

Siuslaw News Coast Life

Special Programs Director wears many hats

Funding, student welfare and program oversight are just some of her responsibilities

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Lisa Utz is a busy lady. Her position at the Siuslaw School District as director of special programs means she is responsible not only for overseeing the day to day needs of the students under her care, but also for obtaining much of the funding needed to run her department. Utz has a corner office at the Siuslaw Elementary School that has large windows and upbeat floral décor that reflects her attitude.

She has been working for the district for over 10 years, originally as a Special Education teacher, then as a case manager and now as the head of her department.

Utz has had to get used to dividing her attention since taking over leadership of the district's Special Programs department. And while she spends a large part of her day dealing with administrative functions, she is quick to point out that the kids are never far from her thoughts.

"It's all about the kids, they are my number one priority," Utz said. "This is a pretty big soapbox for me because my roots are as a teacher and a case manager. The other part of it is as a parent. I've had three children in the district, I have two going through now and one that has graduated and is at the University of Oregon. So I really have a vested



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See **UTZ 2B**

Siuslaw School District Director of Special Programs Lisa Utz gets organized for another busy day

Churches offer Community Supper Program

Four local churches will circulate the weekly free dinner series

BY MARK BRENNAN
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Four local churches are teaming up to provide their neighbors with a weekly free supper on Wednesdays. The Florence Community Suppers Program is a cooperative effort of the St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, the New Life Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw and the Florence United Methodists Church designed to provide an opportunity to get to know their neighbors.

The idea for the suppers, according to Pastor Greg Wood of the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, came from a meeting attended by local church groups.

"This began because a few of us attended a Florence Area Coordinating Council meeting and we discussed how Wednesday night suppers at churches can be helpful to families living on the edge," Wood



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Pastor Greg Wood, Laurie Gillespie, Gail McDivitt, Dan McDivitt and Beth Johnston are part of the team that prepares and serves the food for the Community Suppers.

said, "The meeting sparked something in us to talk together and see if we could do this cooperatively and this program is the result."

The plan for the suppers

moving forward is to rotate the supper between the churches. The first week of each month the supper will be held at the New Life Lutheran, the second Wednesday the meal will be at

the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw. Week three's dinner will be at the United Methodist Church and the fourth week of the month supper will be served at St. Andrews Episcopal Church.

"The first thing we hope is that community members can come and be friendly neighbors. We've all met a lot of people here that we didn't know and that's been a good thing," Wood said. "There is no religious programming, we don't want to intimidate anyone, we just want to provide an opportunity for people to get to know one another."

And while some may find the idea of sharing a free meal with people they don't know unusual, the churches involved hope they can help to break down some of the barriers that separate people while they are breaking bread together.

For more information on The Community Supper Program, call 541-902-6595.

Fly over the moon with 'Moon Over Buffalo'



The cast of Last Resort Players' "Moon Over Buffalo"

Last Resort Players (LRP) will present Ken Ludwig's "Moon Over Buffalo" on March 17 through 19 and 24 to 26 at Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St.

In the madcap comedy tradition of "Lend me a Tenor," the hilarious "Moon Over Buffalo" centers on George and Charlotte Hay, played by John Bachman and Judy Adams, fading stars of the 1950s. At the moment, the Hays are playing two shows in rep in Buffalo, New York, with five actors.

On the brink of a disastrous split-up caused by George's dalliance with a young ingenue, they receive word that they might just have one last shot at stardom: Frank Capra is coming to town to see their matinee, and if he likes what he sees, he might cast them in his movie remake of "The Scarlet Pimpernel."

Unfortunately for George and Charlotte, everything that could go wrong does go wrong, abetted by a visit from their daughter's clueless fiancé and hilarious uncertainty about which play they are actually performing, caused by Charlotte's deaf old stage-manager mother who hates every bone in George's body.

Directed by Paula Lindekugel-Willis with Leah Goodwin as assistant director, LRP's strong ensemble cast features eight actors in comedic roles.

Daphne John plays Ethel, Karylynn Keppol plays Rosalind "Roz" Hay, Victoria Seitzinger plays Eileen, Grant Hammond plays Howard, Jim Wellington plays Paul and Chuck Knorr plays Richard.

For more information, go to lastresortplayers.org.

To purchase tickets, visit the FEC Box Office, call 541-997-1994 or go to eventcenter.org.

FRAA announces 'Call to Artists'

The Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) is inviting all artists to participate in the first annual "Florence Fest" to be held at the Florence Events Center on March 31 and April.

This unique event, which will feature two days of jazz, art and wine, will be highlighted by talented jazz musicians and outstanding wine from some of the best wineries in the Willamette Valley.

The juried art section of the

event will provide maximum exposure for creative artist's work and significant prize money will be awarded.

Selections for the exhibit will be made by Robert Canaga, who is an accomplished painter, photographer and printmaker. He has been the curator for numerous exhibitions throughout the Northwest; including the Gallery at the Watershed, Peace HealthHeadquarters and the

Coos Art Museum.

He is a former gallery owner and has also exhibited in over 30 selected shows, most recently at a three-month show in the State Capitol Building.

His work currently appears in 14 public and private collections.

There is an exquisite sense of style and strength in his own work, and his tastes and preferences are eclectic and run across a broad range of styles.

BLACK
YELLOW
MAGENTA
CYAN