

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

## EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

CATHERINE J. ROURKE  
For the Siuslaw News

### Geraldine Lucio



trusted friend. Sometimes I'm more of a therapist than a barber."

Her grandfather cut hair until his 80s and his shop has remained open for 65 years. Her dad still operates a barber shop in San Antonio as well.

"They both wanted the freedom that comes with being your own boss," Geraldine said. "I guess it runs in the family, and I'm following their footsteps."

So did her brother Raymundo, who sought that same freedom and found it by opening his own barber shop in their hometown.

"I tried working at corporate jobs, but my heart wasn't into it," she said. "So I attended a Sassoon Academy but didn't care for the pretentious salons. I had an interview scheduled at one and never made it through the front door. It lacked family atmosphere."

That's when the familiar barber pole called to her. With the family entrepreneurial spirit in her bones, Geraldine realized she was born to be a barber.

"I definitely carry the family DNA for cutting and styling," she said. "Seeing how happy my family members were in their barber shops, I wanted to enjoy that same camaraderie I experienced there as a child."

**"A barbershop offers more than just a haircut. It's a gathering place for conversation with a trusted friend."**

—GERALDINE LUCIO

Geraldine found a position with a popular barber shop in Austin ranked as the "Best Haircut" by Texas media. While Geraldine felt right at home, she didn't know at that time that her real home awaited her on the Oregon coast. Once she discovered Florence, she never looked back.

"There's a true homey feeling here," she said. "It's totally down to earth."

Geraldine opened the Old Town Barbershop on Bay Street in 2015 after completely remodeling the space. Vintage fixtures and furnishings include antique barber chairs, the oldest dating back to 1901.

"They're like thrones," she said. "Essentially what I'm doing is bringing my grandfather's barber shop back to life. Anyone who comes in here will enjoy a classic barber shop experience, with authentic chairs, personalized cuts, a cup of coffee and good conversation."

Geraldine looks to the future with the latest styles, but also guides clients to choose the most attractive cut for their features instead of new trends.

"I want everyone to be satisfied," she said. "There are no cookie-cutter approaches here — only personalized cuts. I plan to keep a balance between the past I want honored and the future I hope blooms."

As a Lucio barber, Geraldine now contributes to the family's 90 years of combined experience in the hair business, a legacy in which she takes great pride. Her plans include supporting local artists by displaying their art on the shop walls.

"The freedom of the job is what I really love," she said. "For me, barbering offers the freedom to express myself creatively and to be who I really am. I love meeting so many people and working with different hairstyles each day. It's more about my personality than the job itself."

That independent streak also lured Geraldine into the seat of a Cessna 172 where she's working on her pilot's license.

"I love the freedom of drifting through the clouds, with no traffic lights," she said. "It's a total escape — just me and the sky and my rac-



PHOTO BY CATHERINE ROURKE

**Bay Street offered "the perfect historic setting" for Geraldine's old-fashioned barbershop in her family tradition.**

ing heart."

Geraldine slows down that heart by practicing yoga, but opens it up for the needs of the Florence community. Her next fundraising event will take place at her barbershop on Friday evening, May 6, when she hosts the "Green Carpet" fashion show and clothing drive. The gala will showcase clothing by area designers and artists to benefit Helping Hands Coalition, just one of many local causes dear to her heart.

"I want to cut hair for generations

of families," she said. "I've already become acquainted with so many wonderful hearts and souls here. I want to create memories and fun events for the Florence community that help people at the same time."

*Catherine J. Rourke is an award-winning writer, journalist and book editor who teaches creative writing at the Florence Regional Arts Alliance. She may be contacted at CJReditor@gmail.com.*

## LETTERS

### Choose a political party

While I applaud Lane County's public service voting announcement ("Check Voter Registration as May Elections Near," April 16, page 6A), it is misleading.

Oregon's Primary Election for president, May 17, is a closed election. You must not only be registered, but must be a member of a candidate's particular political party to vote for them.

All registered voters will get ballots to vote for local candidates. But, if you are registered as Non-affiliated, Independent, Green, Libertarian or any of the other parties and want to vote for a presidential candidate, you must switch your registration by April 26.

You can always switch back before the General Election in November, if you feel strongly about your affiliation.

Don Patton  
Florence

### Vote 'no' on school bond

In the upcoming election, Florence voters will again be asked to approve another school bond. This one is for a new high school. The Siuslaw School Board is telling us that "we won a federal lottery in the sum of \$4 million" for our schools. Now all we have to do to receive that sum is come up with another \$36.9 million. So all we now have to do is to tear down the existing high school and build a new one.

According to the "Siuslaw School District Bond — Just the Facts," they want the taxpayer owning a \$200,000 assessed value home to believe they will only pay \$20/month or \$240/year toward the bond. When in reality, that's only the first



year assessment.

In the 25th year of the bond, that same homeowner will pay \$496/year. This is due to an increase in assessed value of your home at 3 percent compounded each year. Since the board does not know what percentage rate they will get on the bond, the total cost for this bond could go as high as \$70 million when all is said and done.

On your current tax statement, there are currently six separate taxes and bonds that total approximately 44.8 percent of your total tax bill. I personally pay \$2,031 a year for our schools. So I urge you to review your current tax statement so you can see how much actually goes to the schools now.

I urge you to go to the high school and take one of the walkabouts that will show you this school still has many years of life

left — it is only 46 years old.

It seems the only tax base in this town is property taxes since we do not have any industry or large commercial companies supplying taxes. How much more is the taxpayer supposed to take on and still be able to afford to live in their own home?

Don't think because you are a renter that this does not apply to you because it does. As soon as your landlord gets an increase in taxes, that amount will be passed on to you.

I urge everyone to vote no on this school bond.

James McCoe  
Florence

### Elect Woodbury

Woody Woodbury is running for Lane County Justice of the Peace. I have known Woody for nearly 10 years. His honesty and integrity are beyond reproach.

I have always found him visible in the community, approachable in all settings, and accessible — if you need Woody, he is there for you. This is exactly what he brings to the people of Lane County.

As a retired law enforcement officer, it is critically important to have a magistrate with those three qualities not only for the community he serves, but for local law enforcement who need an approachable and accessible magistrate to do their jobs effectively.

Please join me in voting for Woody Woodbury for Lane County Justice of the Peace.

Maurice K. Sanders  
Retired Florence Chief of Police

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## 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.

**Write to: Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com.**