



MAPLETON HOMECOMING

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Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

After 20 years, City Club’s future is uncertain

By MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The City Club of Florence’s mission is to “inform its members and the local community on issues of common interest, emphasizing the responsibilities and obligations of being good citizens.”

This goal has been met by the founders and members of the club since its inception in 1998. For the past two decades, the conversations coordinated by members of the club have stimulated thoughtful discussion among Florence residents.

Unfortunately, the end of an era may be fast approaching as City Club membership has dwindled to only two active members. And those two members are retiring at the end of the year.

Ralph Nichols and Ruth Baumrucker are the last of a membership group that had numbered in the dozens at the beginning of the millennium. Those days are long gone, and the future of City Club is in serious doubt.

“I’ve been involved with City Club for four years, mostly on the steering committee,” Baumrucker said. “When I started there were six or seven members on that committee and now we are down to just two members. And we are wearing all of the hats. So, we need to spread the wealth and get more new people involved ... mainly because Ralph and I are retiring at the end of the year and there is really no one to take our places.”

See CITY CLUB page 9A

Tools of the trade

*Siuslaw seeks tool
donations to build into
construction program*

By MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The turnaround in the economy has been a mixed blessing for many local construction and contracting businesses in recent years, as evidenced by increasing request for building permits and corresponding inspections by employees of the Florence Planning Department.

There has also been a renewed focus from both the City of Florence and the Siuslaw School District on the importance of a vital construction sector in the city, as Florence continues to grow.

Unfortunately, many builders are having a hard time finding qualified workers to build homes, offices and industrial facilities in the Florence area.

The lack of trained workers has prompted a realization at leadership levels within the school district of the need for a more extensive and energized construction education program. Clint Tatum, a longtime builder, has been tasked with improving Siuslaw’s class offerings in these areas.

The Siuslaw School District website cites the district’s plan to expand programs for business, technology and construction education as a major reason to support Measure



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Clint Tatum, an instructor at Siuslaw middle and high schools, displays some of the donated tools and equipment that the district has recently received from area merchants. Tatum is upgrading the construction class offerings in the school district and will be accepting donations from the community and local merchants to build a collection of professional level equipment to train students in fields related to building and construction.

20-291 this November. The measure includes, as part of the plan for a new high school constructed with bond funds, a Career Technical Education area that will offer to teach students a wide variety of skills associated with building-related trades.

If passed, the bond would include building a dedicated work/learning space to allow for improved educational opportunities and a closer collaboration with Lane Community College.

One of the major challenges faced by Siuslaw School District in accomplishing this goal is the lack of tools and equipment to teach students interested in learning professional level building skills.

Tatum is the construction in-

structor at both the middle and high school. He sees the need for more young people to graduate from high school with a skill and a career path that will provide solid employment opportunities.

“This is the first year of our Career Technical Educational (CTE) construction course,” Tatum said. “Some of these kids need alternatives to college and our community needs more skilled workers, so I have spent my spare time contacting everyone that I have met over the past 20 years, working as a contractor, asking for donations of tools, used or new. The way I figure it, the less we need to spend on tools to get started, the more we will have for materials and the more projects we can build.”

The need for reliable, professional workers in the construction sector has become a pressing issue recently as older workers, many with decades of experience, are retiring.

A recent improvement in the economy, and the renewed interest in building homes in the Florence area, has highlighted the need for Siuslaw to take a more proactive role in preparing workers for the many jobs associated with construction.

Plumbing, electrical and metal fabrication are important elements of the construction field that require significant training, with the end result being long-term, good paying jobs.

See TOOLS page 9A

— NOV. 6 GENERAL ELECTION —

Changing how we vote

*A look at STAR voting and
Lane County Measure 20-290*

By JARED ANDERSON
SIUSLAW NEWS

The future of voting in Lane County in non-partisan elections will be decided this November as electors decide on Measure 20-290.

The question put forth to voters is: “Shall Lane County amend Charter to adopt ‘Score then Automatic Runoff’ method for counting candidate votes in local office races?”

The measure would look to affect two aspects of Lane County voting: Primaries and how citizens vote.

“I think it’s a powerful, revolutionary first step,” Hallie Roberts, campaign manager for STAR voting, told the Siuslaw News in June. “I don’t think

it’s a cure-all patch for everything, but I think it’s absolutely a step in the right direction for our voting method. Whatever changes need to be made to go along side of it, we can address those one at a time.”

Roberts believed STAR would not be the end-all-be-all to fix voting America, but rather acting as a first step to a broader conversation in how America elects its officials.

While the measure would only affect non-partisan races held in Lane County — city races, like mayoral candidates, would not be affected — Roberts hopes that a successful rollout of the program would lead to a broad adoption of STAR throughout the state, revolutionizing how Orego-

nians vote.

For the primaries, the measure would look to eliminate the May primaries for the non-partisan Lane County races for commissioners, sheriffs, assessors and district attorneys.

Instead, the votes would take place during the main November election.

Holding May primaries can have some adverse effects, both financially and in the electorate that gets heard from.

Generally, May voting is the purview of partisan voters in Oregon as it is a time for Republicans and Democrats to pick their nominees for the general election, such as governor or federal representatives.

However, only a fraction of registered voters cast ballots

in primaries. In fact, only 33.6 percent of Oregonians cast ballots in this year’s primary, the lowest turnout since 1998, according to a May article in The Oregonian.

Despite the low number, Oregon is doing better than in the rest of the country. In 2018, only 19.6 percent of registered voters in America cast ballots for their states representative for the federal House of Representatives, according to an October study by Pew Research.

And the voters are older. In Texas this year, only 4.7 percent of all early primary voters were under 30, according to the Texas Monthly in a February article.

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Meet the candidates for Florence City Council

*Mayor runs unopposed as 3 candidates
vie for 2 city council positions*

By CHANTELLE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

As part of the Nov. 6 General Election coverage, Siuslaw News reached out to the four candidates running for positions on the Florence City Council.

Florence Mayor Joe Henry is again running unopposed for his two-year position. Three community members, Geraldine Lucio, Maureen Miltenberger and incumbent Woody Woodbury, are in the running for two four-year city council positions, which are currently held by Susy Lacer and Woodbury, who was ap-

pointed to the council in January. All four candidates answered questions about their experiences, reasons for running and plans for the city. In alphabetical order, read an introduction to each person and then see their responses to five questions.

Disclaimer: Siuslaw News is not endorsing any candidate or measure included in this series. Any views or opinions stated are exclusively those of the individuals themselves. Siuslaw News is not responsible for the accuracy or reliability of information submitted by the individuals.

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