

Community News

Florence FloTones give back to community in final encore

By **BURNEY GARELICK**
SPECIAL TO SIUSLAW NEWS

FloTones give back to community one last time

If music be the food of love, the FloTones fed the central Oregon coast with songs for almost two decades before Florence's inimitable vocal jazz ensemble decided to bring down the curtain last May. That's when the FloTones produced their final concert, "Music Matters," as a benefit for the Siuslaw schools music programs. The singers made their final appearance that year at the Community Chorus of Florence Oregon (CCFO) Christmas concert.

But the FloTones were not quite done. They were determined to go out with a flourish.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the group understood that, upon dissolution, it was required to divest all of its assets and distribute them to other nonprofits, including public schools.

Over the years, the FloTones had purchased some major items including a digital keyboard, an entire sound system, 12 wireless microphones and other assorted items — all of which totaled in excess of \$11,000. Because music matters, the items were given to the Siuslaw schools music programs.

The funds, secured in a credit union account, were used to purchase full page ads in the performance programs for "The Wiz," CROW's (Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops) 2019 musical production and



PHOTO COURTESY KEN JANOWSKI

As part of the distribution of remaining FloTones assets, FloTones President Kate McBroom Redwine recently presented a check for \$1,000 to Florence Food Share Board President Rick Klessig

the CCFO's spring concert. The remaining funds went to Florence Food Share and St. Andrew's Outreach Program.

Providing financial support to the community had always been the mission of the FloTones. The singers frequently performed benefit concerts for Florence Food Share, the Boys & Girls Club, Florence Habitat for Humanity and area churches from Yachats to Reedsport. Florence performances, including their gospel repertoire, were given at the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, New Life Lutheran, the First Baptist Church, the United Methodist Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, Florence Christian Church, and Crossroad Church.

Additionally, the FloTones performed many times at Shorewood Senior Living, Spruce Point Assisted Living and Regency Florence, a senior living facility.

The community-spirited singers were drawn together like bees to honey to create the FloTones. The group was formed in 2003 by members of the CCFO to perform at special community functions. Apart from the larger choral group, the FloTones' repertoire aimed to provide jazz-oriented vocals.

The FloTones spun off from the CCFO in 2004 and achieved its nonprofit status. The fledgling ensemble decided that, for all performances, the singers would memorize the music. That way, they wouldn't need to refer to the printed score and could more readily engage each other to produce exquisite harmony of the highest quality vocal balance and blend. Music selections came mainly from "The Great American Songbook" including 125 songs. The repertoire also included about 50 jazz-flavored Christmas

songs and 20 gospel songs.

Over the years, approximately 50 singers were part of the FloTones' family, including a former Florence mayor, Phil Brubaker, and a former Florence First Citizen, David Capen. Three of the singers — Jan Kinslow, Jeanni Sanders and Ken Janowski — were charter members from start to finish.

The FloTones were fortunate to have had some very talented music directors and accompanists.

No sooner had Dorian Carter founded the group then, in 2003, she left for a sabbatical, and Chuck Cassey became director. Cassey was music and choral director for national television programs including "The Garry Moore Show," "Perry Mason," "Matlock," "Columbo" and "The Hulk." Under Cassey's direction, in 2005, the FloTones produced a CD showcasing their best work, including their signature song, "The Best Is Yet To Come."

Cassey retired in 2007, and Laura Merz became director and accompanist. Merz, a native of Florence, had just earned a master's degree in music from California State University at Northridge in

Los Angeles. She started her tenure by directing FloTones' performances at the Florence Holiday Tree Lighting, the Florentine Estates Christmas Dinner, a Peace Harbor Hospital luncheon, three holiday performances at the Three Rivers Casino, and a Florence Food Share benefit performance that brought in 350 pounds of food and \$198.

When Merz retired in 2015, the FloTones became a self-directed group, accompanied by several fine pianists including Marty Adams, Chris Lewis, Jennifer Weier, Deb Young and, since 2017, Rhianna Haines. From time to time, Ron Green, president of Oregon Pacific Bank, contributed stunning trumpet accompaniment at FloTones' performances.

In addition to concert and Rhody parade appearances, the FloTones undertook individual, thematic shows. Their first production, in 2005, directed by Cassey and staged at the Florence Events Center, was "Eklektik!" a myriad melodious musicale from Mozart to Mancini. The show was a smash hit, and the eclectic ensemble went on to put on a show for Elkton's "Picnic in the Park" music festival in 2007, followed by a series of shows including "In the Attic" in 2009, "Cruisin'" in 2011, "Down Memory Lane" in 2013, "The Glory of Love" in 2015, "Latin Rhythms" in 2016 and "Music Matters" in 2018. Performance venues included the FEC, Florence Playhouse and Class Act Theatre.

It's been a dynamite run for the FloTones. Not only the hills, but the forests, sand dunes and ocean shores have come alive with the sound of their music. Their song may be over, but the memories will linger, and the community will continue to benefit from their largesse. There's no doubt, as time goes by, that new tones and tunes will be inspired to flow.

As the FloTones so often sang, "The best is yet to come."

Calling All Moms

Kitchen Klutter is asking for pictures of Mom for our Mothers Day event Saturday May 11 from 11-4. Pictures will be displayed and returned.

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April 19 - 25	FRI 19	SAT 20	SUN 21	MON 22	TUE 23	WED 24	THU 25
AVENGERS: ENDGAME PG-13 182 MIN - It's here. Tickets are available.							7:00 PM 8:00 PM
HELLBOY - R 120 MIN - "Harbour makes for a formidable Hellboy in a visually snappy milieu... There's plenty to enjoy about the latest absurdist odyssey." IndieWire	12:50 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM 9:10 PM	12:50 PM 3:45 PM 6:10 PM 9:10 PM	12:50 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM	12:50 PM 3:45 PM 6:50 PM	12:50 PM 3:50 PM 6:40 PM	12:50 PM 3:50 PM 6:40 PM	12:50 PM 3:50 PM 6:40 PM
THE MUSTANG - R 96 MIN - A veteran trainer helps a convict in a wild horse training program to find true rehabilitation. "Quiet, understated and unforgettable, The Mustang is a winner by five lengths." Original Cin	1:10 PM 3:50 PM 8:40 PM	11:00 AM 2:25 PM 4:35 PM 6:50 PM	1:10 PM 3:50 PM 6:00 PM	1:10 PM 4:10 PM	1:10 PM 4:00 PM 7:00 PM	1:10 PM 4:00 PM	1:10 PM 4:00 PM
SHAZAM! - PG-13 132 MIN - "Proves so determinedly ebullient you begin to think they're pumping laughing gas into the auditorium." HR	1:00 PM 3:30 PM 6:25 PM 8:50 PM	1:00 PM 3:30 PM 6:25 PM 8:50 PM	1:00 PM 3:50 PM 6:25 PM	4:00 PM 6:40 PM	1:00 PM 3:40 PM 6:30 PM	1:00 PM 3:40 PM 6:30 PM	1:00 PM 3:40 PM 6:30 PM
UNPLANNED - R 106 MIN - "Unplanned" doesn't come close to exploring all of the different combating arguments connected to abortion, but the case it makes is sobering to consider." Deseret News (Salt Lake City)	1:20 PM 3:25 PM 6:00 PM 8:30 PM	1:20 PM 3:50 PM 8:50 PM	1:20 PM 3:25 PM 6:10 PM	1:20 PM 3:50 PM 7:00 PM	1:20 PM 4:10 PM 6:50 PM	1:20 PM 3:30 PM 6:50 PM	1:20 PM 4:10 PM

Events & Performing Arts:	FRI 19	SAT 20	SUN 21	MON 22	TUE 23	WED 24	THU 25
STRATFORD: CORIOLANUS NR 170 MIN - ENCORE		11:00 AM					
Siuslaw Climate Alliance/Florence Earth Day Committee Present... BEFORE THE FLOOD NR 96 MIN - "A sober, thoughtful documentary that combines a lament for a lost Eden with a rousing call to action." Screen Intl.	FREE TICKETS AVAIL NOW			12:30 PM 6:30 PM			
KLIMT & SCHIELE: EROS AND PSYCHE 91 MIN - In Vienna, the European capital of thought and the arts, the sensual artistic visions of two geniuses meet.						6:00 PM	

Box Office opens 30 min. prior to 1st Film | 1930 HWY 101 | www.citylightscinemas.com | Times: 541-305-0014

Public meetings to discuss school facilities

The Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) of the Siuslaw School District is planning several community meetings seeking input on issues regarding our local schools.

The meetings will function as workshops in which citizens will have the opportunity to share their views

on a wide range of topics relating to the schools: educational offerings, facility requirements, meeting the present and future needs of students and more.

The committee is gathering information that will be useful to the school board for planning purposes. The first meeting will be held on

Tuesday, April 23, beginning at 6:30 p.m., at Dunes City Hall on Spruce St. in Westlake.

Coffee, tea and cookies prepared by Siuslaw High School culinary students, will be available.

All local residents are invited to participate.

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
APRIL 20	APRIL 21	APRIL 22	APRIL 23	APRIL 24	APRIL 25	APRIL 26
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	AM Showers
55°F 43°F	57°F 42°F	61°F 48°F	63°F 49°F	59°F 45°F	57°F 45°F	57°F 45°F

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