

# GENERAL NEWS

## Rhody Showcase set for May 11 at FEC

**Queen Rhododendra to be crowned during the fun-filled event**

This year's junior and senior Rhody Courts are gearing up for the Rhododendron Court Scholarship Showcase set for Wednesday, May 11, at 6:30 p.m., at the Florence Events Center.

Formerly known as the Rhododendron Pageant and now held in advance of the annual Rhododendron Festival, this year's event features two juniors, Hannah Anderson and Taylor Coolidge, and one senior, Lyndsey Keppel, from Siuslaw High School who will compete for scholarships and title Queen Rhododendra.

The junior court is made up of five princesses and five princes representing grades 1 through 5 from both Florence and Mapleton.

For the past several weeks, members of the Senior Rhody

Court and Junior Princesses have been serving as ambassadors for the festival by visiting senior residences, volunteering in the community and, most recently, rehearsing their talents for the fun-filled Rhody Showcase.

Court members will be judged individually and as teams on participation, mentorship, public speaking and platform presentation, pin sales and talent.

Queen Rhododendra will be crowned at the end of the showcase, and both courts will make appearances in the the Kids Parade and Grand Floral Parade during the 109th Rhododendron Festival, May 20 through 22.

Advance tickets are on sale now for \$13 and are available through the Florence Events Center box office, or online [www.eventcenter.org](http://www.eventcenter.org).

## Lutheran Church donates to Helping Hands

On April 20, members from the Resurrection Lutheran Church congregation presented Helping Hands Coalition \$1,100 from their fundraising tea efforts last week, as well as food donations to help stock their pantry.

Helping Hands Coalition is an all-volunteer community organization dedicated to providing services, food, clothing and a daytime center for the homeless and the less fortunate.

It provides hot meals every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 1339 Rhododendron Drive in Florence. For more information, visit [www.helpinghandsflorence.org](http://www.helpinghandsflorence.org).

**From left: Helping Hands volunteer Jan Hirsch with Resurrection Lutheran Church members Charlene Blodgett, Deborah Heldt Cordone and Minn Depweg.**



DEBORAH HELDT CORDONE

## Soroptimists host human trafficking seminar

Soroptimist International Club of Florence with its sponsors hosted a Human Trafficking Seminar on Saturday, April 2, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The speakers for the panel were Chief Turner of the Florence Police Department, Runaway and Homeless Youth Services of Eugene director Kristin London, Hope Ranch Youth Ministries founder and board president Diana Jantz, and two formerly trafficked

young women who left that life to become productive citizens.

Chief Turner gave an enlightened view of the crime aspect and how difficult it is to prosecute if a victim is afraid to report. He encouraged citizens to report any suspicious behavior or call one of the hotlines.

London focused on why youth are runaways and how to get them into a safe living arrangement that can begin

giving them positive paths to follow or lead.

Jantz presented slides and a video showing actual trafficking happening, as well as photos of past and present victims.

The former trafficked women presented their stories of abuse and how they have turned their lives around to become productive citizens.

There were handouts describing how to recognize child victims, how to identify the trafficker and how to look

beneath the surface to see a person.

The purpose of the handouts was to inform others how to recognize red flags and take a proper course of action.

Sponsors of the seminar included: Oregon Pacific Bank, Holloway and Associates LLC, CPAs, The Shippin' Shack, Sea Lion Caves, Neil's Carpet Cleaning, Cindy Wobbe and Associates, and Grocery Outlet.

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## Police pursue reckless driver on Highway 101

By CHANTELE MEYER  
Siuslaw News

On April 22, multiple police agencies responded to a pursuit on Highway 101 that led to the arrest of Charles Richard Farrell III, of Vancouver, Wash.

According to a report, an Oregon State Police trooper stopped the vehicle Farrell, 25, was driving on Highway 101 south of Winchester Bay.

"The operator drove away while I was approaching the vehicle," the trooper said.

Farrell fled northbound at speeds over 100 miles per hour and continued driving recklessly through Reedsport and Gardiner and into Lane County.

Other agencies joined in the pursuit, including Reedsport Police Department, Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Lane

County Sheriff's Office, Florence Police Department, Coos County Sheriff's Office and Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians Police Department.

Florence Police Department set up spike strips on Highway 101 at the Siuslaw River Bridge, but Farrell turned the vehicle onto a side road before the bridge. He continued down the road until reaching a dead end at a residence.

At that point, Farrell and his passenger, Danielle Dawn Reed, 25, left the vehicle and entered a wooded area near the Siuslaw River. Farrell left the vehicle running, however — it continued its forward motion until coming to a rest against a retaining wall.

Coos County Deputy Adam Slater and his K9 partner Odin pursued Farrell, locating him

in an adjacent wooded area. Reed faced no criminal charges and was not pursued further.

Farrell was arrested and transported to the Reedsport Police Department jail where he was issued criminal citations for felony elude, reckless driving, reckless endangering and misdemeanor elude. He was issued violation citations for violation of basic rule driving over 100 miles per hour, driving with a suspended license and careless driving.

Farrell was then taken to Lane County Jail.

Cleanup crews removed a green pickup truck from the southbound lane of Highway 101 on Siuslaw River Bridge. Drivers crossing the bridge experienced minor traffic delays until the incident concluded around 9:30 a.m.

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## Dave's Weekly Garden Tip

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APRIL 27	APRIL 28	APRIL 29	APRIL 30	MAY 1	MAY 2	MAY 3
On and Off Rain and Drizzle	Sunshine and Patchy Clouds	Partly Sunny	Clouds limiting Sun	Clouds yielding to Sun	Sunny	Possible Showers
56°F 49°F	59°F 45°F	59°F 42°F	61°F 46°F	68°F 49°F	71°F 49°F	69°F 44°F

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