

Siuslaw News
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Opinion

FLORENCE FLASHBACK

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STIFF AFTERNOON WINDS BRING EXTREME KITEBOARDING

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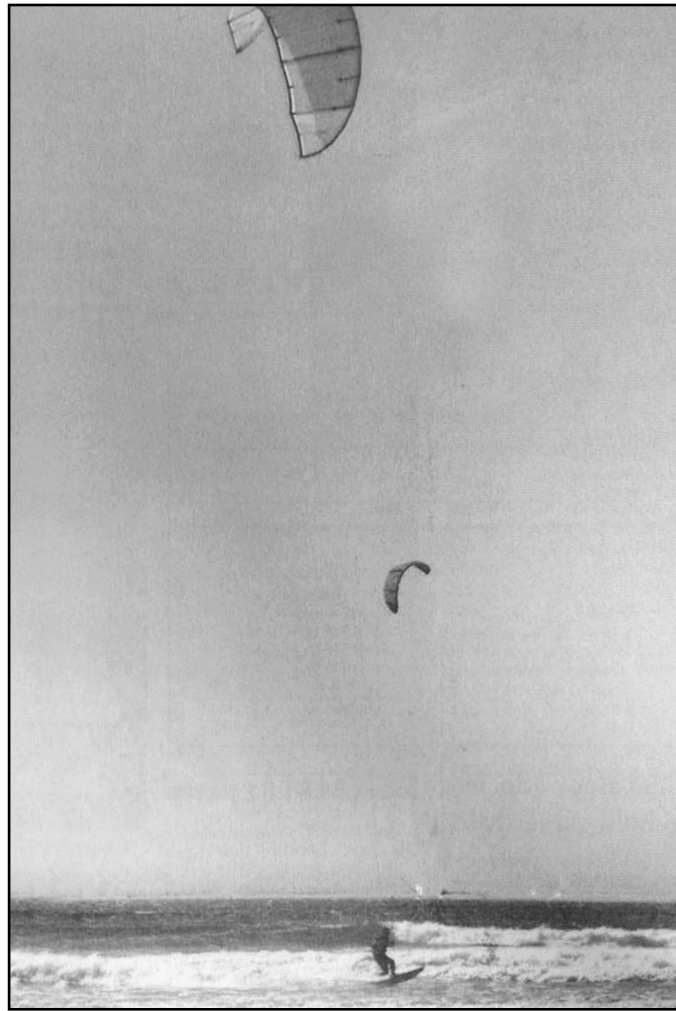
The wind is really cranking today. It tugs out of the north at a good 30 knots, gusting 35, leaving a roil of wind waves that a crowd of South Jetty kiteboarders jump like speedbumps. Strapped like so many Leonardo Da Vincis to their flying machines, a dozen or so kites have brought the extreme sport to Florence.

Drawn by what one kiter known simply as Shay describes as “expert conditions, right on the margin,” participants strap themselves to inflatable foils for a wicked skim across the waves, gigantic grabs of air and less than pleasant tumbles in wet sand and foam when out-of-control kites drag them like wild horses on the run.

Less than a decade old, this solo sport is taking off in popularity, but the audience for dangling over the water like a bug in a harness may always be limited.

“Windsurfing appeals to more people. This is a little gnarly,” says John Ash, a 55-year-old former tree cutter and the only kitesurfer who lives in Florence.

He’s kiteboarded for seven years, ever since the sport gained popularity. It started cropping up in the Columbia River Gorge, France and Hawaii about a decade ago, although using wind power to



move is not a new idea. The first time a guy put a kite on skis was 20 to



Kiteboarders take to the sand and water at South Jetty for extreme rides during heavy afternoon winds.

30 years ago, Ash says. Equipment has improved a lot since then. Early attempts were hard to watch. Painful, says Ash, who got into the sport after recovering from a herniated disk of his own. “The only way to learn is by getting your ass handed to you several times,” Shay says. The sport really took to the air in Maui in the late 1990s, when extreme surfers saw the kite’s radical opportunity. There are even competitions now, like the Bridge of the Gods kiteboarding contest. Here on the Pacific, the swells add an extra edge. “You have to be a real advanced kiter when it’s like this,” another kiteboarder says. “It’s a different animal.” ❖

LETTERS

Health care front and center

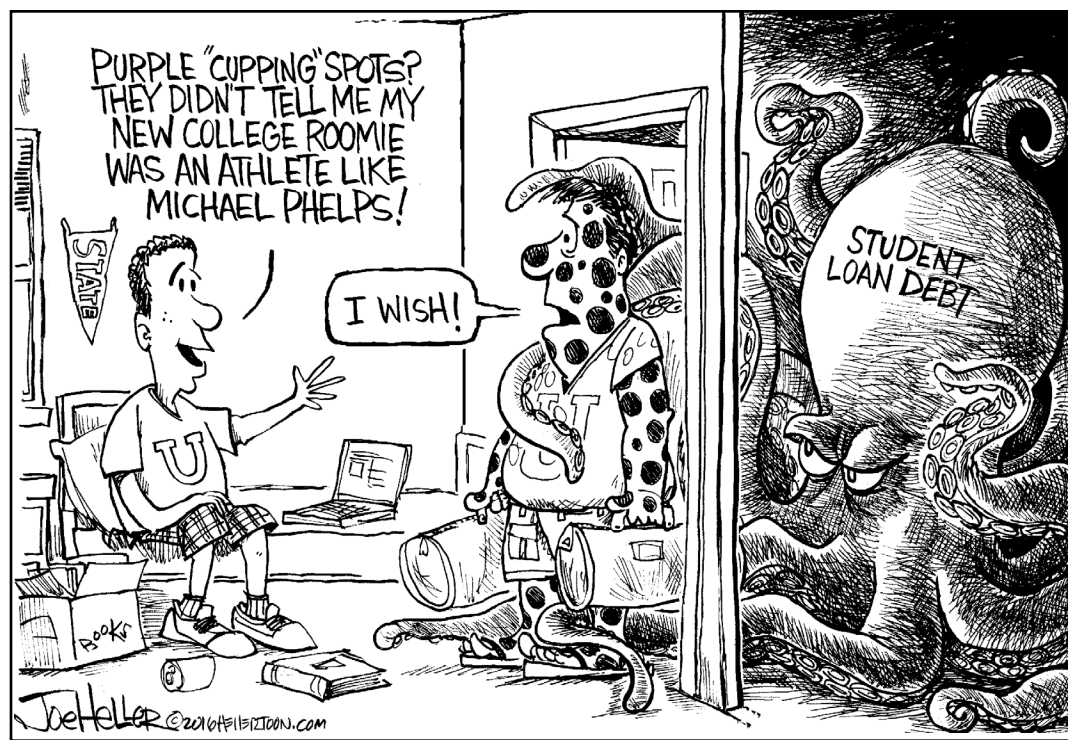
On Aug. 9, Rick Yecny and Nena Harvey spent 90 minutes at the Us TOO Florence Prostate Cancer Education/Support Group providing information on the primary care situation in Florence. They were very well prepared and, following a short PowerPoint presentation, showed their depth of concern and creative thinking in providing solutions to our unfortunate loss of primary care physicians.

It is very encouraging to know we have these two (and others) at PeaceHealth working feverishly in a proactive way on our behalf.

I encourage everyone who possibly can to attend their presentation at the FEC, 715 Quince St., on Thursday, Aug. 18, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. to get the facts.

I think the result will be a positive feeling that they truly have our health care front and center and will move mountains, if necessary, to provide it.

Bob Horney
 Florence



So-called rights

In response to Dolly Brock’s letter (“Deadly Statistics,” Aug. 10) regarding Tony Cavarno’s letter on the gun issue. By her definition, I am a paranoid gun owner. I refer to her statement that “if more gun owners were less paranoid about losing their so-called rights and more interested in stronger, sensible gun laws, we might stand a chance of changing gun violence statistics.”

Since when are Constitutional Amendments “so-called rights?” You can call it paranoia, but I call it a well-founded concern that the sanctity of the Constitution is under attack — not just by well-meaning individuals, but by our current administration.

Furthermore, the new Democrat Party Platform panders to the anti-gun crowd while doing nothing, except more demeaning welfare programs, to help solve the root problems in the

big city ghettos. If restrictive gun laws were the answer, Chicago, Detroit and Baltimore, with the toughest gun laws around, would be havens of peace and tranquility instead of the killing grounds that they are. The street gangs and drug dealers could care less about your “stronger and sensible” gun laws and account for much of your “deadly statistics.”

I believe that there is nothing more dangerous than a government that provides for your every need while taking away your rights.

Keith Kraft
 Florence

Never too late for change

Many of you already know the Real Food Co-op is no longer in business. It’s truly a shame that in a town of over 8,000, there weren’t enough people desiring organic foods.

We supported our local farmers. Though many stores tout they carry local products, that usually means it comes from California or Mexico. Our farmers live in this community. They shop here in town or in Eugene. They are the people that grow our foods with love without the use of pesticides. And, they are always fighting to keep it that way.

Though many may say that organic foods are too expensive, I ask you to examine that. The difference in price between organic Swiss Chard versus conventional is usually less than a dollar. That extra money spent now could potentially save thousands down the road in healthcare costs.

The growing information about pesticides and the harm they cause in our bodies is factual. I admit it, I don’t like to listen to political speeches and I know that even if I ignore them, someone is going to win. But ignoring the fact there are poisons sprayed and put into the soils

of the foods we eat, doesn’t make it go away. There is a price to pay and it’s going to be higher than anything you see in the produce aisle.

It is disheartening that fast food restaurants in this town thrive but a co-op cannot. We supported the small businesses selling products without GMOs, using organic ingredients. The labels had words you could read and understand. Interestingly, as a friend pointed out, these labels tell us when the products are organic and non-GMO, but shouldn’t it really say when the foods have chemicals in them?

As I like to say, it is never too late for change, until we’re not here to do so. If we can go out to eat breakfast at a restaurant and spend \$10 or \$15 on a meal, why can’t we buy organic eggs for \$5 a dozen? If you break it down per egg, that’s less than 50 cents apiece. If you have two eggs a day, you can eat them for the next six days. That’s a savings.

I’m no mathematician. I’ll never be an accountant. But I know the final cost comes in more than one way — the biggest being in the breakdown of health. As long as we have a choice, we have the opportunity to learn and understand what we put in our mouths to feed our bodies. This is our responsibility, not our doctors’.

Karen Hazelwood
 (In honor of the Real Food Co-op), Florence

LETTERS 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.
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