

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

## FLORENCE FLASHBACK

1890 | THE WEST ❖ FLORENCE TIMES ❖ THE SIUSLAW OAR ❖ THE SIUSLAW NEWS ❖ SIUSLAW NEWS | 2016

### SEA LION CAVES ADDS ELEVATOR

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Keeping in step with the modern trend toward efficiency and speed, and offering a great advantage to the aged or infirm and to small children, the Sea Lion Caves, 12 miles north of Florence, have installed an elevator to carry people to the lower level of the steep hillside that is the location of the popular tourist attraction.

The 210-foot elevator is capable of carrying 3,500 pounds, or about 24 people whose average weight is about 145 pounds. Instead of floor designations, there is a lighted panel indicating in feet the distance traveled. It is self operating, and is connected by an inter-

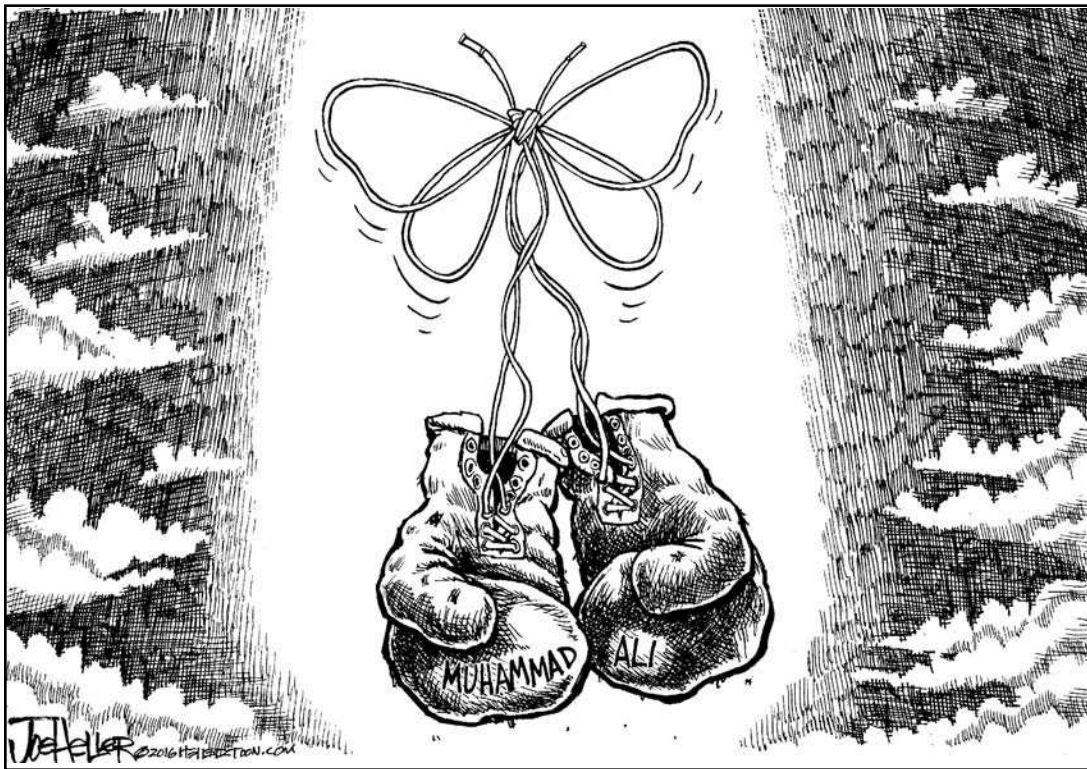
com system to the main office. There is also an auxiliary power plant with automatic controls to operate the elevator in case of a power failure. The stairway is still in use, but with the new elevator, it will be discontinued in the future.

The intercom system is connected with the elevator, the cave platform, machine room and office. Electric lights in the cave and portions of the trail have been installed.

It was necessary to drill and blast a perpendicular tunnel through solid rock to accommodate the elevator. Operations for this were begun in 1958 and costs for the entire project came to about \$175,000,

according to the owners, C. S. Saubert, John C. Jacobson and Don Houghton. A 55-foot tunnel runs east from the observation platform to the lower end of the elevator; this, also, was cut through solid rock. A petrified skeleton of a sea lion was exposed in the cave, and is fenced off and can be viewed by the public.

The Sea Lion Caves had 117,000 registered visitors last year, and employs a personnel of 10 in addition to the owners who work there. They are open all year, though they employ only one person in the winter season. In addition to the caves from which the sea lions are visible, they operate a coffee and gift shop. ❖



## Remembering Muhammad Ali

I met Muhammad Ali in 1986 when he expressed interest in a project I had undertaken to build a West Coast Olympic Training and Youth Center in Concord, Calif.

The news had spread throughout the boxing club circuit since we were actively involved in a boxing training program at the Little C Athletic Club in Concord. Terry Lee, a sparring partner to Ali, was the coach there. The Little C was funded by the Kenneth Hofmann Foundation, of which I was the director.

We invited Ali to Concord to take part in a kick-off fundraising event

for the Youth Center. He not only agreed but suggested a three-round bout between he and Lee at the event. We advertised the event, including the Ali bout with Lee. We sold out in one day, at \$200 a seat.

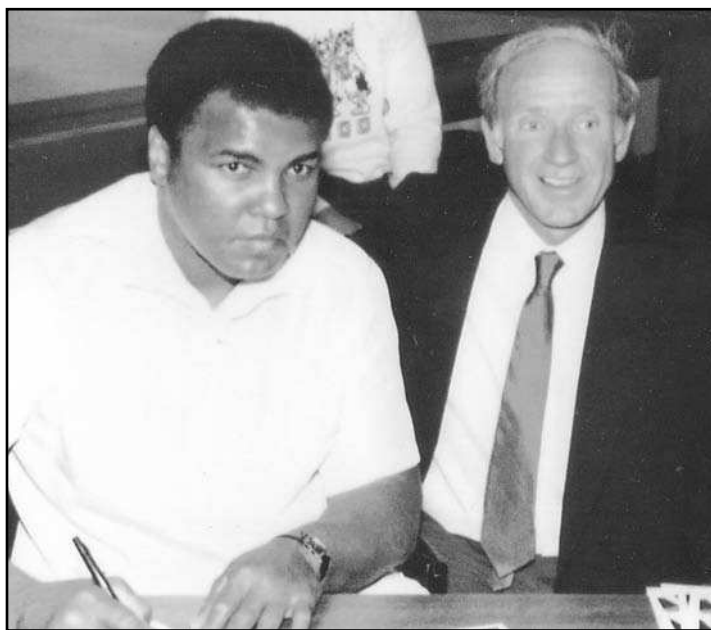
We set up a ring in a gym surrounded by tables for an added dinner. Ali made the Youth Center a big deal in the media and greatly enhanced our fundraising effort.

A couple of months later he called me and invited Lee and myself to Las Vegas to attend a big fight and a party with a lot of high rollers, many movie stars.

We met Ali in

### GUEST VIEWPOINT

BY GENE OLSON  
 FLORENCE RESIDENT



Muhammad Ali and Gene Olson

Hollywood and drove to Las Vegas in his fancy motorhome. He told us we could raise quite a bit of money there as long as we hung out with him. True enough, as we walked along the main street almost everyone would yell out "Ali! Ali!" Every restaurant and club we visited we were served free. I was beginning to feel important.

The party was at Caesars Palace overlooking the boxing ring below. It was filled with movie stars and other boxers. Ali told me to stand next to him at all times because all the important people will come and ask to have their picture taken with

him. He was certainly correct about that. I was able to hand out our Youth Center flyer to most everyone.

At the fight itself I was able to sit next to Ali at ringside. It was indeed an exciting day. Our fundraising effort, over the next couple of months, blossomed due to the caring and effort given to it by Muhammad Ali.

**Editor's Note:** Boxing legend Muhammad Ali died of septic shock June 3 at age 74 in Scottsdale, Ariz. Ali, who had suffered from Parkinson's disease for the past 32 years, was a world champion boxer and civil rights icon.

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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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