

**HOLIDAYS from page 1A**

From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., there will be face painting with Kassy Keppol of Dragon Art. There will also be refreshments.

All proceeds of the Festival of Trees go to the Oregon Coast Military Museum.

Then, from 3 to 7 p.m., the Port of Siuslaw Marina will be lit by the twinkling lights of the Light Up Your Boat Float display on the Siuslaw River. People are invited to call the port to be included — all boats, canoes, rafts and even kayaks are welcome. Even U.S. Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River plans to be involved

Light Up Your Boat Float is sponsored by the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, Breen Marine and the Port of Siuslaw. Contact the Port of Siuslaw at 541-997-3040 to reserve a slip for your boat.

At 3:30 p.m., Santa Claus will officially arrive on a Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue firetruck

in Historic Old Town, heralding the beginning of the Florence Holiday Festival on Bay Street. Featuring carols, hot cocoa and cider and hay rides, the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce's family-friendly event also highlights Old Town merchants.

Local singers with Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW) will perform live music at 4:30 p.m. As a special treat, nationally-touring swinging crooner Ken Lavigne will sing beginning at 5:30 p.m. before heading to his SEAcost concert.

Florence Public Works and community volunteers will finish putting up lights, evergreen garlands and the holiday banners by this weekend. All eyes will be on the Siuslaw River Bridge Interpretive Center at 6 p.m., when Florence Mayor Joe Henry flips the switch to light the city's 23-foot living grand fir and the light displays in the park.

"Our Old Town area is getting



SIUSLAW NEWS FILE PHOTO

**Santa Claus will arrive in Historic Old Town Florence at 3:30 p.m. this Saturday for the Florence Holiday Festival.**

decked-out for the holidays," said Chamber Executive Director Bettina Hannigan. "Last year, the City of Florence planted a gorgeous live tree for our town to enjoy year after year."

Those wishing to warm up but continue the celebration

are encouraged to attend a free pre-concert talk with Lavigne at 6:15 p.m. at the Florence Events Center. Tickets are still available for his "Christmas Roadshow" at 7 p.m.

"Come on out to be a part of the festivities!" Hannigan said.

**POOCH from page 1A**

Dalton's vision was to provide a situation where the principles of positive reinforcement, along with training provided by professionals, would help establish an empathetic bond between at-risk youth and homeless dogs.

Project POOCH's website shares the stories of some its successful graduates and offers an inspiring forecast for those interested in improving the lives of participants — from both the canine and human families.

The hope is to be able to recreate the success achieved at MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility at Camp Florence.

Marina Lewis, shelter manager at the Oregon Coast Humane Society (OCHS) in Florence, said her experiences working with the young men at Camp Florence has been very positive.

"Usually what happens is we have a dog who we think would benefit from going to Camp Florence. We just call them and say, 'Hey, can you come and pick this dog up?' And we tell them about the dog to make sure it is a good fit," explained Lewis, who said the shelter has gotten pretty good at judging what they [the dog] can and can't handle — and what they would and wouldn't enjoy. "And we also do it to get a better picture of who the dog is outside of the shelter environment," added Lewis. "The boys are really good about telling us specific traits about the dogs and what they do and do not like, and how they act in certain situations."

One of the residents of Camp Florence is a young man named Frankie, who feels the work he is doing with the dogs from OCHS is similar to work he has done previously at MacLaren, with the original Project POOCH, with similar positive results.

"What we do at Project POOCH is honestly learn how to work with the dogs," Frankie said. "We are able to apply for certain certificates and, if we pass, we get certified and are able to look after dogs in a kennel environment."

"We are here to rehabilitate them and help train them."

Frankie starts out by getting to know the personality of the dog he is going to work with and also identifies medical issues, like infections or hair loss, and points those problems out to the staff veterinarian for treatment.

"Before fostering a dog, we go and actually have to visit with the dog first, before even bringing it to camp," he said. "We have other dogs and people there and we get to know what the dog's behavior is and see if there are any behavior issues we can address and then we know what to expect and to work on — so we can decide whether it is a good idea to foster them at camp."

The health aspects of the dogs working with the Camp Florence youth are often secondary considerations, with bad behavior and bad attitudes more pressing concerns.

"The biggest challenge is the fact that some dogs are really aggressive or are deemed unadoptable, so that is the real issue. The process is a bit of a guess for a person never working with

dogs," Frankie said. "But I come in with the mindset that I have to be patient and try to communicate with them, because they can't talk, you just have to go off of their body language."

"That process is challenging, but it's not a bad part."

Lewis is hoping to increase the interactions between OCHS and Camp Florence. She sees the relationship growing in the future.

"All of our interactions with Camp Florence have been really positive. ... The last dog we sent there was an elderly pit bull," said Lewis. "Coco just needed some tender loving care. There is nothing wrong with her, she was just a house dog, she was like 11 years old, and was used to being in a house and she howled the whole time. We sent her to spend time with the boys and after that she did great," Lewis said.

The experiences Frankie has had while working with shelter dogs has made a strong impression on him and he is pleased that he has been able to make a difference in a dog's life. He has also found a dog that he enjoyed working with so much that he has decided to spend a lot more time with it.

"The most recent dog I worked with was a dog I ended up adopting. His name is Niko and I got him when he was a small little puppy," said Frankie.

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