

## OBITUARIES

**Jonathan Clifford Spero**

November 30, 1952 - April 13, 2020

Join us in remembrance and celebration of Jonathan Clifford Spero. Jonathan was a hard-working man with a heart of gold, who was still farming and writing on his last living day on Earth. He left this realm peacefully and unexpectedly on April 13, 2020, at home in Provolt, Oregon, in his sleep.

Jonathan came to this world on November 30, 1952, in Buffalo, NY, into the loving home of his parents, A. June and Robert David Spero. He joined older brother, David, and later welcomed younger brother, Daniel.

He was an adventurous spirit with a great love of music, who ventured to Woodstock in 1969. He loved

to sing and play guitar and was a great supporter of local musicians.

Throughout his life, Jonathan was active in political causes, opposing the Vietnam War and supporting the women's rights and anti-war movements.

An aspiring farmer, Jonathan bought *How to Grow Vegetables & Fruits by the Organic Method*, by J.I. Rodale, and immediately left New York in search of cheap and fertile land. His search brought him to Glenville, West Virginia, where he met the love of his life, Jessie Ellen Rader. They married on September 20, 1975. Jonathan became a land surveyor, and they moved to Southern Oregon, where they raised their three children, Orion, Rose, and Heidi.

Successful and revered as a professional land surveyor, Jonathan retired in 2011 to put his time and passion into plant breeding. He brought to fruition many of his own varieties, including Siber Frill Kale, Solstice Broccoli, Emerald Fan Lettuce, and Top Hat, Festivity,

Zanadoo, Tuxana, and Aloha #9 open-pollinated sweet corns.

A founding board member of the Open Source Seed Initiative, Jonathan worked tirelessly to maintain fair and open access to plant genetics. He wrote numerous articles on plant breeding and agriculture and was often invited to speak at conferences. He was a Grange member from 1981 until his death.

Seedsmen, Seed Mentor, Seed Protector, Seed Friend, Corn Breeder, Earth Lover, Righteous Family Man, Beloved Friend of Many, Jonathan planted his love into the hearts of his many friends and family and into the land and the seeds he bred

and cultivated for the greater good of people and planet.

He also helped lead a successful campaign banning GMO crops in Jackson County, all the while fighting for statewide protections for seed diversity, and keeping seeds open-source and accessible to all farmers.

Preceded in death by his parents, Jonathan will be dearly missed by his loving wife of 45 years, Jessie; his children and those he treated as his own children; his son-in-law, Mukil; his brothers and their partners; nephews Sekani and Mathias; Ron, Donna and Ira; his many friends; and fans of his work.

Jonathan was laid to rest at Hartley Cemetery in his beloved Williams. A celebration of life is planned for later in the summer. Friends are invited to contact Karen at karen@gaiasophia.com to attend work parties being planned to help care for Jonathan's land and gardens.

**Mike Kohn**

November 29, 1949 - May 7, 2020

Mike Kohn, Diana Coogle's husband and Applegate Neighborhood Network board member, passed away on May 7, 2020, at his home in Medford.

Mike was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 29, 1949. He lived at Molto Bene, on Slagle Creek in the Applegate, for 30 years.

He was a strong hiker and an advocate for environmental health, especially in the Applegate. As a board member of Applegate Trails Association, he helped build the popular East Applegate Ridge Trail.

Both employees and customers of his business, Home Comfort Hearth, held him in great esteem and will miss his



Mike Kohn and Diana Coogle, on their honeymoon near Trinidad, California, in May 2019.

cheerful demeanor and competence with his business.

Our corner of the world is a better place for his having been here.

**Daryl Jackson**

October 26, 1951 - March 23, 2020

Daryl Jackson, 68, of Williams, died March 23 after a battle with cancer.

The third-generation southern Oregonian grew up here and loved it. He was an avid river person who rafted, guided, and fished.

Friends remember him as a force of nature in the Williams/Applegate area who was very much committed to the preservation of our environment and as a caring, compassionate, giving, generous, loyal friend. He helped initiate Applegate and Williams Watershed Council riparian tree planting programs and was biologist and coordinator of the Williams Waterway Project, which served as a statewide model for maintaining roadside vegetation without the use of herbicides.

Daryl was a member of the Williams Town Council. In a campaign flyer, he wrote, "I have always believed that it is important to give something back to the place we live. For me, that means



improving the land and waters of Oregon and specifically Williams."

He lived lightly on the earth. He was an animal lover and Alpine skier. He was a father and a grandfather. He loved his family dearly.



Paragliders launch from Woodrat Mountain. Photo: Terri Eubanks.

**Flying will—someday—return to the Applegate Valley**

BY TERRI STEWART

Woodrat Mountain, in the Applegate Valley, has been a well-known launching site for thrill-seeking aviators since the late 1970s. The launch site was pioneered by two men, Jeff Van Datta and Doug Hildreth, who recognized Woodrat Mountain, near Ruch, Oregon, as a safe location and whose enthusiasm, leadership, and methodic thinking would evolve into the creation of a local club and decades of continuous flight from the world-class site.

Their knowledge and mentorship pioneered flying instruction from Woodrat and planted the roots of the Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association. The dynamic duo taught hang gliding in those early years, though the majority of pilots using Woodrat today are paragliding pilots. Both popular sports demand respect for the environment, including knowledge of the weather and landscape, while delivering a sense of absolute joy no other sport comes close to.

Pilots come from all over the world to take to the Applegate skies, where on a great day pilots are able to fly to Grants Pass and as far as Weed, California. And spectators come, too, taking advantage of local wineries and restaurants to catch sight of the colorful canopies that have become part of the local culture in the Applegate.

Today, local leaders carry on the legacy built by Hildreth and Van Datta, incorporating careful learning instruction and opportunities, formulating practical

flight patterns, and generally teaching respect for the love of flight.

The club consists of roughly 60 members who support each other and the community through partnerships with landowners whose properties serve as landing zones; the Bureau of Land Management, which owns and manages the launch site; and the Oregon Department of Transportation, which benefits from club members' annual cleanup along Highway 238. They also do other small projects such as providing signage at Cantrall Buckley Park, and they sponsor the Applegate Open, an annual sanctioned race event, typically held in June, that fills the sky with hundreds of paragliders as pilots race to their goal.

As of early May, it appears the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to force the club to cancel its 2020 event, but flight will continue from Woodrat for decades to come. Those who are interested in instruction or in simply learning more can visit RVHPA.org for a list of instructors, and information about Woodrat and other nearby flying sites, including Whaleback in northern California.

The club also typically sponsors another small fly-in annually in September. Both events serve as a great opportunity to visit the Applegate Valley.

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