

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

## DISASTER PREP

BY DAVE ROBINSON  
Special to the Siuslaw News

## Seasoned preppers

One of the most vulnerable groups is that of our “seasoned citizens.” Whether it’s mobility issues, health concerns or just simply the “alone factor,” our seniors often have different needs than the younger crowd.

This week’s column is provided especially for our seniors, although the information is just as relevant for the post-boomer generation as well. As I have mentioned before, when disaster occurs, the first responders are overwhelmed. YOYO then becomes a reality: You’re On Your Own.

The American Red Cross recommends you create a Personal Support Network made up of several folks who will check in on you, ensure your wellness and give assistance if needed. This network can consist of friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers and neighbors. Ideally, a minimum of three people can be identified at each location where you regularly spend time, for example at work, home or volunteer site.

There are seven important items to discuss and implement with a personal support network:

1. Make arrangements, prior to an emergency, for your support network to immediately check on you after a disaster and, if

needed, offer assistance.

2. Exchange important keys.

3. Show them where you keep emergency supplies.

4. Share copies of your relevant emergency documents, evacuation plans and emergency health information card.

5. Agree on and practice methods of contacting each other in the event of an emergency. Do not count on the telephones working. (Dave’s note: Check out FRS radios or consider sharing the cost of a goTenna with someone; gotenna.com.)

6. You and your network should always notify each other when you’re going to be out of town and when you will return.

7. The relationship should be mutual. You have a lot to contribute! Learn about each other’s needs and how to help each other in an emergency. You can even collaborate on making preparations to be ready for a disaster.

The single most important thing anyone can do to prepare for a disaster is to organize their neighborhood — and it doesn’t cost a cent! Contacting your neighbors, especially fellow seniors can build a sense of community and camaraderie along with an assurance that no one need to face adversity alone. Introduce the topic at the Senior

Center, or your church group or the quilting group. Collaborating on projects can not only bring some peace of mind, but just may bring some new friends into your life.

Keep in mind you may want to stock up on certain medications. Most doctors are sympathetic to your needs regarding planning for disaster and are willing to cooperate by prescribing most maintenance medications in advance. The difficult thing here is to get your insurance to get on board with that concept. So any advance preparations you make in that regard may have to come out of your own pocket.

Then, be sure to take special care to mind the expiration dates on your meds. Also, try to see your way clear to pick up an extra pair of eyeglasses. Finally, some of us have enough trouble keeping track of our glasses even without a disaster, so adding a pair of drugstore “cheaters” to your kit just might not be a bad idea.

*Dave Robinson is the postmaster in Bandon, Ore., and author of “Disaster Prep for the Rest of Us.” He may be contacted at [disasterprep.dave@gmail.com](mailto:disasterprep.dave@gmail.com). Visit his website for more disaster preparedness tips, [www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com](http://www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com).*

## YESTERDAY’S NEWS

### MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On March 22, 1765, to raise funds to pay off debts and defend the new American territories won from the French, the British government passes the Stamp Act. It levied a tax on all materials printed in the colonies, from newspapers and pamphlets to playing cards and even dice.

- On March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory in New York City burns down, killing 145 workers. Owners had refused to install sprinkler systems and take other safety measures in case they needed to burn down the shop to collect fire insurance, a not uncommon practice at the time.

- On March 23, 1937, Craig Breedlove, the first person to reach land speeds of up to 600 mph in a jet-powered vehicle, is born. He designed a three-wheeled, rocket-shaped vehicle powered by a surplus military jet engine and dubbed it the Spirit of America.

- On March 27, 1945, Nazi Germany launches its last V-2 long-range rockets, killing 162 civilians in England and Belgium. The V-2 could carry a 2,000-pound warhead and became the precursor of the ICBM of the post-war era.

- On March 26, 1953, American medical researcher Dr. Jonas Salk announces that he has successfully tested a vaccine against the virus that causes polio. In 1952 — an epidemic year for the crippling disease — there were 58,000 new cases reported in the U.S.

- On March 21, 1965, in the name of black voting rights, 3,200 civil-rights demonstrators, led by Martin Luther King Jr., begin a historic 54-mile march from Selma, Alabama, to the state capitol at Montgomery.

- On March 24, 1989, the worst oil spill in U.S. territory begins when the supertanker Exxon Valdez runs aground on a reef in Alaska’s remote Prince William Sound. An estimated 11 million gallons of oil was released and eventually covered 1,300 miles of coastline.

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## LETTERS

### Extraordinary person

AJ Brauer is indeed an extraordinary person (“Extraordinary People,” March 9).

As a practicing physician, I have met several individuals during my 25 years in practice who are truly inspiring, and he is one of them. He has contributed to my philosophy and practice as a friend and colleague.

Florence owes a great deal to this wonderful doctor and person.

Bruce Watanabe, MD  
Orthopedics, PeaceHealth Medical Group

### Vote for Woody

I truly endorse Woody Woodbury for Justice of the Peace of Lane County.

Woody has served in several leadership roles, such as Chamber of Commerce president for two years and was on the board for seven. He served on the Florence Food Share board, the Florence Urban Renewal Agency board and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue board.

Woody supports many groups, including the Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County, Power of Florence, PTA, Siuslaw Athletic Booster Club and many others. In 2014, Woody received a special Distinguished Service Award for his many acts of generosity to the Florence community. Woody’s business, Grocery Outlet, donates about 20,000 pounds of food annually to Food Share.

Please vote for Woody. He is the hallmark of a true leader, striving to make Florence a better place.

Eric Tanikawa  
Florence

### Celebrating Shawn’s life

The people of Florence certainly knew how to celebrate the life of Shawn Morgan, and that’s just what they did last Saturday at the high school. It was absolutely marvelous.

Hundreds of people stood in a long line to pay their respects to this young man and his family. For most of them, he was known as a former police officer, but since he was 13, Shawn was raised in Florence, so he was also a classmate and friend.

Atop a fire truck ladder in the front of the school, the American Flag was flown on high, as lights flashed on the truck. The crowd walked between two lines of police officers when they entered the school and made their way to the gym, where they heard the lovely strains of hymns being played on a handmade wooden flute.

Near the end of the service, countless people shared memories of times that they recalled during Shawn’s lifetime, including moving recollections given by his two sons, Justin and Aaron. The minister also read a letter that Shawn’s sister Shanna had sent to Shawn.

The service concluded with a wonderful slideshow of the 48 years of Shawn’s life. Truly this was a glorious celebration of the life of Shawn Eric Morgan, police officer and friend.

Bonnie Schmol  
Florence

### The butterfly effect

The big problems that overwhelm us take up much of our emotional bandwidth these days. We often feel powerless to change things. But sometimes working on the small things can create solutions and positive changes for the future.

Overlooking the smaller details can obscure larger effects as in the “butterfly effect” (“the sensitive dependence on initial conditions in which a small change in one ... system, can result in large differences in a later state”). The metaphor is a butterfly flapping its wings in one place that can cause the action of a hurricane in another.

As we populate the world, we struggle to maintain our quality of life and tend to overlook the necessary attention to basics. I was reminded the other day when I planted crocuses. A large bumblebee began busily checking out the stamens. I have seen no bees this spring and was pleased to watch.

In a few minutes he suddenly fell over and stopped moving, and I remembered I had bought these plants at a local “box” store where the plants have been treated with neonic (short for neonicotinoids, found in Roundup and Bayer treatments). They are ubiquitous in home and agricultural uses.

According to the Texas A&M website: “New research points to potential toxicity to bees and other beneficial insects through low level contamination of nectar and pollen with neonicotinoid insecticides used in agriculture.” And what about butterflies and hummingbirds? Insects are the source of food for many birds, and we are losing our birds as well. Fewer birds, more insects, more toxic chemicals, more toxic foods, more health problems, etc. Shouldn’t we start where we are and be more careful?

Thirty percent of our agricultural crops depend on pollinators. Bees are a major necessity. Without them, we lose much of our fruits, nuts and flowering vegetables. Without those, we may face food shortages, higher food prices and a loss of what we need for good health. This is one small example of how our small actions have a much wider effect. On a larger scale, we are dealing with cancerous chemicals in our agricultural programs and in aerial forest sprays.

At home we can make a difference: stop using insecticides, plant bee-attracting plants, control insects by attracting birds, plant with good compost for stronger plants, grow your own vegetables, and let’s get rid of the chemicals that pollute our water table and soil, and which endanger our pollinators.

We need to find ways to work with nature, not against it. We will all be better for it in the long run. For more information on the toxic chemicals on our produce and flowering plants, go to [organicconsumers.org](http://organicconsumers.org).

Joann Henderson  
Florence

### Wonderful care

Florence was a pleasant coastal town with a fine local hospital, we were told two years ago while looking for a home. We had occasion to learn that first hand recently when my wife faced a life-threatening health event.

From the ambulance personnel to the emergency room staff to the nurses and doctors in the ICU, the general hospital and the walk-in clinic, my wife has had wonderful care. She continues to get better and better, every day.

Thank you, very much, PeaceHealth.  
Stan Pusieski  
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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