

Community Voices

NATURAL PERSPECTIVE — FLICKERS OF SPRING (AND A FAREWELL)



By Emily J. Uhrig, Ph.D.
Special to Siuslaw News

Spring is finally materializing. Trees are budding, and daffodils are blooming. Animals, too, are stirring after winter's lull.

Birds in particular are flitting around yards and gardens as their breeding seasons begin, providing great opportunities for home-based wildlife viewing. Among the small songbirds, you may notice a larger bird poking about the dirt with its stout beak. This is likely a woodpecker known as the northern flicker. Northern flickers, widespread throughout Oregon, have tan plumage with dark speckles and a black bib across their chest. Males have a red "mustache", and both sexes have red wing and tail feathers visible in

flight. In contrast to other woodpeckers, flickers usually forage on the ground. They mainly eat insects, which they often dig for vigorously. Ants are a favorite food, and flickers have long, sticky tongues to catch them. From tip to base, the tongue can be 5 inches long — nearly half the length of the flicker's body! Their substantial tongue requires special anatomy. Like all vertebrates, a flicker's tongue attaches to a bone called the hyoid. In humans, the hyoid is a small

u-shaped bone in the neck. In flickers, the hyoid wraps around the skull, coming over the top of the head before passing through a nostril. That is, the tongue is stored under the scalp and anchored in the bird's nose. The tongue is not the flickers' only remarkable characteristic: they also play instruments. In a behavior aptly called "drumming", flickers rapidly peck on objects to make a sound pattern for communication during the breeding season. To make sound carry farther, flickers select objects that resonate. In natural

habitats, they choose hollow trees or stumps, but in urban areas, they often use metal objects, like gutters and chimneys. If you hear a metallic pattering overhead, your house may be serving as a flicker's drum. Unlike when foraging, drumming flickers aren't trying to make holes, so in many cases, the practice is more annoying to homeowners (especially if you're trying to sleep in) than it is damaging. If, however, you find flickers, or other woodpeckers, creating holes on your

home, you should investigate further, as that's a sign of insect infestation. So, on these early spring days when it's a bit cold to venture out, try birdwatching through your window. You just may see a flicker. They are not the most pleasant musicians to listen to, but they can help remove insects from your yard. **Note:** As my work is taking me out of the area, this is my last article for the *Siuslaw News*. Many thanks to my readers over these past four years, and best wishes for your continued nature watching!

Us TOO FLORENCE — CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH COVID-19 (PART 3)



By Christopher Schwartz
Special to Siuslaw News

Before I get to Jim's continuing COVID-19 experience, I want to relate another episode in my life simply because I was in close contact with him right before he was diagnosed. I went to get another rapid covid test on Feb. 5 at my request. I had been feeling punky and anxious recently. Doc fit me in for a 1 p.m. appointment. I described

my symptoms. "Non-specific," he said. "Probably just what passes for normal everywhere these days: anxiety." Negative test result. His solution: turn off the news (and FB), keep busy around the house. I can do that. Now, here's Jim's final update beginning with *Super-Covies Day 6*: Some really kind people brought me some food. They left and I was getting ready to heat it up and just for a second I thought, "I hope they were careful preparing this, I could catch coronavirus!" Like Chappelle says, "Anything's funny, 'til it happens to you." So thankful to say I'm breathing smoothly. Other Symptoms: Zinger headaches (like having a vice on my head), some chills, wake up in the middle of the

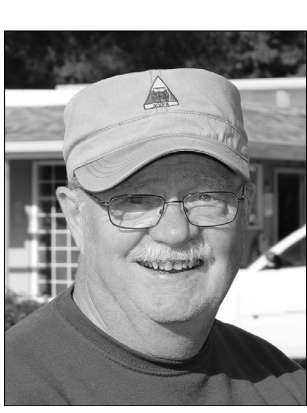
night, pile-o-sweat, general low energy. Symptoms I do *not* have: Nausea, vomiting, loss of smell or taste, heaviness in my chest, purple toes or popsicle toes (remember that song by Michael Franks, "Popsicle Toes?" Smooth singer. One thing I fall prey to is just plain old fear. All the upbeat and kind wishes from friends resonate deeply. But then I'm watching the game and in the commercial, the newscaster comes on: "News at 11: highest death count ever, cases rising everywhere..." YAAAR!! DAY 7: How grateful to be breathing smoothly still. Fever: The evening fever has come regularly each night. I soak the sheets and bedding to the mattress each time. Some chills: I've been taking Ibuprofen to feel com-

fortable enough to sleep for awhile. Headaches: Take hold of my skull for periods, ouch, but not totally debilitating. Some helpful changes: After 3 hard days at the beginning, I'd just lay there stiff and sore. My knees were like rusty gates and hurt. I started rolling my butt, my back and legs. Fixed it — humidifier: Good support for keeping your airway moist, harder for virus to adhere. DAY 10: Okay, no big fever last night, or 6-foot wet spot or chills. I could have celebrated more if not for these vice grips-like headaches that followed me around all day yesterday and kept on me throughout the night. I know that people suffer a lot more than me in some cases with Covid. I am thankful, yet these head-

aches are a challenge. Still able to breathe smoothly. I don't take it for granted. BEST news: Holly came home from Bandon Inn on Dec. 15th!!! No more isolation for me! Contact Tracing: This was way more relaxed than I imagined it would be. When they called, I expected to hear the Law and Order theme, "Bah-Bum..." and names and places to be taken. But no way! The gal was very nice. They only went back a couple of days before symptoms, and the tracing was more like: "So whaddya think?" I told her that I was especially worried about my three older golf buddies had been near me, but outside and distanced. But those guys and spouses got tested right away. All negative (not conclusive) and had no symptoms. So

HOORAY for that. I was SO relieved. But she asked for no names. *Final Covid Update and lucky me:* In my "mild and typical Covid case," I had eight nights of fevers, lessening until they were gone on Dec. 7. Gone, too (finally), are the chills, icky headaches and general exhaustion. No issue breathing, coughing, "poiple" (purple) toes, nausea. I felt so grateful. My strength is returning more and more each day. Thank You all! When I was sick as a dog, not thinking straight and really quite terrified, I could feel the current of all your kindness(es) gently carrying me down the river to a better day, a healthy day. Thank you, Jim. Golfing with my buddies again but using a golf cart.

MILITARY CHRONICLES — VETERAN PROFILE: DARRYL PARSONS



By Cal Applebee
Special to Siuslaw News

I first met Darryl in 2006 right after moving to Florence. Darryl has the distinct privilege of having served in three branches of our military: Army, Navy and the Air Force — plus a solid career in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In all, he has 28 years of service to our nation. He entered the U.S. Army first, and served from 1956

until 1958, originally in the 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Division, known as the Sunset Division, aka the Jungeleers. He had a family connection to that unit in that his uncle served in the same unit in France during WWI, his cousin in WWII and Darryl during Vietnam. Son Chad enlisted in the same unit but unfortunately was injured in boot camp and medically discharged. Quite a family heritage! Eventually, Darryl served as a lineman in an Intelligence and Recon Squad stateside, primarily at Ft. Rilea and Ft. Lewis. Almost directly from his Army discharge, Darryl enlisted into the Navy and served from December of 1958 until October of 1964, attaining the level of 3rd Class Boatswain's Mate.

During his stint in the Navy, he served on two aircraft carriers, the U.S.S. Lexington and the U.S.S. Ranger, both seeing action in Vietnam. He was onboard the U.S.S. Ranger headed towards Cuba for the missile crises in 1962 when world tensions were resolved and they turned around and headed back to Pearl Harbor. Darryl also spent 16 months at Subic Bay in the Philippines aboard tugs. He discharged from Treasure Island in San Francisco. From the Navy, Darryl went back towards OD green and a stint in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers where he served largely on three different barges during that time. He served aboard The Dredge Multnomah, Dredge Davidson and Dredge Biddle, taking

him not only up and down the west coast from San Francisco to the Columbia River, but yet another trip to Vietnam to dredge the Saigon River on the Davidson. He served as Quartermaster on both the Davidson and the Biddle. His time in the Corps of Engineers left some significant impacts on Darryl's life: his first trip to Florence was on the Dredge Davidson. He would eventually retire here. It was while in the Corps stationed at Ft. Stevens he met his wife Diane. He discharged from the Corps in 1967. Evidently serving all that time on the water made Darryl think in more lofty terms, as his next stint was in the U.S. Air Force, serving from 1977 until his discharge in 1993 at the rank of Technical Sergeant. As a crash and rescue firefight-

er, his unit's primary duty was protection for the bases alert aircraft. He served primarily at McCord, Portland Air Base and Klamath Falls, but eventually saw duty at 21 different bases throughout his career. He was glad he never had to respond to any major crashes involving a lot of bodies, but did see significant action with major crashes, one involving a huge fuel spill from a C5A, and a big C141 crash with fire at Clark AFB in Washington. While Darryl stated his favorite time in the service was with the USAF, he talks fondly of the other branches, including some pretty exciting experiences in all. While in the Navy, his ship crossed the International Dateline one time on his birthday — while zigzag-

ging to avoid a trailing Russian Sub — he only had to celebrate that day once. While in serving on Dredges in the Corps of Engineers, he was involved in a water accident during the 1964 Oregon fall storms, where he fell overboard with full foul-weather gear on. He was rescued by someone on an adjoining tug, and years later, while volunteering as a docent at the Oregon Coast Military Museum, met that same man who had pulled him from the water! Darryl has served our nation well and with distinction, and I am glad to say that introduction years ago at coffee, has developed into a life-long friendship. Thank you, Darryl, for your friendship, and your service to our country.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

ELIJAH BLANKENSHIP
SENIOR
FOOTBALL

HIGHLIGHT:
The Sports Club, the Siuslaw News and Coast Radio Sports congratulate Siuslaw Viking quarterback senior **Elijah Blankenship**. Elijah led the Viking offense in Friday night's game against Sisters with a pair of touchdown passes and added a third rushing in the 36-19 win.

Honorable Mention: Desiree Tupua - Siuslaw Volleyball

Highlight:
Honorable mention goes to Viking sophomore Desiree Tupua. Desiree had 27 kills, 12 service aces and 8 blocks in two matches last week along with an 11-0 serving run against Elmira.

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The Siuslaw News & COAST RADIO Sports

FEATURED HOME OF THE WEEK

88505 3RD AVE - WHITE WATER OCEAN VIEWS!

Newly remodeled throughout, this fabulous beach house is perfect for full-time living or would make an ideal vacation rental. No HOAs. Ocean views & a short walk to beach access. This spacious home w/ oversized double garage offers lots of room for family, friends & toys. Large fully fenced yard & room for RV parking. Open concept, all new interior paint, LVP flooring, quartz counters, 2 ensuites-1 upstairs, 1 down w/ new walk-in shower. Huge bedroom/bonus room w/ wave-breaking views. Must see! \$695,000 #12140 MLS#21049463

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