

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

**DEAR READERS**  
 Below is an article about the first ever Florence Home and Garden Show in 1997. Don't miss the show's 20th event from Friday afternoon through Sunday at the Florence Events Center. —Editor

## FLORENCE FLASHBACK

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### HOME SHOW ATTRACTS LARGE CROWD

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A Bay Breeze lounge chair and an Elmira cookstove — sold. A wine kit that will make 30 bottles of wine — sold. A bottle of garlic bread-dipping sauce — sold. A worry stone — sold.

Whether it was sales, information or a chance for exhibitors to strut their goods, the first annual Florence Home and Garden Show had it all.

More than 3,500 people attended the three-day event held at the Florence Events Center last weekend. Twenty-eight exhibitors displayed their merchandise in 37 booths located on the flat floor of the event center.

Organizer and co-sponsor of the event Jon Thompson said, "The event turned out better than I had dreamed. The show was a tribute to the events center, which is becoming the social center of the community. I think it reflects the uniqueness of the community the way they responded to an event such as this."

He said the show was promoted by the local media, KCST Radio and the Siuslaw News, the event sponsors, and by the Garden Club, the show's greeters.

"The entire success of the event rested on the shoulders of the vendors, and the success of the event is a reflection on them as well. They performed extremely well, and will prob-

ably reap the rewards," he said.

The group of exhibitors was diverse, much to the delight of many in attendance.

There were demonstrations held throughout the weekend that included everything from toilet repairs to home wine and beer brewing.

Some show attendees said they didn't want to buy anything, but wanted to learn from the demonstrations.

Mapleton resident Angela Canby was on her third demonstration on Saturday, fixing a leaky toilet. After that, she planned to attend a demonstration on composting, food preservation and more the next day.

"All home shows have demonstrations and we try to make it to them," she said. "It's an educational experience, and they usually have something for everyone."

By 1 p.m. on Sunday, 14 people had signed up for plumbing inspections and 50 people had signed up for pest eliminations.

"We were rushing around last night to get more literature in our booth and game tickets because we ran out by the first night," said Dennis Shepard, Pelican Plumbing owner.

"People are really interested in their water and how it's treated. We were really surprised by this turnout and quite overwhelmed."

Exhibitor Linda Ory, of Orygon Home Center, said, "People seem to be real interested in learning to do things

themselves or get help for some of the decorating they want to do," Ory said.

Just at that moment, a customer thanked Ory for work done on a bookcase.

"You see, this is great — we get to visit with the customers we don't get to see after we finish a job," Ory said. "This has been a great show."

The exhibitors made many contacts not only with the show attendees but with each other as well.

Wanda Johnson, co-owner of Florence Hearth and Patio, said one of the nicest things about the show was how the different exhibitors supported each other by lending products for displays.

"We are normally all so busy we don't get to go out in each other's businesses," Johnson said. "So often we don't get to see what the others have in their stores. I have been attending home shows and industry trade shows for 20 years, and I have not seen this happen in other areas. There was full cooperation by the exhibitors with each other."

"Doing a home show in your own home town is like having a three-day party, and you get to see your friends."

Florence resident Arol Salo said it was wonderful that Florence had its own home show and thought the timing was just right.

"I think my wife now has the idea that she wants a pond," Salo said. "And now I've got to get started to work around the back of the house." ❖



### LETTERS

#### A new challenge

Within this past year, Helping Hands Coalition for the homeless has been gratified and astonished. Our small community has responded to our requests for donations with a tremendous outpouring of clothing, camping equipment, kitchen supplies, monetary gifts — the list is endless!

This is a town that cares about those in need. We wish that this letter was merely to thank all of you, but we are facing a more difficult challenge now. Our building has become too small.

We have been searching for another one, but our resources are limited. Florence, will you help us once again? We want to become a stable and effective resource center for our homeless population.

Please consider attending our next planning meeting March 26 at 10 a.m. at Helping Hands, 1339 Rhododendron Drive, where you can share your insights and knowledge with us, or drop by our office and we will meet with you.

Thank you, Florence, for your support.

Sue Thornton  
 Volunteer Coordinator, Florence

#### Oscar night at City Lights

Once again Michael and Susan presented a wonderful venue for viewing the Academy Awards in their theater. With your ticket you received one glass of wine, unlimited hors d'oeuvres and a chance to win a photo from the Milton Green Archives by being the one who was successful by picking the most winners in each category.

There were little gold statues that one could purchase for a prize worth more than the purchase, and a prize for Best Dressed. A wonderful guitar player and female singer provided

entertainment during the evening and there was BoxLunch, which had its van outside offering special meals for the evening.

The awards were shown in two theaters and nominated short and animated films were shown in another theater before the main presentation began.

Truly a nice evening because you could dress up and during commercial breaks one could get more wine and food, schmooze and reconnect with individuals, visit the bathrooms and those that smoked could go outside.

What surprised me is that more people in the

community did not attend the event because they missed a wonderful evening to interact with other patrons to clap and cheer. It was almost like being there.

Win Jolley  
 Florence

#### Camp for all youth

The "Barbershop Trio" article (Feb. 20, A1) referred to the Oregon Youth Authority teaching young offenders important skills and life lessons at Camp Florence.

Where does a camp exist for those youths who are not law offenders to learn these skills and lessons? For those youths who have chosen not to be law violators, where is their Camp Florence?

Seems like the wrong group is being positively rewarded for making the wrong choices instead of vice versa. Separate facilities should be available, and equal opportunities for all should not be ignored.

Thomas Nieland  
 Florence

### 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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