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CLASS OF 2020
 Congratulations Graduates

MORE PHOTOS ON A9

Siuslaw News
 NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
 VOL. 130, NO. 46
 FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER

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CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2020



‘Who is it you want to be?’
 Mapleton High School seniors parade through area, create graduation video

STORY BY JARED ANDERSON
 PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER
 SIUSLAW NEWS

The nine graduating seniors of Mapleton High School celebrated graduation on Friday with a parade through the upriver community, as well as a posted video of this year’s ceremony.

For the past few weeks, seniors and their families have been visiting the high school gym one at a time, filming all of the Mapleton traditions of graduation, including the giving out of roses and a candlelit diploma presentation.

On Friday, the video was released, which started with senior Justyce Wierichs reminding all viewers to turn off their cell phones during the presentation.

The ceremony’s opening salutation was given by Theryn Schwertfeger, who opened his speech with a tribute to Brandon Kimble, a Mapleton student who passed away in 2016.

“Brandon Kimble was an amazing classmate of ours, a class clown, and a genuinely good person,” Schwertfeger said. “I am truly saddened that he cannot be here to graduate with us here today. We can never forget Brandon, our classmate, and we should keep his memory alive.”

Schwertfeger then congratulated Class of 2020 seniors across the world for their accomplishments



COURTESY PHOTOS

and achievements.
 “It’s not every day we get to celebrate the accomplishments of 13 precious years of your life, so let it sink in and enjoy it with the ones you love,” he said.

See MAPLETON page 7A



‘The class that will change the world’

Siuslaw High School conducts socially distant graduation ceremony

STORY & PHOTOS
 BY JARED ANDERSON
 SIUSLAW NEWS

“Three months ago, we were finishing the third quarter

and beginning Spring sports,” Siuslaw High School Principal Kerri Tatum said. “When the students went home on March 11, we were looking forward to a long weekend and nice weather. Overnight, education as we know it changed.”

Tatum stood on the grounds of Hans Petersen Memorial Field to start off Siuslaw School District’s first social-distance friendly graduation ceremony. Instead of hosting the nearly 100 graduating seniors all at once, the district spaced out the event, allowing seniors and their families the opportunity to walk to the makeshift stage to be handed diplomas.

Senior Class President Amelia Wells read the names out loud, while district board members Guy Rosinbaum and Paul Burns alternated the giving of diplomas. One by one, seniors and their families walked onto the field, laughing, crying and taking pictures as the seniors entered their next chapter in life.

Traditional highlights of the ceremony, including speeches by seniors, were prerecorded and broadcasted live on KCST Coast Radio and posted online. KCST also covered the event live, with school board member Bob Sneddon and school counselor Steve Moser commenting.

“I want to thank this group of seniors and their families for their

See SIUSLAW page 8A



State PTA honors Siuslaw teacher, student

Music teacher Amanda Sarles named Oregon PTA Teacher of the Year

BY CHANTELE MEYER
 SIUSLAW NEWS

Every year, members of the Florence Community Parent Teacher Association (FCPTA) get together to decide on nominations for the annual Oregon PTA Awards. This year, the local group nominated two people, Siuslaw Elementary School music teacher Amanda Sarles and fourth-grader Claire McNeill, for awards at the state level. And this year, both Siuslaw people won.

“This is an emotional, huge, epic moment for all of us,” said FCPTA President Crystal Osburn.

According to the awards announcement, “Oregon PTA takes great pride in recognizing units



(Above with flowers) Oregon PTA and members of the Florence Community PTA honored Siuslaw Elementary music teacher Amanda Sarles as the Oregon PTA Teacher of the Year and (left, with balloon) 4th grader Claire McNeill as the with the Student Service Award for the state.

and individuals for their work and dedication to further PTA’s mission and values. Congratulations to our 2019-2020 award winners.”

Oregon PTA honored McNeill with the Student Service Award for making “important contributions

See AWARDS page 6A

Florence City Council responds to heightened concerns

BY MARK BRENNAN
 SIUSLAW NEWS

The Florence City Council met via teleconference on Monday, June 9, with a full agenda. City leaders attempted to reassure city residents that there is no need for concern regarding community safety on any level.

The city is in the process of improving the video platforms used for council meetings and all councilors were in attendance — and fully visible — during the nearly two-hour long meeting.

Florence Mayor Joe Henry brought the meeting to order and turned to City Manager Erin Reynolds, who welcomed the council and made a

See COUNCIL page 5A

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