



LOOKING FOR A WIN

SPORTS — B



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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

Service, sacrifice of Vietnam vets recognized nationally

Florence-area veterans say appreciation of their contributions in Vietnam has never been better

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is a commemorative holiday, celebrated on March 29, to acknowledge the service and sacrifice made by veterans serving in one of America's most divisive and longest wars.

The need to formally recognize veterans from the Vietnam era was first acknowledged by President Barack Obama on March 29, 2012.

Obama issued a proclamation on that day that "called upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities that commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Vietnam War."

Obama's proclamation went on to say, "The Vietnam War is a story of different backgrounds, colors and creeds who came together to complete a daunting mission. It is a story of Americans from every corner of our nation, who left the warmth of family to serve the country they loved. It is a story of patriots who braved the line of fire, who cast themselves into harm's way to save a friend, who fought hour after hour, day after day to preserve the liberties we hold dear."

The proclamation was well received by Vietnam veterans because it captured the multicultural nature of the conflict, which saw volunteers and drafted soldiers serving alongside one another, often forming relationships that would carry on for years after the individuals' service had ended.

The date was made a nationally-recognized annual holiday in 2017 by President Donald Trump.

The public recognition of Vietnam era vets was initially established by individual states in the 1970s on either March 29 or 30, to acknowledge the day that the last U.S. combat troops were withdrawn from Vietnam and the day the last prisoners of war held in Vietnam were released.

See **VETERANS 5A**

Training for 'worst case' scenario

ALICE training teaches proactive responses for Siuslaw School District staff and faculty

By **MARK BRENNAN**
Siuslaw News

The recent national focus on school shootings coincided with a day of training at the Siuslaw School District on Friday, March 23.

The training was designed to prepare and educate faculty and district staff to better anticipate and respond to an active shooter situation in or at Florence schools.

The all-day session was an attempt to familiarize Siuslaw staff with a recently updated plan to thwart and deter an active shooter in the district.

Since 2007, the U.S. Department of Education provided guidance and techniques to school districts that focused on the "Lockdown" approach to safeguarding students.

This plan called for students and teachers to lock the doors to a school or classroom and to wait out the shooter. There were no proactive elements to the plan. It only called for teachers to lock the door to their respective classrooms and wait.

This limited strategy often resulted in high death counts when the shooter was able to find and shoot hiding staff and students, with little or no resistance.

In 2013, the Department of Education and educational institutions spent significant resources to research active shooter incidents. These findings resulted in a major shift in the active shooter policies promoted by school districts across the country. Ultimately, the studies culminated in the creation and adoption of a more robust deterrent-based strategy known as ALICE training.

ALICE is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate.

This reformulated approach to dealing with active shooter situations was explained in detail at the Friday training by Florence



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw staff and faculty practice reunification drills as part of the ALICE active-shooter training conducted by the district and Florence Police Department at the middle and high schools last Friday.

Police Commander John Pitcher.

Pitcher's presentation highlighted the major shift in the strategies suggested by the Department of Education and other national law enforcement agencies when schools find themselves the victims of an active shooter.

Pitcher believes the Lockdown strategy was not effective and said he is glad there is now a more robust effort to stop active shooters available to educators.

"Studies have shown that simply trying to hide from the bad guys wasn't working. The killers would just go from room to room, shooting and killing as many people as they could

along the way. The new plan is much more proactive and I feel it gives the students and staff in those situations a much better chance of coming out of the attack alive," he said.

See **ALICE 11A**

'WE HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE AND WE NEED TO START NOW'

Florence's unaffiliated 'March for Our Lives' opens broader discussion on guns, 2nd Amendment

Gun reform activists took to the streets on Saturday as 75 to 80 residents of the Siuslaw region marched in support of the March for Our Lives campaign, a high-school-student-planned march that brought hundreds of thousands of protesters out across the nation, asking for various forms of legislative gun reform.

The national March for Our Lives was organized in part by students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., which was the scene of a school shooting on Feb. 14 that left 17 dead and many injured. The Florence march was not an official affiliate with the national campaign.

"I was really impressed that that many people came out in the rain," Florence march coordinator Maureen Miltenberger said about the demonstration, which began at the Florence Methodist Church and worked its way up and down Highway 101 and parts of Historic Old Town Florence.

"I was talking to my sister who went to the Washington, D.C., march that day, and she said she was standing in the crowd and never felt such a feeling of togetherness and achievement in her whole life," Miltenberger said. "She felt that the country was on the right track of working together. Even in our small town of Florence, I felt that."



STORY AND PHOTOS BY **JARED ANDERSON**
Siuslaw News

Protesters carry signs in support of the national March for Our Lives movement and to say "Never Again" to gun violence, especially in schools.

For Miltenberger, the event was a chance to remember her son, who at the age of 19 was killed during a home robbery.

"I wanted my son to be a part of it," she said. "Because he died of gun violence, I felt more a part of it than most people because I've gone through it myself. That's why I wanted to be a part of it and make sure it happened."

"These kids have lived with school shooting their entire lives; the rest of us have not," march participant Nancy Rickard said.

She stated her reason for marching was to support the students.

"I didn't march with any signs," she said. "I have four grandkids and it's a worry. We don't live in the same protected world that we used to. It's not just about guns."

While the march was largely peaceful, with demonstrators quietly marching and holding up signs for cars passing by, the march was not without some controversy. Three demonstrators entered the Florence Gun Shop on Highway 101, which was located on the march's route.

See **MARCH 9A**