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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON



PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL FARNSWORTH AND MEG SPENCER



The 2017 Rotary Auction on March 11 was a night full of stars as the Florence community raised a record-setting \$109,131.89 during the "Dancing for the Stars of Tomorrow" event.

Dancing for the Stars of Tomorrow

Rotary Auction sets record high for third straight year

BY CHANTELLE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Rotary Club of Florence announced the grand total of this year's Rotary Auction at its lunch meeting on March 21, and the total had club members dancing. The March 11 auction, called "Dancing for the Stars of Tomorrow," raised \$109,131.89. This is up nearly \$8,000 from last year's "Sky's the Limit" record of \$101,390.

McMullen said the total came from just the auction alone.

"This is what you guys did in just one night," he said. "It's around 10 percent higher than last year."

More than 300 people attended the Rotary Auction at the Florence Events Center.

Auction Committee co-chair Kevin

See **AUCTION 9A**



Three Rivers hosts Community Job Fair Thursday

Annual fair to match 30+ area employers with job applicants

Thursday will see a gathering of employers currently hiring and active job seekers all in one room, thanks to the efforts of Three Rivers Casino Resort and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

BY CHANTELLE MEYER
Siuslaw News

The Community Job Fair will be March 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Three Rivers event center at 5647 Highway 126.

"It can be tough to find opportunities in this area," said Pam Hickson, event organizer and Three Rivers recruitment specialist. "Folks don't always get the chance to meet this number of applicants all at one time. This is both sides, employers and applicants, coming together. You can hone in on the careers and opportunities available."

Last year, more than 300 people attended the first event.

"We had people from all over the area and state, and even people from Washington looking to relocate," Hickson said.

Three Rivers began the event when Hickson realized that job openings in the area were remaining unfilled while a lot of people were looking for work.

See **JOB FAIR 9A**

Getting the 'Conversation' started

Oregon Humanities Conversation Project promotes listening and sharing ideas

The current heated political climate has highlighted the many differences that exist between individuals across the country and in the Florence community. The issues that divide people can appear at times to be insurmountable.

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

One solution to this problem, and to most others, is to talk about it.

The process of listening to others, even those with wildly different perspectives, can and often does bring people together.

That is the premise behind The Conversation Project, a program sponsored by Oregon Humanities. Siuslaw Public Library has twice brought the program to Florence.

Discussing differences is one of the main objectives of the Conversation Project, according to Adam Davis, executive director of Oregon Humanities. Davis feels talking may lead to an understanding and an appreciation of the concerns with those whom we disagree.

"The goal is to get Oregonians from differing perspectives to communicate and connect while discussing issues that matter to them," Davis said. "We think it strengthens communities to talk about the tough issues, even if we continue to disagree."

The Conversation Project is an ongoing series of discussions from a menu of 30 topics selected for their relevancy and topicality. The conversations are taking place across the state in libraries, schools and other public places

that request speakers.

Both forums hosted by Siuslaw Public Library have had positive results.

Last week, the library presented food writer Jennifer Burns Bright, who focused on the sometimes-confusing paradigm surrounding seafood, its quality, scarcity and future availability.

Bright presented information on the various aspects of the seafood industry that affect Oregon consumers and commercial and recreational fishermen. People who attended Bright's presentation asked pertinent questions and actively participated in the conversation.

Siuslaw Library Director Meg Spencer said the number of topics covered by the Conversation Project allow for an interested group to ask for a specific speaker to address an issue that is important to that area.

"The library hosted a Conversation Project event with Nan Laurence about 'A City's Center: Rethinking Downtown' that had a great deal of relevance in light of the ReVision



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Dr. Jennifer Burns, the featured speaker at last week's Conversation Project forum, discusses the different aspects of Oregon's seafood culture with attendees.

Florence project here in our area," Spencer said. "And in the case of this most recent conversation, Bright was speaking on a topic of great interest to our area, seafood."

Most areas can request a speaker on the issues that resonate in their location.

"One of the strengths of the Project is the fact that communities across the state can contact us and bring a speaker into their community that will be able to speak about an issue that is important to them," said Davis.

See **PROJECT 9A**

Pesticide concern prompts voluntary marijuana recall

On Monday, The Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) issued an immediate health and safety advisory due to the identification of potentially unsafe pesticide residue on retail plant material produced from marijuana cultivated by Emerald Wave Estate, LLC.

The effected marijuana failed a pesticide test for pyrethrins exceeding the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) action level for this class of pesticide.

Affected products include marijuana flower and, as a result, the retailer that sold the product has issued a voluntary recall.

The marijuana flower was sold at "Buds 4 U" in Mapleton, where 82.5 grams was sold to 31 customers between March 8 and 10.

See **MARIJUANA 9A**

City council names grant recipients, approves action items

Florence City Councilors appeared to be in an agreeable mood during the March 20 meeting as they unanimously voted to award five \$1,000 grants to local non-profit organizations and approved all six action items on the agenda.

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Councilor Joshua Greene was out of town and did not participate in the voting.

The city offered a total of \$5,000 in grants to local non-profit organizations that met the city's criteria. This year, 18 groups applied for the grants, which was a significant increase over last year, when money was left over because only four organizations submitted applications.

This year's grant recipients are

Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County, Florence Senior Center, Florence Food Share, Siuslaw Youth Soccer Association and Helping Hands Coalition.

In other business, Interim Finance Director Andy Parks reported to the council on the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award the city received from the Government Finance Officers Association.

According to Parks, the award is offered to cities, special districts and school districts that present clear, concise and transparent budgets that are easy for the community to understand.

"This isn't an easy award to get," Parks said. "Florence is in the top 2 percent. In Oregon, you are only going to find one other city of our size (that received the

award). It is a testament to the support from the city council and the management team."

During public comments, two residents expressed concerns over what, if anything, the city was proposing to do about the recent flooding occurring east of Willow Loop, between 16th and 18th streets.

David Eckhardt said, "Although this has been an extremely wet winter, it doesn't mean the future is not going to be the same. This would be a good opportunity for the city to get ahead of the ball on this."

"Sixteenth Street was like Venice, Italy. There was no street. Pine Court was blocked off. Eighteenth Street was the same," he added.

Shannon Graham said she was

worried about black mold growing in the flooded crawl space under her home on Pine Court.

Mayor Joe Henry acknowledged their concerns, but was not sure what the city could do, other than providing pumps to discharge the excess water.

"To handle the worst case runoff all over town would be monumentally expensive. We only have so many pumps, and they are taking them around to different places," Henry said.

The council later approved two action items involving right-of-way ordinances and fees for communications providers. New language authorized the city to sign leases with communications providers and fixed the fees for all

See **COUNCIL 9A**