

NATURAL PERSPECTIVE —

# Finding the way home



By EMILY J. UHRIG, PhD  
Special to the Siuslaw News

As the kids return to school following their summer adventures, salmon are returning to the Siuslaw River after years of ocean adventuring. Fish born in the river's upper reaches left their freshwater home at a

young age to feed and grow in the Pacific, ranging northward as far as British Columbia and Alaska.

Evading the claws, teeth and fishing poles of predators along the way, the salmon are heading back to the streams of their youth. They first arrive in the estuary, but, with the onset of fall rains, they will make their way upstream to the smaller tributaries in the Coast Range.

In a time when many of us rely on GPS to navigate across town, how do these fish find their birthplace from over a thousand miles away?

Navigation during the initial, ocean-based leg of the salmon's journey is still not fully understood, partly due to the difficulties of studying wild fish at sea. However, there is considerable

evidence pointing to their using the earth's magnetic field to orient themselves.

Other factors, like ocean currents, temperature or sunlight, may also help guide them. In reality, their ocean navigation likely depends on some combination of cues.

During the next leg of their journey, the salmon's navigation skills are better known. As they approach the river, fish begin relying on their sense of smell to continue on their way home. As young fish, they imprinted on the scent of their home waters. The water chemistry, and possibly the smells of fellow fish, creates a unique "odor bouquet" that imprints on the young salmon's memory.

This is similar to how smells, such as baking cookies, may

evoke your childhood memories of visits to Grandma's house.

After their noses lead them home, the travel-worn salmon will spawn and die.

Their decomposing carcasses release nutrients that help support their own developing offspring as well as the overall health of the river and surrounding environment. Thus, the seemingly abrupt end to an arduous journey secures the future of our fish populations.

Even if you don't encounter salmon on the hook or the plate this fall, as you pass the river, know that beneath its waters these persistent fish are sniffing their way home to ensure that some of their descendants can do the same in years to come.

## SIUSLAW VALLEY FIRE & RESCUE

# Protecting together

Often, fire departments are compared to paramilitary organizations.

Uniforms are worn, assignments given, orders are followed and members are sent to areas devastated by fires.

Troops, on the other hand, are sent to all reaches of the world. To a degree, so are firefighters as they are partnered up with others to fight fires burning in our forests and wilderness.

These specially trained firefighters have taken many courses and have trained just for this type of work. When needed, their new title changes to Wildland Firefighter when they deploy to conflagrations.

As of this writing, six of Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue's (SVFR) frontline Wildland Firefighters are working various fires throughout the region. Their uniforms aren't BDUs (battle dress uniforms), but more appropriate flame retardant Nomex clothing, protective headgear and good boots.

SVFR has accepted taskings from Lane County Fire and headed down to the Chetco Bar Fire near

Brookings, Ore. Additionally, some volunteers from SVFR are contracted by private companies to numerous fires east of Eugene.

The duration of their assignments is from a few to 21 days at a time. Our latest crew was notified at 1 a.m. early one day. They responded to the largest fire in America —

the Chetco Bar Fire. Meanwhile, family members, friends and fellow firefighters anxiously monitored the raging firestorms where our wildland firefighters were and are deployed.

After a bit of time and the excitement wears off, just like anyone else, Wildland Firefighters miss home. You can tell by Facebook postings, others miss them too.

In the meantime, your local firefighters from Swisshome/Deadwood, Mapleton and Siuslaw Valley are continuing to protect the district together here on the homefront.

*Pete "Boa" Warren can be contacted at 541-997-3212, or the main SVFR station, 2625 Highway 101, or email Boa@svfr.org.*



By PETE "BOA" WARREN  
Recruitment & Retention  
Coordinator for SVFR

## MILITARY HERITAGE CHRONICLES —

# 'Ute' ought to know



By CAL APPLEBEE  
Special to the Siuslaw News

As sometimes happens with many writers, as my deadline approached for this edition of Military Heritage Chronicles, I was experiencing a serious writer's block, which is pretty amazing considering there are literally thousands of topics available to write about military heritage.

But I was rescued by a call from my friend Barney who said, "Hey, I've got a great

story idea for you."

And he did. His motivation was simple: he owns a 1950 Ford Ute — which, whenever he drives it in public, he spends two and three times longer on a journey responding to questions from curious onlookers.

This story will be somewhat of a crossover combining both Military Heritage Chronicles and Car Chronicles as it deals with a little-known vehicle

from the land down under which is rarely seen in the States: the Australian Ute, which also has some military heritage.

While the iconic military Jeep of U.S. origin was born out of military needs, the Ute emanates from civilian needs in the 1930s — so the story goes — although versions were produced for the Australian

See UTE 11A

## DENTURE SERVICES INC.

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED

Open 4 days a week!

Here to serve your denture needs:

- Dentures
- Partial Dentures
- Immediate Dentures
- Implant Dentures
- Relines & Repairs Same Day

Monday-Thursday  
10am - 2 pm

524 Laurel St.  
541-997-6054



William Foster LD  
Sherry, Office Manager

*"As a denture wearer myself, I can answer your questions and address your denture concerns."*  
~ William Foster, LD

Financing: Citi Health Card  
12 Month no Interest



## FRIENDS OF THE FLORENCE EVENTS CENTER



John Daniel is the author of ten books of poetry, essays, memoir, and fiction. He has won three Oregon Book Awards, a Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award, a Pushcart Prize, the John Burroughs Nature Essay Award, and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. His newest book is a novel titled *Gifted*. Join us for a special evening with this amazing author!

WWW.FLORENCEFESTIVALOFBOOKS.ORG

Oregon Book Award Winner  
**John Daniel**  
\$8 advance, \$10 at door  
Friday, Sept 29 at 7 p.m

**Chapter Sponsors:** Peace Harbor Foundation; Siuslaw Public Library. **Verse Sponsors:** Harriet & Dick Smith; Lynn & Shelley Taylor; Maire Testa. **In-Between Sponsor:** Ron Hogeland & Nancy Archer. **Line Sponsors:** The Archives & Joshua Greene; Backstreet Gallery; Cindy Wobbe Estate Sales; Coastal Writers & Karen D. Nichols; Florence Regional Arts Alliance; Ladies of Elks; Kevin Mittge; On Your Feet With a Splash; Pacific Publishing & Jon Thompson; Port Hole Publishing; River House Inn; Siuslaw News.



## Senior Services

It's easy to relax, knowing these community businesses are here to help with all of your service needs.

Call the Siuslaw News to Join Our Senior Directory  
541-997-3441

SPRUCE POINT  
ASSISTED LIVING  
375 9th Street • Florence  
541-997-6111

SIUSLAW  
NEWS  
148 Maple St.  
Florence  
541-997-3441