

Siuslaw News
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Opinion

FLORENCE FLASHBACK

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

DUNES DEDICATION DRAWS 600 PEOPLE

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The Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, newest and most unique public area in the United States, was dedicated on Saturday with the keynote on conservation, planning and wise utilization of resources.

Congressman John Dellenback, author of the Dunes Bill, was in the forefront all day, from the breakfast in Florence, attended by 122, to the dedication ceremonies at the Eel Creek Campground and the final luncheon hosted by Douglas County and Reedsport in the afternoon.

Dellenback set the key for the day at the Florence breakfast when he said that it was appropriate for the ceremonies to begin here, "because it was here that it all started in 1966."

"We have worked long and hard together to preserve the magnificent Oregon Dunes for all Americans," he said. "Now it's up to us to work just as hard to make sure future development doesn't ruin the natural beauty of the 32,000-acre national recreation area."

Dunes legislation was first introduced in 1959, but it was defeated.

"I came to Florence and came to appreciate and depend on your support and advice," Dellenback said.

It took widespread support from local interests, the state of Oregon and federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to establish the national recreation area.

Gov. Tom McCall said the dedication was a "great day for all Americans, as well as all Oregonians."

The dedication ceremonies, in perfect weather near the Umpqua Scenic Area at Eel Creek Campgrounds 10 miles south of Reedsport, drew a crowd of nearly 600, including a large delegation from Florence.

Security was tight with mounted and foot patrols in evidence, along with uniformed and plainclothes police officers.

Speakers noted that the dunes are the finest coastal dunes in the United States, that 13 dunes bills were introduced in Congress since 1959 and that funds would be authorized to enable work to begin in earnest next year.

Among plans on the drawing board are added facilities at Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes, including additional boat launching facilities, camp-

grounds and other installations.

A visitor's information center will also be established as soon as possible with exhibits, information and explanatory programs to familiarize people with the dunes.

Siuslaw National Forest Supervisor Spencer T. Moore paid tribute to a number of Florence-area residents who were influential in hammering out the final bill. Included were Jack Parker, Wilbur Ternyik, Howard Campbell, Dave Holman, Howard Ragan, Judd Huntington and A.E. "Pony" Ellingson of Mapleton.

"These 32,000 acres that now come under joint federal, state, county, city and private protection are a monument to the dedication of many to save a few of our natural resources for all time," McCall said.

Dellenback said, "We didn't nationalize the Oregon dunes, we federalized them with true cooperation between all levels of government and private citizens. A balanced, sound, long-range program of development, conservation and utilization of this magnificent area will be the springboard for increased involvement of the U.S. Forest Service in recreation development and management, not only here but throughout the United States." ❖

LETTERS

The light of love

Last week was a very difficult week for our country as a whole and for those of us who are members of the LGBTQ community. When news unfolded about the tragic mass killing at Pulse, a LGBTQ nightclub in Orlando, I was shaken to my core.

I am so grateful for the ecumenical gathering held on Thursday, June 16, and led by an interfaith group of leaders, including Georgia DuBose, vicar, and Steve Avery, deacon, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church; Greg Wood, pastor, Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw; Lori Blake, pastor, New Life Lutheran Church; Dale Edwards, pastor, Crossroads Assembly of God; Joanie Schmidt, chaplain, PeaceHealth Medical Center; Susanne Mann-Heintz, Baha'is of Florence; and Judy Schwartz, chaplain, Ha'avurah of Florence.

Having a place to gather together, to mourn, to share stories and to meditate and pray was the start of a healing process for many.

In recent years, the changing climate of acceptance and love, on the whole, in our country, enabled many of us who grew up being very cautious, to be more open, to share our life stories, without fear or recrimination. That feeling of safety and acceptance was shattered early Sunday morning, June 12. It was shattered both by the horrific actions of the gunman and by the horrific responses of some religious and political leaders, who used the tragedy as a way to blame a lifestyle "choice."

But Thursday evening, the light of love washed over me as members of our Florence community gathered. Coming together, mothers, sons and daughters, friends, partners, spouses, neighbors, let love wash away the hurt and the fear.

Thank you to the leaders of the ecumenical group who gave us the opportunity to mourn, to meditate and to begin healing. Thank you to members of the community who gathered together to mourn, to pray, to embrace and to remind each other that love conquers hate.

Becky Goehring
Florence

Touched by the reverence

My heart has been so heavy as I think of the victims of the Orlando shooting. The news has been tragic. Over a hundred people shot at a popular gay nightclub that was celebrating "Latino night" — 49 of whom did not survive.

Two young men who planned to marry will now be buried next to one another. A mother out dancing with her son will never dance again. Wounded victims so afraid to be "outed" that they didn't seek medical help. Families learning of their child's orientation for the first time because they were among the dead.

And yet, among all the pain and ugliness, there was goodness and hope. Friends and allies waited in lines that stretched for blocks to donate blood. Chik-fil-A, a fast food chain with an anti-gay reputation, gave away free food at blood drive locations. Jet Blue Airlines offered free flights to family members trying to get to Florida. On one of those flights, every single passenger wrote a note of encouragement to a grandmother on her way to her grandson's funeral.

Even here, people in Florence have responded with kindness and support. An interfaith group scheduled a vigil of remembrance at the Episcopal church. Sixty to 80 people attended that vigil along with clergy from New Life Lutheran, St. Andrew's Episcopal, the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, Cross Road Assembly of God, the Jewish community and the hospital chaplain. I was so touched by the reverence and outpouring of concern.

I pray that no one is ever again hurt or killed simply because they are gay. And, I am grateful for those in this community who join me in that prayer.

Lucinda Hughes
Florence

False claim against Sanders

Regarding the June 4 letter "Bernie's Claim to Fame": Stating (sarcastically) that Bernie Sanders' one claim to fame was his oversight of a disastrous Veterans Affairs (VA) is false and simplistic. VA trouble started long before Sanders chaired the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (2013 to 2015). He didn't cure all VA ills but left it better off.

According to the VA and Military Medicine, between 2007 and 2013 aging Vietnam vets and horrifically wounded Iraq and Afghanistan vets increased demands on VA services by 46 percent. Sanders proposed \$21 billion in funding, but Congress voted it down. Then in 2014 the VA scandal hit the news.

The New York Times reported that Sanders initially believed stories of VA dysfunction to be exaggerations by Republicans trying to privatize vet benefits. But the whistleblower in Phoenix, Dr. Sam Foote, said that Sanders "quickly realized the VA was lying, and he turned right around and was all over them."

With Sen. John McCain and the House VA Committee Chair, Sanders negotiated \$16 bil-

lion in funding, which earned him awards from the American Legion and VFW. Congressional Quarterly called it "one of the most significant deals in years."

The bill didn't address self-dealing VA officials. Congress still grapples with systemic VA corruption, which can't fairly be laid on the shoulders of any one man.

VA problems are part of a larger issue that needs public discussion — the true costs of long-term military combat operations. Sanders' position: "If you think it is too expensive to take care of veterans, don't send them to war."

Sanders' claims to fame include: four-term mayor of Burlington, Vt.; longest-serving (eight-term) Independent U.S. Congressman, and proving that a presidential candidate doesn't have to sell out to billionaires (or be one) to fund a major campaign — through small contributions from working people he has stood up for over the past 40 years.

Rollin Olson
Florence

Evolution

In his 1985 novel, "Galápagos," Kurt Vonnegut creates a far distant future where the highest form of life on earth is a cute little sea creature, resembling a cross between a seal and a penguin.

This fiction is based on the idea that somewhere near the end of the 20th century the human brain had evolved to be so large as to be constantly getting us into serious trouble. At this point, natural selection kicked in to favor smaller, and thus safer, brains; a process that resulted, over millions of years, in the future the novel describes.

Could it be we are now seeing signs that Mr. Vonnegut was indeed quite prescient? Did our brains reach a point several years ago where nature decided to start downsizing?

Is the potential nomination of Donald Trump for President of the United States not clear evidence that such a process is, in fact, at work?

Just wondering.

Jimmie Zinn
Florence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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.

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