

SIUSLAW from page 1A

care, patience and grace as they rolled with some pretty difficult closures, cancellations and changes to the senior year and graduation they spent 13 years working towards,” Tatum said. “We know that the flexibility and ability to adapt that they have shown will serve them well in their future.”

Despite the difficulties of the past three months, the principal reported that 2020 represented the highest percentage of graduates of any class in Siuslaw history.

The evening officially began with the National Anthem, sung by senior Brooklyn Cahoon in a pre-recorded video, followed by a recorded speech by Class of 2020 Outstanding Boy Jared Northrop.

Northrop began his speech by thanking the school board, staff, teachers and community at large who supported students through leadership, mentoring and simply being there for the students.

“I’d also like to thank all the parents who have helped guide us, support us and cheer us on, saying ‘You can do it,’” Northrop said. “I also want to thank and congratulate all my classmates of 2020. It’s been an honor to be a part of this class and I’m thankful for the good hearted, wise, talented and fun people that make up this group.”

He spoke about how the past few months were far from how his class would have ended the year, and spoke on the suddenness of

the closure.

“Who would know that when we left class on March 11, that would be the last time we would step into a classroom with our teachers and classmates?” he asked. “Who knew that when we finished our athletic practices that it would be the last time on the field with our team and our coaches? No goodbyes, no nothing. Who knew that we would have to finish our studies remotely, without being able to be in the same room, walk down the same halls or eat lunch with our peers?”

He listed the many traditions that were lost to seniors this year including prom, school barbecues, concerts, spring sports and ceremonies. But Northrop also reflected on the many traditions that seniors were able to take part in throughout their 13-year career.

“Preschool story time at the Siuslaw Public Library with Ms. Gail, making gingerbread houses and performing in plays in kindergarten, visiting Elliot Farms in first grade, touring Sea Lions Caves and Heceta Head Lighthouse in second grade,” he said.

He also listed writing to pen pals in Reedsport in the third grade, science with Mrs. Smith in fourth, and the egg drop in fifth grade, as well as Siuslaw Watershed summer camps, Stream Team in middle school and “all the Jim Grano field trips throughout,” he said. “And here at the high school we had all our great activities until the last

three months.”

At that point, things changed in one fell swoop, but Northrop stated the loss showed the resilience of the students.

“We are a class of strong individuals who can adapt to a world of change. And I’m confident that this group will go out and be a positive influence,” he said. “I hope that this great class of 2020 can share their kindness and help make this a better, more giving and more respectful to one another world.”

Northrop hopes that graduated will keep good memories of their time at the high school, and keep the relationships that they’ve established.

“Even as we all go about our individual lives that may take us to the opposite ends of the globe, remember, wherever you are, Siuslaw is still home,” he said. “Yes it’s true that the last few months were not what we envisioned. But now it’s time for us to envision our future and make that happen. We’ll always be Siuslaw Vikings and Viking strong.”

Class of 2020 Outstanding Girl Nina Aaron began her prerecorded speech with a look at the world when she was born, just after 9/11.

“Most of us came into this world during a time of unrest, trauma and heartbreak,” she said. “While healing from the loss of so many, the start of a new millennium and the advancement in technologies have allowed for a time of rebirth and growth as our country came together with strength and compassion.”

But her generation has since helped the nation become stronger.

“Over the course of our time together, we’ve managed to help our community, state, nation and the world to become a better place,” she said.

Now, however, the world is separated in ways never seen before.

“We have sacrificed our senior year memories to protect our community and our loved ones,” said Aaron. “We have learned that now, more than ever, our voices have the power to fight for better conditions that will create a better society for us and future generations. This is an opportunity for our generation to change the way that things have been done because we see that the old way of doing things isn’t working. We are the future leaders, the class that will change the world.”

Aaron echoed earlier comments that their class

had shown a strong resilience in difficult times, pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a hero.

“These qualities will never be taken away from us and we can use them to create a more positive future. This year, we were the ones given the ultimate test of selflessness, and together we have united to create a special moment for all of us to remember for the rest of our lives,” she said.

At the conclusion of her speech, Aaron thanked the school board, parents and community for their support during the past three months.

“Over the course of this quarantine, people have started to realize how hard

it is to be a teacher and that it takes a special type of person to do it,” she said. “From the late nights prepping to paying for things out of pocket to make our schooling easier, we will never be able to thank you enough.”

She also thanked her classmates for the memories, and gave advice to future graduates.

“Be leaders wherever you go, and always do what’s right, even when it’s hard,” she said. “And with the same strength and growth that we came into this world with, we will continue our path forward in putting in the work to leave this world a better place than it has ever been.”

See PHOTOS page 9A

Backstreet Gallery features artists

Backstreet Gallery’s special opening show will feature several distinctive artists’ work:

- Mark Anderson’s stunning digital monochromatic imagery. Whether in black and white or sepia tones, his photos capture nature in a powerful way, inviting into his world. Our natural environment never looked better.
- John Leasure’s oil paintings captures lighthouses, ocean scenes vases of flowers and more. He bathes his subject in a brilliant light that rests on a flower petal or streaks through the clouds as it radiates across the canvas.
- A gourd artist, Colleen McKnight’s sculptural work enhances the organic shape of each gourd. She then finishes the sculpture with a range of subtle colors, vivid shades, metallic finishes or decorative collage or beading.
- Meredith Draper, a time-piece jeweler, specializes in unique jewelry. Draper has collected antique watches, watch parts, gems and exciting treasures that she refines into one-of-a-kind jewelry.
- Former elementary teacher and magazine editor and staff writer Judy Fleagle launched a new writing career a decade ago. Her two bridge books are essential take-alongs for any coastal trip, as is her book on finding the coast’s unusual or quirky destinations. Another tells of extraordinary pets Fleagle has rescued. And being a

docent with the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum makes her Florence history book even more fascinating.

Backstreet Gallery is due to reopen in mid-June. For more information, visit www.backstreetgallery.org.



PETERSEN
AUTO DETAIL
would like to thank everyone that voted for us in our category.
We appreciate being chosen
BEST AUTO DETAILER!

541 • 999 • 6078

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

2019 VOTED BEST OF FLORENCE



FACEBOOK.COM/PETERSENAUTODETAIL

Deadline for Press Releases Is Every Monday and Thursday by Noon.
Email PRESSRELEASES@THESIUSLAWNEWS.COM.

JOHNSTON

MOTOR COMPANY

All departments are open by appointment.

Thank you for your understanding as we slowly start to provide services. We will keep you updated as we progress through getting our business hours back to normal.

For the safety of our community we are following measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

(541) 997-3475 • 2150 Hwy. 101, Florence
www.johnstonmotorcompany.com

FEATURED HOME OF THE WEEK



1050 BAY STREET #12
Outstanding Siuslaw River Bay frontage right off the patio. Sweeping views of the sand dunes, Siuslaw River and the historic bascule bridge that spans the beautiful Siuslaw River. Just a short walk to Florence’s Old Town District. It has 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, breakfast bar, cozy wood stove and private patio. The condo is in great condition and ready to move in and enjoy the Florence experience. **\$309,000** #11991 MLSP20230817

“We’re next to the Bridge”
100 Hwy. 101
See all Florence Listings at cbcoast.com

COLDWELL BANKER
COAST REAL ESTATE
541-997-7777

FLORENCE-OPOLY



Now offering shipping
Only \$12.62

(Local only. Out of area, please call for pricing.)

On Sale \$24.99 each (Regular \$34.00)*

*Offer expires June 30, 2020

Modeled after the world famous board game, Florence-Opoly is customized to our great city.

Summer Fun for the whole family!

Available At:



Siuslaw News

148 Maple Street, Florence • 541-997-3441
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm

Find us on Facebook
SIUSLAW NEWS

Visit us on the web
THESIUSLAWNEWS.COM