



# My commencement address (if I ever give one)

Ned Hickson

To the Class of 2016, faculty members, parents, dignitaries, mis-informed wedding crashers and Visa/Master Card representatives who have gathered here today: I am honored to have the opportunity to address this group of graduating seniors and impart the wisdom I have gained since my own graduation from high school nearly 150 years ago.

Standing before you today, I see the anticipation on your faces as each of you comes to realize what sharing my wisdom with you means: Possibly the shortest commencement speech in school history.

Before long, you will step forward and receive the culmination of 12 — possibly 14 — years of education. You will shake hands with some of those who have helped guide you to this milestone. And unless your last name begins with a “Z,” you will return to your seat as the rest your classmates step forward to receive their diplomas.

That’s when you will silently think to yourself, “I really shouldn’t have had that second bottle of Mountain Dew.”

But you will sit quietly, probably cross-legged, and deal with it. You are now officially your own person — making your own decisions, embracing the rewards and accepting the consequences of those decisions — as you embark on a jour-

ney of independence in a world of your own making. At least until laundry day, when you will return home to eat chocolate chip cookies while mom gets the Cheeto and pizza stains out of your favorite underwear.

That’s because having wisdom isn’t about knowing everything. It’s also about recognizing and acknowledging when you *don’t*. Just like getting those stains out, it’s OK to admit when you don’t know how to do something or handle a tough situation in life.

A smart person takes ownership of the things they know; I wise person seeks the knowledge of others when they don’t.

When I graduated from high school in 1984, there was no Internet. No Siri.

No Pinterest. No Kanye West. Therefore, the Class of 1984 was expected to know EVERYTHING. The pressure was tremendous! We hugged our parents goodbye and entered a dark, Google-less world. We were young pilots flying blind. Dead stick. Rudderless. Broken-winged. And lots of other euphemisms I am now able to Google for occasions like this.

We had no choice but to rely on each other. We pooled our knowledge. Challenged each other. And together we advanced ourselves and society by having the courage to answer fundamental questions like: *What would happen if we grew chia seeds on a clay pot shaped like ‘Mr. T?’*

Truth be told, it’s human nature to want to know all the answers. At the same time,

culture discourages us from admitting when we don’t have them. You’ve now spent the better part of your first 17 to 18 years of life receiving an education. Not so you’ll have all the answers, but have the courage and wisdom to ask the kinds of questions that will improve your life and, hopefully, the lives of others.

This will take more than Googling. More than Wikipedia. Possibly even more than “How-To” videos on YouTube.

It’s certainly going to take a great data and texting plan.

However, most of all, it’s going to take the kind of determination that got you here; sitting in these chairs; moments away from receiving your diploma; and still regretting that second bottle of Mountain Dew.

Yet, I look upon your faces and see my own hope reflected in them. When you leave here, be courageous and wise. Never be afraid to admit you don’t have all the answers.

Those who do are destined to a life of empty promises. Usually somewhere in our nation’s Capitol.

Always remember the feeling you have right now. The anticipation. The hope. The unlimited possibilities. It’s who you are at this moment.

It’s who you will always be as long as you allow yourself to be wise...

*Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His first book, “Humor at the Speed of Life,” is available from Port Hole Publishing, Amazon and Barnes and Nobel. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com.*

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## Community preparedness focus of today’s ‘Our Town’

A four-day exercise aimed at testing the oversight of disastrous events in Oregon will involve local emergency response agencies in early June.

Members of the Western Lane Emergency Operations Group (WLEOG) will talk about the June 7-10 exercise on this month’s edition of KCST Coast Radio’s Our Town.

Today, June 1, from 4 to 6 p.m. on 106.9 KCST, then again Thursday, June 2, from 10 a.m. to noon on 104.1 KCFM, the radio show will highlight the local involvement in Cascadia Rising, a four-day training exercise that will examine how planning, execution and communication

of disaster response agencies will react in the event of a widespread disaster.

Megan Messmer, the president of WLEOG, will anchor a four-person panel that includes Florence Police Chief Tom Turner, Siuslaw Valley Fire Chief Jim Langborg, and Western Lane Ambulance Executive Director Brian Burright. They will talk with Our Town host Bob Sneddon about their preparations and planned responses this week.

The drill won’t include any public or actual response efforts. It will be a closed “table top” drill that will test the plans already in place. One major benefit of the drill, according to local responders, will be in testing the commu-

nications plans already developed for the area.

Also on Our Town, Siuslaw School Board chairwoman Tammy Butler will talk about conversations the board has had following the failure of last month’s \$36.9 million levy that would have funded construction of a new high school in Florence.

“The need hasn’t gone away just because voters said ‘no,’” said Butler. Officials are planning on reviewing their effort in the coming weeks and months and might resubmit another proposal to voters next year.

Siuslaw Primary School principal Mike Harkelrode will talk about a new summer program called “Kids in Transition to School” (KITS) aimed at helping incoming kindergartners get prepared for the coming school year. KITS is also a research project presented by Portland State University and works with parents as well as kids.

One other segment on Our Town will feature three area business leaders and their efforts to establish and endowment fund that would provide

an annual \$2,500 scholarship to the recipient of the Florence Future First Citizen award.

It would be named in honor of Marteen Wick, a long-time local resident and business owner who recently passed away.

Lisa Sedlacek, Kay King and Ron Green will talk about Wick’s contributions to the community, as well as their efforts to establish the endowment fund. They estimate they need at least \$62,000 to permanently endow the fund.

They have raised just over \$10,000 so far, plus an additional \$2,500 that will be awarded to this year’s recipient, Siuslaw High School senior Hannah Bartlett.

Our Town is sponsored by Andy Baber of Edward Jones Investments; Holloway and Associates CPAs; the Archives Photo Restoration Specialists, Lane Community College in Florence, Siuslaw Public Library and PeaceHealth. It airs on KCST, FM 106.9, the first Wednesday of each month between 4 and 6 p.m.; then again the next morning on KCFM, AM1250-FM 104.1 from 10 a.m. to noon.

**The Florence Organic Farmers’ Market will start its 20th season on May 28 and continuing through October 29.**

The market will be open THIS SATURDAY from 10am-2pm at 310 Highway 101 ( Pro Lumber)

The market accepts WIC and Farm Direct Nutrition vouchers.

For more information, call Maria at 541-902-8815.

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## Dogs for the Deaf topic at Lions Club meeting June 7

Dogs for the Deaf is the subject of the Tuesday, June 7, Florence Lions Club meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Pacific Pines RV Park meeting room, 4044 Highway 101 (entrance on 42nd Street).

Interested members of the public are invited to attend.

Dogs for the Deaf rescues dogs from animal shelters throughout the western United States. After professional training at its southern Oregon facility, the dogs are placed

with people with a variety of disabilities and challenges (including hearing loss and deafness), as well as full-time professionals (teachers, physicians, counselors and other healthcare professionals) in the treatment of and work with their clients.

The dogs are placed with qualified clients throughout the United States.

For more information, contact Linda Stent at 541-844-5573.

Florence Food Share is your local community food pantry. We serve emergency food boxes to all those who qualify financially. Our hours are 9:30a.m.-1p.m., Monday through Friday. We reopen in the afternoons on Monday and Wednesday from 4-6p.m. We are also now open the first and third Saturday of each month, from 10a.m. – 1p.m. Please call us with any questions and/or for more information.

2190 Spruce Street  
541-997-9110  
[www.florencefoodshare.org](http://www.florencefoodshare.org)  
[info@florencefoodshare.org](mailto:info@florencefoodshare.org)

Florence Food Share es su lacena de comida comunitaria. Servimos cajas de comida de emergencia a todos esos que calificquen financieramente. Nuestras horas son de 9:30a.m. – 1p.m., de lunes a viernes. Re-abrimos por la tarde del lunes y del miércoles de 4-6p.m. También, ahora abrimos el primer y tercer sábado de cada mes, de 10a.m. – 1p.m. Por favor llámenos con cualquier duda y/o para conseguir más información.

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