

**ASK THE GATER**

# What was the first high school in the Applegate watershed?

BY LISA BALDWIN

*Editor's note: Curious about anything Applegate? Ask us! Send your inquiry to intrepid Gater reporter Lisa Baldwin at the email below.*

The Three Rivers School District has three high schools, one in each of the river drainages in Josephine County—the Illinois, the Rogue, and the Applegate. Illinois Valley High School in Cave Junction serves the entire Illinois Valley, from Hayes Hill to the state line. North Valley High School in Merlin covers Northern Josephine County, and Hidden Valley High School in Murphy serves the communities in our Applegate watershed.

Hidden Valley and North Valley opened as brand new schools in September 1977, and some Applegaters still refer to them as the “new” high schools. But few folks might know that the first high school in Josephine County opened in 1886 in the lower Applegate, near the present site of Jerome Prairie School and the intersection of Redwood Avenue and Robinson Road.

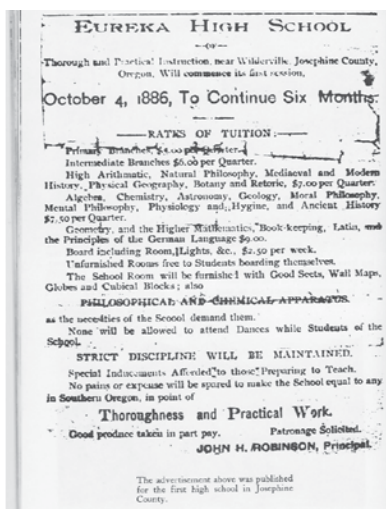
In 1883, farmer and educator John H. Robinson brought his family from Texas and homesteaded near Wilderville.

The Robinsons acquired land on both sides of the Applegate River, starting with 160 acres and soon purchasing more. By 1888, Robinsons owned 900 acres in Jerome Prairie.

The well-educated John Robinson saw a need for a high school in the prosperous community. Jerome Prairie School had been open since 1871, but like most schools of the time, it offered only the basics, “the Three R’s,” through eight grades. So, in October of 1886, Robinson opened Eureka High School in the second story of his home. He and his wife refurbished outbuildings and provided room and board for students needing accommodations. Tuition for the six-month term was reasonable, and Robinson accepted “good produce” as partial payment.

Eureka High School closed in 1888 when the Grants Pass Academy started offering a high school curriculum. Ironically, the GP Academy was housed in the two-story community center from Jerome Prairie, that was bought, dismantled and rebuilt on N.W. B Street in Grants Pass.

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The board rate of \$2.50 per week at the new Eureka High School in Jerome Prairie in the lower Applegate in 1886 included a room, “lights &c.” Prospective students were admonished that “None will be allowed to attend Dances while Students of the School.”

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## ••• BIZBITS •••

**Applegate Sign Company.** Lyle and Charlene Trimmer, owners of the newly named Applegate Sign Company, have been creating signs, logos, and designs in the Rogue Valley since the 1970s.



“We work closely with our customers to capture the essence of their unique business identity,” Charlene says. “Our approach to logo and sign design encompasses everything from concept to installation.”

To see their most recent work and to get ordering information, visit their Facebook pages: facebook.com/ApplegateCustoms for horse related signs, stall guards, etc., and facebook.com/ApplegateSignCompany for commercial signs, banners, etc.

Standish Cottage, Calvary Chapel, Wild River Restaurant, the Ruch Bungalow, Solid Rock Coffee House, and many horse farms and vineyards are among their numerous clients.

They also offer graphic design, photography, copywriting, and project management services. You can see more of their work on the site, Trimmer Agency.com.

Applegate Sign Company, PO Box 1000, Jacksonville 97530  
Lyle & Charleen Trimmer, 541-840-6846, charleen@applegatesigncompany.com



**The Hier Holistic Crop & Critter Shop**, a new feed store in Jacksonville, opened in late March.

Owner Luis Peña, a Southern Oregon native, says, “Let us supply your farm, garden, and/or home with all your holistic crop and critter feed needs! Come by or let us know what you need.”

Hier Holistic serves the community by providing quality, organic, and ethically sourced agricultural, pet, and garden supplies. They understand that even though we are all doing our best to social distance, customers still need products. Necessary accommodations can be made, and the folks at Hier

Holistic are just a phone call, email, or social media contact away.

Hier Holistic Feed Store 660 North 5th Street, Jacksonville 97530  
541-690-0734, all@hierholistic.com  
Facebook: facebook.com/hierholistic

**The Pot Rack** in Jacksonville has a new owner, Erika Bishop and family (Grace, James, and Lucas are her kids). The store carries unique and beautiful selections of linens, serving ware, bric-a-brac, and kitchen odds and ends.

Erika’s first official day as owner was September 17. “I’m thrilled to be operating this gem of a store and will continue to run it as before, while adding new lines and a website with online shopping in 2021,” she says.

Erika and her family moved to Jacksonville in 2002 from New York City following the devastation of 9/11. All the kids attended Jacksonville elementary, and Erika worked as a freelance marketing consultant for many food and wine companies throughout the valley.

Fun fact: Erika was the first executive producer of the Food Network and created many famous chef brands that you’re probably familiar with.

The Pot Rack is open daily from 10:00 am-5:00 pm.  
140 W California Street, PO Box 764, Jacksonville 97530  
541-899-5736, erika@thepotrack.com



**Wicked Sharp Salon.** Sandy Reynolds sold Salon 238 in Ruch on July 1, after owning the hair and nails salon for six years and working there for a total of ten years. New owner, Beth Henderson, started working as a nail technician with Sandy at the salon a year ago in July and jumped at the chance to buy the landmark salon, which has been in operation at the same location for forty years. She has beautifully redecorated the inside and renamed the salon Wicked Sharp.



Sandy is still working three days a week, varying her schedule to accommodate her current clients’ needs. She says she is planning on spending the extra time she now has enjoying herself on the river, which her property borders, and keeping her two very active kitties company.

Beth has hired two additional staff and is planning a Grand Reopening Celebration. With acrylics, manicures, hair styling, and beautification in general, they will have you looking wicked sharp!

Wicked Sharp Salon, 7390 Hwy. 238, Ruch 97530. Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm. 541-200-9725

Jeanette LeTourneau  
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**BizBits** highlights businesses new to the area, holding special events, or offering new products. If you are a business owner, let us know when you move into the area or to a different location, hold a special event, expand your business, or mark a milestone.  
Email gater@applegater.org.