a year.

Oregonians can sign up, renew, or change their health insurance plans at www.HealthCare.gov.

Even if you were already re-enrolled in your current plan, you can change plans through Jan. 31.

"If the price of your current

plan has increased for 2016, it may be worth checking HealthCare.gov to see if you can find a less expensive plan or if you qualify for financial help," said Patrick Allen, director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS), which runs the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace.

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, consumers who shop and switch plans could save an estimated average of \$569 on their 2016 plan.

As of Jan. 2, 2016, 133,776

Oregonians had selected a plan through Health Care.gov.

That number is about 19 percent higher than the approximately 112,000 Oregonians who selected a plan in 2015.

Financial help is available for many people if they enroll through HealthCare.gov.

Depending on their income, they may qualify for tax credits to help pay their monthly premium and help with out-of-pocket costs such as deductibles and co-pays.

Three out of four Oregonians who used HealthCare.gov last year received tax credits averaging \$199 per month.

Oregon has a network of insurance agents and community organizations ready to help people enroll. You can find an agent or community partner in your area by going to www.oregonhealthcare.gov/get-help.html, or calling the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace at 1-855-268-3767 (toll-free).

DCBS also provided grants to 24 agents to create drop-in enrollment centers during open enrollment. These centers will be open during the entire open enrollment period during normal business hours, with some extended hours.

You can find the list of enrollment centers at www.oregonhealthcare.gov/get-help.html. To start shopping for plans, visit HealthCare.gov or call 1-800-318-2596 (toll-free) (TTY: 1-855-889-4325).

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