

the spotlight

A weekly roundup of shopping, savings and doings around town.




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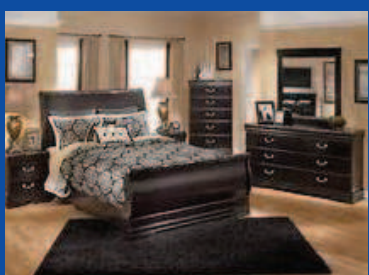
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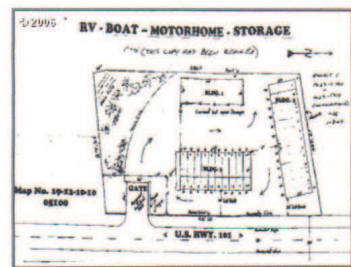
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WALL from page 1A

Kim Pruitt, Community Relations Coordinator for Spruce Point, hopes the visit will serve as a learning opportunity for many in the community who might not have a familiarity with the conflict.

While Pruitt has received commitments from members of Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River to assist with set-up, but there are some weekend staffing needs remaining.

"The Wall is open for visitors 24 hours a day while in Florence, and we could use help during those overnight hours," she said. "We are still looking for folks to volunteer from 2 to 6 a.m. each day."

The replica wall will arrive in Florence on Tuesday evening with a motorcycle escort of more than 100 veterans heralding its appearance. The public is invited to attend the arrival and show support for local vets who served in Vietnam.

Set up for the wall will begin Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m. and public viewing is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m.

Local veterans' groups, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, are assisting in the installation of the wall and could use help from the community with this preparation.

Bruce Andrade, who is coordinating the assistance effort, said the team working on the logistics is understaffed at this time.

"There are a number of opportunities for volunteers that range from assembling the wall to assisting the visitors at the wall, to helping set up for the Remembrance Program on Saturday, April 6," Andrade said.

The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington hosts millions of visitors each year and has garnered praise from the public, military members and visitors from around the world. The visiting model of the wall is similar in scope to the original and the close attention to detail that marked the construction of the original has been carried over to the replica.

Maya Ying Lin designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial when she was a still an undergraduate at Yale University and has since continued a successful career as a landscape architect. The structure is made up of two 246-foot-long black granite walls that are scaled from 10 feet tall at the center to 8 inches at the extremes. Each wall has 72 panels, 70 of which list names, along with two panels that remain blank. The memorial wall is surrounded by a two-acre national park maintained by the National Park Service and visited by millions each year.

The replica visiting Florence is nearly as impressive as the original and has the advantage of mobility as it can go to those that might never get to Washington D.C. for a visit.

Over the past 40 years, the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial has become more than just a granite recitation of the names of the perished and missing — it has come to represent hope and healing.

These changes have taken years as the attitudes and anger that marked much of the war have subsided and decreased. These changes are also reflected in the treatment and appreciation of those who served during the war.

All of these are part of the reason the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial has come to be known as "The Wall That Heals."

"Every veteran of the Vietnam War can speak of the lessons they personally learned from this war. I can only offer my perspective," Andrade said. "When I mustered out of the service and returned home, it was obvious the war was being fought on the home front as well. For many years I never mentioned anything about my time in the service mainly because of the negative opinions about the war and of veterans in general. Over the years, the doctrines that were offered as 'public opinion' have been replaced with a genuine understanding and appreciation for the sacrifices made by America's veterans."

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Fund is a non-profit organization established to advocate for that war's veterans and to promote a greater understanding of the conflict. In addition to managing the original wall, the group also coordinates the scheduled trips for the traveling replicas.

Earlier this year, Heidi Zimmerman, Vice President of Programs and Communications for the fund, said she is pleased the wall is coming back to Oregon.

"We received 116 applications to host The Wall That Heals in 2019 and chose 34 sites to visit this year. There are a lot of factors that go into choosing our sites," Zimmerman said. "We look at whether we've been to the area, or the state, before and how recent it was. We look at the proposed location for the site and dates that the host has requested. We hadn't been in Oregon since 2015. We are thrilled to be on display in Oregon this year with our updated, larger Wall replica and educational displays."

The strong ties that exist between the military community and the citizens of Florence is the central reason for the arrival of the replica of the "Wall that Heals."

Many of the area's Vietnam era vets are pleased with the positive attention being given to the vets that served in the once polarizing conflict.

"The veterans that serve our country do so willingly and without reservation," Andrade said. "They want to ensure that generations to come are afforded the freedoms we have enjoyed for over 200 years. It is my honor to offer them any support any way I can. As a member of the VFW, I see firsthand the support that this great community of Florence provides its veterans. I only hope that other communities will join Florence in its vigorous support of veterans."

For more information on opportunities to assist with the installation or removal of the wall, or to volunteer to stand watch, call Spruce Point Assisted Living at 541-997-6111 or contact Andrade at 209-915-5181.

Spirituali-Tea to learn about words and their power

On Monday, April 1, at 6:30 p.m. the community is invited to join a group Friends who enjoy talking about spiritual matters with openness for the diversity of ideas participants present. All are invited to attend the Spirituali-Tea gathering at 875 Seventh St. The topic for the evening is "Words."

"Mean words hurt," said Spirituali-Tea organizer James Heintz. "Words spoken are degraded when degrading the person spoken to. Words retain their lexical definitions, yet lose

their meaning, if mean-spirited. Barbed words dull their points."

He suggested showing "compassion toward passion" and following sayings from Bahá'u'lláh.

"Answer the fire of anger (whether your own or someone else's) with the warmth of understanding — acknowledging the problem, ascertaining the need, reducing the frustration, and affirming the value of the relationship — before offering your own opinion," Heintz advised.

The gathering will end at 8 p.m. by reading the prayer requests left in the Prayer Pole in the garden of the Florence Playhouse in Historic Old Town.



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