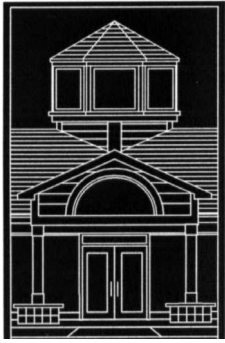


## Library Tidings



### News about the Siuslaw Public Library

Library Tidings, a regular feature of the Siuslaw News, features news about upcoming Siuslaw Public Library programs for adults and children, new books and videos, and other library news of interest to the community.

Library Tidings by Kevin Mitige

### Book Review "The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea" By Jack E. Davis

When painter Winslow Homer first sailed into the Gulf of Mexico, he was struck by its "special kind of providence."

Indeed, the Gulf presented itself as America's sea — bound by geography, culture and tradition to the national experience — and yet, there has never been a comprehensive history of the Gulf until now.

Given this omission, in this rich and original work that explores the Gulf through our human connection with the sea, environmental historian Jack E. Davis finally places this exceptional region into the American mythos in a panoramic history that extends from the Pleistocene age to the twenty-first century.

Significant beyond tragic oil spills and hurricanes, the Gulf has historically been one of the world's most bounteous marine environments, supporting human life for millennia.

Davis starts from the premise that nature lies at the center of human existence, and takes readers on a compelling and, at times, wrenching journey from the Florida Keys to the Texas Rio

Grande, along marshy shorelines and majestic estuarine bays, both beautiful and life-giving, though fated to exploitation by esurient oil men and real-estate developers.

Rich in previously untold stories, "The Gulf" tells the larger narrative of the American Sea — from the sportfish that brought the earliest tourists to Gulf shores to Hollywood's engagement with the first offshore oil wells — as it inspired and empowered, sometimes to its own detriment, the ethnically diverse groups of a growing nation.

Davis' pageant of historical characters is vast, including: the president who directed western expansion toward its shores, the New England fishermen who introduced their own distinct skills to the region and the industries and big agriculture that sent their contamination downstream into this estuarine ecosystem.

Nor does Davis neglect the colorfully idiosyncratic individuals: the Tabasco king who devoted his life to wildlife conservation, the Texas shrimper who gave her life to clean water and public health, and the New York architect who hooked the "big one" that set the sports fishing world on fire.

Davis reminds us that amid the

ruin, beauty awaits its return. Sensitive to the imminent effects of climate change, and to the difficult task of rectifying the assaults of recent centuries, "The Gulf" suggests how a penetrating examination of a single region's history can inform the country's path ahead.

### Welcome Erin Gordenier!

The library is pleased to introduce our newest employee, Erin Gordenier, to the community.

Gordenier graduated from the University of Washington's iSchool with a master's degree in Library and Information Science, and has worked for nine years in the public information office for the City of Beaverton.

Like all of us, Gordenier will be handling a multitude of tasks, but her primary focus will be on public outreach and volunteer coordination.

Be sure to stop by and welcome her to the library district!

### Four Shilling Short Concert

Don't forget — tonight Four Shillings Short will be presenting a free concert at the library between 6 and 8 p.m. in the Bromley Room.

This duo is always popular so people are encouraged to arrive early to get a seat.

## Community Chorus seeks singers for holiday show

Registration to sing with the Community Chorus of Florence will take place every Thursday in September at the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, 3996 Highway 101.

Registration will begin at 6:30 p.m. each Thursday, followed by rehearsal from 7 p.m.

to 8:30 p.m. thereafter until the Christmas Concert in December.

The Chorus does not require an audition.

For more information, call 541-997-3469 or visit [www.communitychorusflorenceoregon.org](http://www.communitychorusflorenceoregon.org).

## Florence Elks team up with Habitat for house warming

Florence Elks Lodge 1858 committee members Karen Smales, Joyce Middleton and Sandy Kulman applied for a grant from the Elks National Foundation to provide a little warmth to Florence's Habitat for Humanity (FHH) new homeowners this past year.

The committee met with the new owners to determine what

would assist the families the most as they move in.

"Those grantors who provide monies for local projects really like it when local organizations come together to serve those in the community," said Kulman.

So far, three families have benefitted from the Beacon grant money, which is available for ongoing annual projects in

a community.

The Durgan family was given some pavers to keep the sand at bay in their yard, while the Fuller family received a table's worth of housewarming gifts last spring.

The committee members met with the newest FHH family on the job site at Nopal Street recently and determined the Pinnock-Davis family will

receive a newly refinished table and six reupholstered chairs so their family can all eat together.

With the donations received from the BeachWalk set for Saturday, Sept. 9, FHH will continue these efforts.

For more information about the upcoming event, contact Linda Stent, interim executive director, at 541-844-5573.

## Rates from 1A

All that considered, for the 2016-17 school year, Siuslaw High School had a graduation rate of 84.7 percent, according to high school counselor Steven Moser. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has not yet publicly released a full statement for any schools for the 2016-17 year, and instead considers its most recent data to be from the 2015-16 year.

According to the ODE, 2015-2016's graduation rate was 72.28 percent, only slightly lower than the Oregon state average of 74.83 percent — and the fourth worst in the entire United States. The near 85 percent, however, marks a significant improvement in what has become a trend of rising graduation rates.

In that race of 10 students, however, there are still two that aren't making it to the end, and these are the youth that especially should not be left behind. Either of the two students may have given up, either lacking the skill or motivation to see it through. Something out of their control may have happened, something that hindered or even seriously hurt them. Or they could have found a different path along the way.

More students are graduating,

but for those who are not, school is still as imposing a challenge as ever.

"I ended up getting a GED," said a local teen, who asked to remain anonymous. "The teachers recommended it to me after it was very apparent to them that I was not going to get out of the hole I dug myself."

Over time, the student realized that it was no one single thing that led to being unable to graduate — no one assignment, test or absence. Instead, it was a constant barrage of those issues, and most often a combination of all of them.

"I thought I would be able to dig myself out of the bad hole that I was in at the time," the student explained. "By about halfway through [senior year], it just became very apparent that it was not going to happen."

"I was missing some classes, and then it started piling up with more work, and no one really wanted to help me with that, either. ... It just kind of cascaded into a mess that I knew was not going to work out."

A combination of many issues can lead students to not graduating, but those issues can start early in a student's career.

For the school administration, the beginning of senior year is not early enough to start thinking about graduation — it has to be

much sooner.

"The idea is to focus in and make sure our freshmen, our sophomores, even our eighth-graders over at the middle school are learning the skills are prepared as best they can," Moser said. "I think it's really a system of making sure that students are getting their seven or so credits a year, so by the time they hit their senior year, they're already at twenty or twenty one credits, and really only needing the last couple of English or government credits."

The anonymous student agreed that help from the school was vital when they found they couldn't control their issues with school on their own.

"I had a couple of teachers here and there that offered assistance, and that's why I did pass their classes," the student said. "But some didn't help, and that's why I started flunking those classes, and that's why it went really badly. They needed to actually give me that extra push. I don't mean that I needed their undivided attention, I just mean that they needed to give me some sort of attention to help with those issues that I was falling behind with."

At the end of the day, however, Moser said students' welfare needed to be addressed, not just the statistic of graduation rates. The full focus now is on the stu-

dents affected, and whatever would be best for them.

"GEDS don't necessarily improve our graduation rate, but ultimately, it's what's going to be best for the student," said Moser. "I'll always try to go for the regular diploma, just because I think it's the best possible outcome for the years that students have spent at school, but I'll never count out the GED as a possible option for a student."

A GED is sufficient enough to be accepted by two-year colleges, such as Lane Community College. High enough of a score on the GED test may also qualify a student for certain four-year colleges, as well.

"I want to try to get into college," the anonymous student said. "I'm thinking something along the lines of Portland State University, or maybe Lane Community College here in Florence. At either one of those two, I can get some interesting classes."

"I think that's a big thing with the system that's been created here," Moser said. "There's not just a 'one size fits all' education anymore."

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**Our Town:**

- Congressman Peter DeFazio talks about fire resources and the challenges with allocating money in a new political age.
- Meet the New Librarian, Erin Gordenier.
- Three Rivers Casino's Food and Beverage Director, Gary Gortz, talks Wellness Fair.
- Columnist Dave Robinson, speaker at this year's Be Ready Expo.
- Habitat Beachwalk with Linda Stent. ...and more

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