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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

90-YEAR-OLD FLORENCE RESIDENT BECOMES U.S. CITIZEN

With assistance from her family, Zoila Jimenez's 30-year struggle to 'come to America' ends

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Citizenship. It's one word that expresses so much. Rhetoric during the 2016 election was often focused on the issue.

In recent months, implementation of new policies and directives from our nation's capital have led to an examination of the larger questions: Who should be allowed to be an American? And when can

one become a citizen? These questions facing the nation have been playing out in Florence, in real time, in the case of 90-year-old Zoila Esperanza Alfonso Jimenez.

Born and raised in Cuba, Jimenez is the mother of three sons, two of whom live in Oregon. She has been in the United States for seven years.

One of her sons, Enrique, lives and works in Eugene. Twenty-five years ago, he left Cuba in a small boat and made

the decision to risk his life and cross the shark-infested ocean to get to Florida. He made it to America's shores and eventually became a U.S. citizen.

Mrs. Jimenez speaks Cuban quickly and very precisely, laughing often and smiling while speaking. Her nephew, Luis Sanchez, interprets for his, "Tia," telling the story of how his family ended up in Florence.

"Tia says she wasn't happy in Cuba. When Fidel Castro

took power, everything changed. She remembers that she could speak, she could say anything she wanted about the government or whatever.

See **CITIZEN 9A**

(From left) Marsala Sanchez, Zoila Jimenez and Luis Sanchez, Jimenez's nephew, all live in Florence. All recently became American citizens.



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

County Parks invites public comment

Lane County Parks continues to develop Master Plan

Lane County Department of Public Works held its second public meeting in the area May 4 at Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue Main Station. The presentation was the fifth in the current series of public meetings, which is intended to solicit input on the department's Master Park Plan.

The presentation was an interactive exercise between department administrators and the Florence community, similar to a previous meeting held in Mapleton. The format employed used charts and informational slides to prompt audience members to consider and discuss the direction that the county should take in developing and maintaining the various parks in the county system.

Lane County Public Works Director Tim Elsea commented on the desire of his department to get as much information from the public as possible.

"We are working with the residents to create a Parks Master Plan that will not only serve the county for the next 20 years, but for the next generation," Elsea said.

According to the meeting, Lane County's parks system includes 71 parks and more than 4,000 acres.

See **MASTER PLAN 7A**

Master felter creates unique exhibit

Made-for-Florence exhibit uses wool, water and friction for trip 'Under the Sea'

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

The local art scene is a vital component of life in Florence. There are numerous galleries and rooms available to show and view art from different artists and work from a variety of genres.

One of the oldest and most unusual of those crafts is now being shown at Siuslaw Public Library, 1460 Ninth St. in Florence. This month's featured artist is Kathy Elfers and her creations are made from felt.

The art and craft of felting is gaining notice among art admirers. Elfers work will undoubtedly further that appreciation.

Mary Colgan-Bennetts, circulation supervisor and art committee liaison for the library, is excited about the unique nature of Elfers' creations.

"This collection is called 'Under the Sea,' and it is truly amazing. The pieces are huge," Colgan-Bennetts said. "It's one thing to have a skill set and it's another to have that 'vision thing' and Kathy has that. She is able to take it from a concept all the way through to the finished product."

Elfers has been felting for years. She said she thought the larger community would be interested in her work.

"Mary has asked me to do a felt show for a few years now. I spent three months creating these pieces exclusively for this show. I rarely make pieces this large due to limited space in the galleries, so this was the perfect opportunity to get out of my box and do something different," Elfers said. "I really wanted to do something that the Florence community could



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Kathy Elfer's large scale felt exhibit at Siuslaw Public Library features jellyfish, sea stars and a popular fish known as "Puffer." The "Under the Sea" show is scheduled to hang for two months.

both enjoy and relate to. 'Under the Sea' seemed like the perfect theme."

Colgan-Bennetts sees Elfers enthusiasm for the work as one of the qualities that separates her from others who felt.

"When Kathy gets an idea in her head she makes it happen. She had this idea about doing a jellyfish. So she pondered it and figured out how to do it and it ended up being too large for



her living situation. So she worked on it outside and it's just amazing," Colgan-Bennetts said.

See **EXHIBIT 7A**

Florence Police officers assaulted, male suspect dead

At approximately 9 a.m. on May 8, Oregon State Police troopers were notified of assistance needed at the Florence Police Department Jail. Troopers and officers responded and discovered two officers who had been seriously assaulted while attempting to release a 40-year-old male from the custody of the Florence PD jail.

As medics arrived to attend to the two injured officers, the male became non-responsive. Medics turned their attention to him and transported him to Peace Harbor Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The Oregon State Police Criminal Division was requested to assist with the investigation. In the meantime, the two officers were transported to a hospital for their injuries. The officers names have not been released. The name of the deceased is also being withheld pending notification of the next of kin.

There is no further threat or danger to the public. All information is being released through the Lane County District Attorney's Office.

STAFF REPORT
Siuslaw News

A GREEN DAY IN FLORENCE

Florence Green Fair returned for its eighth year May 6 with new vendors showing environmentally-friendly products, services and lessons at the Florence Events Center. Attendees also got the chance to "grab some green" in Three Rivers Casino Resort's Cash Cube, where Siuslaw News gave away money and certificates throughout the day. Oregon Coast Humane Society hosted the second Give and Take event for people to recycle the old and take home something new. The big winner of the day was Mapleton Food Share, which received 400 pounds of donated food and \$160 to purchase additional items. The 2017 Green Fair was sponsored by County Transfer and Recycling and hosted by Siuslaw News and KCST Coast Radio.

EIGHTH ANNUAL FLORENCE GREEN FAIR



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

