

# ATHLETES OF THE YEAR 2019

INSIDE — SPORTS

## Siuslaw News SIUSLAW'S ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

VOL. 129, NO. 46

NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY  
FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER



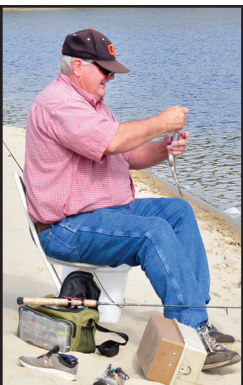
Mostly sunny skies with a high of 62 and a low tonight of 49. Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY



Siuslaw named Brain Bowl Champions  
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SPORTS



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### Veteran recognized nationally

Local volunteer receives award, trip to Washington D.C.

There are some individuals who have a mission in life. These people have a sense of purpose and a tenacity that allows them to overcome the obstacles life presents while continuing to fulfill that mission. Many of us also tend to let the important moments of life happen and then let them slip away to become a memory or an afterthought in a discussion years later. Others take those meaningful moments and incorporate them into the lives they lead from that time forward. Jim Swantz is one of those people.

Swantz served in the Air Force for 20 years and at the age of 81 continues to serve the Florence community in many ways. His time in

STORY & PHOTOS  
By MARK BRENNAN  
SIUSLAW NEWS

service plays a prominent role today in his life, framing the actions he takes and the way in which he chooses to contribute his time.

"Primarily, I was in electronic countermeasures working on B-52's. During my tour in Vietnam, I flew backend crew on a C-130, which is a recon bird. We flew over Cambodia and Laos and Vietnam," Swantz said.

One of the most rewarding efforts Swantz is involved in has garnered him attention for his service and dedication working to support area veterans with disabilities.

See VETERAN page 5A

### Solo flight



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Elijah LaCrosse and Terry Tomeny

### 16-year-old Air Academy graduate pursues flying

By MARK BRENNAN  
SIUSLAW NEWS

Planning for the future is not usually a quality associated with youth. Many young people are still learning about life and the world at large as teenagers and push concerns regarding careers to the back burner. That is not the case for Elijah LaCrosse, a 16-year-old who has just completed a solo airplane flight that will bring him closer to his long-term goal of becoming a professional pilot.

LaCrosse has always had an interest in planes and flying and took an opportunity provided to him by local aviators Terry Tomeny and Sam Spayd two years ago to explore this interest.

"I was always interested in building things, but then I started running with a guy who was a retired airline pilot and he turned me onto flying. I had planned on going to the Air Force Academy for a long time — I'm still thinking about doing that — and this is a good way for me to get started," LaCrosse said.

LaCrosse, who has been primarily home schooled, is finishing his junior year studies and plans on pursuing some type of aviation-related career, the nature of which will be determined by the costs associated with flight training and related educational and certification requirements.

Earlier this week, LaCrosse and Tomeny took an extended trip around the state for the purpose

See PILOT page 6A



### Heyday at the farm

STORY & PHOTOS  
By CHANTELE MEYER  
SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw first-graders spent two days at a farm as part of a longstanding tradition of school visits. Below, the Elliott family descendants wave to the departing schoolbus, the last to visit the farm.

### Elliott's Hilltop Acres concludes school visits after 55 years

On May 29 and 30, Siuslaw Elementary School first-graders attended a field trip at Elliott's Hilltop Acres Farm, the last school visit after 55 years of tradition. According to the remaining Elliott family members (many with different last names), the farm will continue although public access will be limited to family and friends.

Loni Schofield, granddaughter to the farm's founders George and Leona Elliott, ran the field trips with four generations of Elliott family descendants. Her husband Paul drove the tractor for the hay rides and Megan, her daughter, showed students how to gently hold bunnies, ducks and chicks.

"In 1957, my grandmother took animals to the school," Loni told a group of students. "In 1964, one of the teachers asked if they could bring the kids up here, so we started bringing kids to the farm. That was 55 years ago, and sadly it is our last year."

On the farm visits, students got to run, play and get an up-close view of life on a farm. Their day was split into lunch when they arrived at 11 a.m. followed by an hour of group activities: Paul's



hayride, a brief loop on horseback, a visit with Scottish Highland cows and the chance to hold soft baby animals.

"We got to hold babies," first-grader Trindle said. "My favorite was holding the duck, because ducks are my favorite animal."

Violet's favorite part was hold-

ing the bunnies. Students were able to sit down and hold the bunnies on their laps, taking turns for the most part.

One little girl, Adrienna, "hoarded the bunnies" the family joked, saying that she was "a bunny whisperer" by how much the bunnies seemed to enjoy her. "She did not want to leave the bunnies," Loni said.

Afterwards, the kids climbed a grass-covered hill — avoiding the wild tom turkeys — and rolled down.

"It's a heyday for them, rolling down the hill," Loni said.

The day ended with adventure play in the farm's unique playground, consisting of three tire swings, a swing set, seesaw, slide, merry-go-rounds and tether ball.

Barb Rowland, Loni's aunt and one of three daughters of George and Leona, was on the first first-grade field trip to the farm in 1964.

"It's kind of cool because so many of our friends grew up out here with us," she said. "They remember the fun times being on the farm."

See FARM page 7A

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