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DANCER from page 1A

In order to become a Chiefette, auditions were given in a large ballroom in downtown Kansas City. Girls from all over the area auditioned for the chance to become a Chiefette.

I was selected at the audition as a young high school girl, and supported the Chiefs at each home game with pre-game and half-time dance entertainment. My two sisters, Ruth and Esther, were selected in the audition the following year, so all three of us were part of the popular performing team.

The directors of the Kansas City Chiefettes were Shirley Marley and Johnny Miller. They were my dance teachers then, and continue to run the Miller-Marley School of Dance in Kansas City.

The intensity of physical training was integral to be-

ing a Chiefette. Strenuous dance practices and athletic training were part of the position. Our routines were numerous and varied, from dancing with footballs to wooden suitcases, from balloons to feathers. The chant, "Smile, smile, smile!" was spoken by each girl as she stepped onto the field, maneuvering in precision as we looked up into the crowd of thousands above and all around us.

The exhilaration of this moment was unparalleled.

When thousands of people are watching and cheering as you perform challenging routines requiring physical agility, strength, coordination and poise, one's personal character develops. The character that develops in the dancers correlates with the character of the football team. The players persist, struggle, achieve and win! Hard work, teamwork

and physical and mental achievement all make a winning team in both football and dance.

Being in the Chiefettes taught me to work hard, achieve, focus and persevere. Our rehearsals were exceptionally demanding and challenging.

I remember the directors leading us with high kicks, 20 in a row, push-ups and sit-ups all in the heat and humidity of the Kansas City climate. We would hear them tell us, "Guide right ... higher kicks ... stay with the beat."

I went on to minor in dance at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Following graduation with a degree in education, I became a YWCA Youth Director in Mankato, Minn. There I started a YWCA Pom Squad and taught young girls some of the dance skills I had learned when perform-

ing with the Kansas City Chiefettes. Later, I attended the American Dance Festival at Duke University, in Durham, N.C., where I danced from sun-up to sun-down.

I still treasure my Chiefette uniform and my Chiefette necklace after all these years.

Plus, I still believe in strenuous athletic training at any age. I take ballet at our local Lane Community College and exercise regularly at Coastal Fitness. Dance and fitness are a dedicated lifetime focus for me, and the cornerstones for a healthy and long life!

Dolly Greene has been teaching in the Siuslaw School District for 25 years since 1995, originally working as the Gifted And Talented instructor and currently teaching third grade.

POPULATION from page 1A

For PIT Count organizers, safety was the primary consideration when approaching individuals.

While the threat of violence was remote for PIT volunteers, the leaders acknowledge the feeling among some of the region's unsheltered that there is a concerted effort to diminish services for the homeless in order to decrease their numbers.

One unsheltered individual, who only wanted to be identified as Steve, shared his take on the situation in Florence.

"We have hemorrhaged services for the homeless for the last five years," he said. "We lost the showers at the port, Helping Hands lost its building and are doing a lot less than they were, and SOS has less funding, so they are doing less. We have been losing lots of services as the homeless popu-

lation has skyrocketed."

One of Florence's most active voices for the consideration and support of those who are unsheltered is Brenda Gilmer. On a regular basis, she speaks at Florence City Council meetings on the subject of the unsheltered.

According to Gilmer, while the ideas behind the PIT count are worthwhile, she believes the methodology employed is almost completely ineffective in ascertaining the actual number of homeless in Florence.

For proof of her position she points to last year's count, which stated that there were 14 homeless people in Florence. One of the reasons she believes the count was so low has to do with caution on the part of those being counted.

"It is absolutely inaccurate," Gilmer said. "It is simply ridiculous to believe we have that few homeless in Florence. The numbers just don't add up and that is because one of the biggest fears that most homeless people have is being targeted. Once you are targeted, you are on their radar, you are known, and it becomes an ever-spreading circle of problems for them."

Before volunteers headed out, they looked over large, laminated maps laid out on tables in the Bromley Room. The teams were consulted on the areas they would like to canvass. These locations included public places that are used by the unsheltered when it is cold or rainy, as is often the case on the coast. The Florence Emergency Cold

Weather Shelter only opens when it is below freezing or when rain is forecast along with near freezing temperatures, as it was on Monday night.

As of yet, Florence does not have a long-term solution for sheltering the un-

housed. "I think in law enforcement, generally there is empathy for people who have no shelter, but there is no empathy for people using drugs or alcohol, because that can lead to offensive behaviors," Gilmer said.

The PIT required that volunteer counting teams ask questions to get an idea of demographics of the people they interviewed.

The purpose of the count goes beyond tallying numbers; it is connected to funding for the services needed to assist the unsheltered. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that communities receiving federal funds from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program conduct a count of the unsheltered every two years, although most communities do so every year.

Locally, Siuslaw Outreach Services (SOS) and Florence Food Share are the main recipients of the funding that stems from the count.

These counts are used as a basis for fund allocation, but also as a tool that allows local, state and the federal government to approximate the extent and scope of the challenge of homelessness. This allows organizations and social

service nonprofits that work closely with the unsheltered to create plans for dealing with the costs and logistical challenges inherent in assisting the unsheltered.

In 2018, 51,977 people were served by agencies in Lane County's Client/Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Of the 51,977 people served, 13,070 households were homeless for at least one night in 2018.

In addition:

- In 2018, SOS served 716 clients who experienced homelessness in the Siuslaw region. A total of 7,738 utilized the outreach's services that year.
- In winter 2018-19, the Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter was open 20 nights, serving a guest population of 16 women and 39 men with a nightly average of 11 guests.

- 1,537 individuals were served at St. Vincent De Paul's Egan Warming Center during the 22 nights of activation during the winter season 2018-2019.

- 2,490 homeless students attended public school in Lane County during the 2017-18 school year.

- 2,070 people stayed at the Eugene Mission during 2018; 1,990 adults and 80 children.

The final totals for the 2020 PIT count will be tallied and published on the Lane County website, lane-county.org/government/county_departments/health_and_human_services/human_services/division/point-in-time_pit_homeless_count.

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Call to artists made for 'Where Art Though?'

Backstreet Gallery invites community members and artists to enter the an-

nual community art challenge, "Where Art Thou," for two- and three-dimen-

sional creations.

The show will be displayed at the Florence Events Center from Feb. 25 through March 31.

Entry forms are due Friday, Feb. 14, at Backstreet Gallery, 1421 Bay Street.

Artwork is to be delivered to the FEC on Feb. 25, between 10 a.m. and noon.

Entry forms available at Backstreet Gallery, online at www.eventcenter.org or at www.backstreetgallery.org.

Two independent artists will judge the show: World traveler and photographer Jim Buch, with multimedia artist Geoffrey McCormack.

Best of Show and People's Choice award-winners will have a month-long show at Backstreet Gallery.

There will be a reception honoring the artists on March 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the FEC.

The reception is open to the community and will include refreshments.



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