

Lighthouse to host Christmas open house

Heceta Head Lightstation is celebrating 23 years of the Annual Victorian Christmas Open House on Dec. 8 and 9, 15 and 16 from 4 to 7 p.m. each day.

The Queen Anne style Keeper's House will be decorated inside and out with festive Victorian holiday decorations Dec. 6 through Jan. 2.

Open house sponsors will be providing warm drinks and treats.

Each evening, local performers will play holiday favorites at the historic Keeper's House. Even Santa will be visiting to welcome children of all ages.

Guests are encouraged to take a night time walk to the lighthouse, which provides an opportunity to watch the lighthouse beams rotate overhead. Guests are encouraged to bring a flashlight.

Entry to the Keeper's House is free, but



donations are gladly accepted. Parking is available at the Heceta Head Lighthouse State Scenic View Point, just below the Keeper's House, for \$5 per vehicle.

A free shuttle bus offered by NW Adventures Quest and Carnahan Construction will take visitors from the park right to the front door. For more information, contact the Heceta B&B at 866-547-3696 or keepers@hecetalighthouse.com.

Help contribute by serving on a city committee

Would you like to see more public involvement in the City of Florence to make sure your voice is heard? Would you like to make a difference and help contribute to the goals and objectives of the City as a whole?

At the Nov. 5 Florence City Council meeting, the council elected to amend its committee structures to allow for more opportunities for citizens to get engaged in projects that interest them.

"City committees work tirelessly to provide much needed volunteer time to keep many of the City's programs functioning at a level that would be impossible without their services," states City Recorder/Economic Development Coordinator Kelli Weese.

City Committees generally meet once per month as a group.

People interested in positions should expect to attend recurring meetings and devote time for study of issues and performance above and beyond meeting attendance.

Volunteer time is vital in working towards solutions to local government issues.

If you are interested in serving your city and getting involved, consider applying for one of the open positions on one of the City's committees.

The following boards and committees are currently filling vacancies for varying term lengths, with positions set to begin on February 1, 2019.

- Planning Commission
- Budget Committee
- Community & Economic Development Committee

• Environmental Management Advisory Committee

- Public Arts Committee
- Transportation Committee
- Audit Ad-Hoc Committee

The deadline for applications is Dec. 31.

Applying for a position is easy. Applications can be downloaded from the City's website at www.ci.florence.or.us and are available at the Florence Public Works Facility (2675 Kingwood Street) during regular business hours.

For details regarding the duties and responsibilities of these bodies, residency requirements of applicants, term lengths, or any other questions, contact Weese at 541-997-3437 or via email at kelli.weese@ci.florence.or.us.

PLAQUE from page 1A

The heavy brass plaque was taken just prior to Veteran's Day last month. Once it was discovered missing, Cavarno headed up plans to start raising money to replace the sign. That effort will no longer be necessary, much to the relief of Cavarno and his compatriots.

What will be needed, however, is a more permanent way to attach the plaque to the Memorial Wall to prevent a future theft.

The veterans talked about the work that went into creat-

ing the park, based on a discussion, more than a decade ago, that took place at The Old Town Coffee Shop, a regular meeting place for the group.

Together, the veterans agreed that there was a need for a long-term tribute to service members that lived in Florence — and the idea for the park was born. The park has since become Florence's central public location for tributes and ceremonies related to veteran affairs and patriotic holidays.

In November, Cavarno took the lead in reporting to the police and to the community the

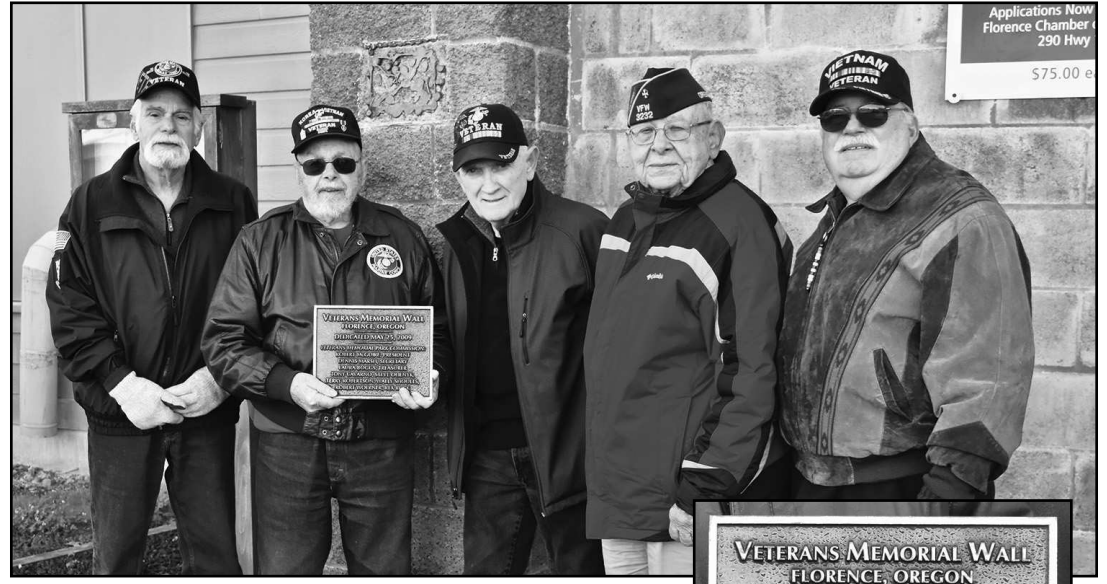
loss of the dedication plaque. His police report, along with a story published in the Siuslaw News and social media alerts, were shared across the state. These reports may have played a part in the return of the plaque.

"I think whoever did this may have seen this on Facebook and thought, 'I better get rid of this thing before I get arrested,'" Cavarno said.

The second part of this story takes place in Brookings, a small town in Curry County, Ore., near the California border. It is similar in many aspects to Florence in a number of meaningful ways, including population size, history as a timber town and strong ties to the military and the first responder communities. Perhaps most importantly, there is a small-town ethos that infuses the manner in which people treat one another.

This is a case where that type of small-town concern allowed for the return of a piece of metal that was much more than a sign on a wall.

One of Brookings neighborhood parks, Azalea Park, is where an observant city employee, Jay Trost, noticed an unattended backpack. He



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

These five veterans were part of the original Veteran's Memorial Park Commission, helping to realize Florence's goal to have a park set aside to honor area veterans. In the past month, they sought to raise funds to replace the brass dedication plaque, which was discovered missing on Veterans Day. Now, they can use the funds to secure it more permanently to the Memorial Wall.



checked out the contents of the backpack, read the plaque discovered inside and quickly contacted the Brookings Police Department.

Officer Rob Johnson was assigned to the case of the plaque in the backpack and he immediately knew he had found something that needed some closer attention.

"We got a call of a suspicious package sitting in Azalea Park and we knew after looking at the plaque and reading it, that we had found something that would be important to return," Johnson said. "So, when I got back to the station, I gave the Florence Police Department a call and I talked with the case officer there. We started figur-

ing out the best way to return it.

"It is heavy, so the cost to ship was a consideration, but we just wanted to make sure it got returned as cheaply and as quickly as possible."

Brookings is 156 miles south of Florence, or about a 3.5-hour drive.

It turned out that Johnson had a friend that was going to North Bend later that week, and he had a friend that was going to Florence, and so they coordinated a handoff near Coos Bay. As quick as you please, the plaque was at the Florence Police Department.

The department then called Cavarno, giving him the news the plaque had been recovered and was waiting for pickup.

The next to last step in the journey of the missing plaque required a call to West Coast Autobody and its owner Rick Ruede.

Cavarno updated Ruede on the plaque's journey and expressed his concerns about the shape the plaque was in.

"It's been up there for nine years and it's starting to show signs of wear," Cavarno said. "Over the years, especially with the weather outside there at the park, it was starting to weather."

Once he had been brought up to speed, Ruede agreed to clean, polish and reseal the plaque free of charge.

"Basically, it was scratched up and the brass wasn't shiny anymore, so we cleaned that up and we polished it up, so the brass was showing through again and it shined up nice," Ruede said. "I've dealt a lot with these vets and I know so many of them personally. I just wanted to help if I could. I really like to support the local service groups and these guys in particular."

Cavarno is clear what the last step in the process of recovering the plaque will be.

"The next step we are going to take is we are going to procure some one-way screws and drill lead shields into the block walls and mount it that way, so this doesn't happen again," he said.

The Florence Veteran's Memorial Park is at 1200 Bay St. It has views of the Siuslaw River, dunes, wildlife and the Siuslaw River Bridge. It is open during daylight hours year-round.

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