PERPETUA *from page 1A*

James Cook in 1778, at which time he named it after Saint Perpetua.

Michele Holman Jones, a district ranger for the U.S. Forest Service, points to the dedication and commitment of the volunteers at Cape Perpetua as the reason the USDA has been able to keep the visitor center open, unlike other parks in the state.

"The government shutdown is based on appropriated funding. We are running Cape Perpetua, and other campgrounds and day use sites, off recreation fee dollars, which are not appropriated by Congress," Jones said. "We have a small amount of staff that runs Cape Perpetua because we are extremely fortunate to have a group of volunteers that allow us to keep the doors open full time, year-round."

The Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve is Oregon's largest marine reserve and is located 23 miles north of Florence. It is also one of the premier locations on the West Coast for whale watching. This is especially true during the early weeks of each year as more than 20,000 gray whales migrate south.

MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Cape Perpetua is a popular site for hiking, wildlife viewing and whale watching. It also seasonally offers camping.

The whales are moving to warmer Mexican waters to mate and give birth, as part of the longest migration route of any mammal on earth.

The large main room of the visitor center has several flora and fauna exhibits to help hikers and beach walkers identify the native plants, birds and sea creatures that might be seen on one of the trails leading from the center, or at the tidepools on the beaches below.

There are also banks of windows inside the center that have viewing stations with binoculars or long-range sighting devices available for ocean viewing.

This is the area that most visitors will gravitate towards after entering the visitor center, and this where volunteers Lila Chambers and Mary Ellen O'Shaughnessy greet visitors and answer questions from the dozens of inquisitive tourists they talk with daily.

"Cape Perpetua Scenic area is open right now!" Chambers said enthusiastically. "It has 12 trails, identified on the brochure, that are open at this time. The trails go from easy to moderately challenging, and they all start right here at the visitor center."

Chambers and O'Shaughnessy are just two of the dozen or so individuals who contribute to the educational aspect of a trip to the reserve by providing information and explaining interesting seasonal wildlife activities like this month's gray whale migration.

"We have had a number of whale sightings this week, and there seem to be a lot of folks stopping in to watch the whale migration, which should continue for the next week or two," Chambers said.

The Cape Perpetua Scenic Area and Visitor Center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Cape Perpetua Campground is closed at this time.

SERIES *from page 1A*

At the same time, our intention was to always include potential solutions. Our thought was that if the public was aware of the issues, they could become involved in the solutions as well.

"Jeopardy" was controversial from the start. While many people appreciated bringing these issues to light, others blamed those in trouble and, in some cases, suggested that if they couldn't cut it, they should just move away. Others believed "affordable housing" was just a scam to get more taxes.

Still others chastised the paper for putting the region in a bad light, a particularly strong criticism from realtors fearful that prospective buyers would decide not to move to the region. The concern was valid. We periodically saw Facebook posts from potential buyers who would write, "Are things really that bad? We were thinking of moving there but ..."

The Florence Area Chamber of Commerce was bombarded with concerned calls about the series, and we were accused of endangering the future of the region, just as it was recovering from the Great Recession. Some area officials were livid, calling the reporting editorialized lies. What we didn't know at the time was Florence was in the running for the television show "Small Business Revolution," and there was real fear that the series would scare them off.

In actuality, it was the opposite. Television shows like "Revolution" look for towns so down-on-their luck that they need to be saved. In fact, when the show's producers came to town, we were asked to print out sections of the series for them in an attempt to demonstrate what problems were really occurring.

Despite many of the dire stories contained in the series, there was always a current of optimism. With almost every problem presented, we had some official presenting a solution that was either in process or further down the road. To quote Dan Lofy from the series, "I think the City of Florence really has its s--t together." In the end, we didn't need a television show to swoop in and save us — we had this covered.

That was at the beginning of the 2018. As we enter 2019, have things gotten better?

Housing is certainly at the forefront of city officials' minds when they're asked about issues facing the region. The City of Florence has made big strides in encouraging affordable homes to be built, including a partnership with NEDCO to build housing along Airport Road. Local churches have worked on creating temporary housing spaces, and the State of Oregon now allows property owners to build and rent out accessory dwelling units next to their homes. Cannery Station, a multi-unit apartment complex expected to be built across from Fred Meyer, is looking to bring affordable housing and jobs to the community within the next 10 years. And many residents have stepped up to bring their own creative solutions to the issue, giving their time and money to charities that they may not otherwise have.

But as far as concrete results, they're still on the horizon.

Ultimately, it takes time for all of these projects to come to fruition. We still hear stories about difficulties finding well-paying jobs or landing an affordable place to rent. And we probably will hear more of those stories throughout 2019 as well. The city is most definitely in motion — but it takes time to reach momentum. Hundreds are pushing towards that goal. It's just a matter of sticking together to reach it.

"The Right of the People to Keep and Bear Arms" ***(March 30 to April 21)***

The problems started when students decided to walk out.

It was March when Siuslaw High School students joined a nationwide protest initiated by student activists at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High in Parkland, Fla., which was the scene of a mass shooting the month prior. The walkout at SHS was to protest mass shootings and support gun reform.

Social media reactions to our coverage became heated. Some comments began spreading unfounded accusations, including rumors that the teachers and parents instructed students to walk out and that students were paid to do it. Neither accusation proved true.

See **SERIES** *page 6A*

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