

Applegater

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Celebrating
~27~
Years

The Applegate River Lodge is for sale — to the right person

BY DIANA COOGLE

For 29 years the Applegate River Lodge has been iconic to the Applegate: beautiful log-trimmed buildings, green lawns to the river, music nights, dinner on the deck. For 29 years it has been a community partner: providing a venue for *Applegater* events, donations of overnight stays to nonprofits' auctions, free meals during the pandemic.

Now it's for sale.

"This was a way of life, a sanctuary for the community," co-owner Joanna Davis says. "I'll only sell to someone who will continue that legacy."

On January 21, 1992, Joanna, her then husband, Richard, and their sons, six-year-old Dusty and seven-year-old Duke, moved here from California and opened the restaurant.

But it's hard to make a restaurant profitable. After five years they decided to run a lodge as well.

Eight local banks refused them a loan, thinking it crazy to build a lodge "way out there." (Valley View was the Applegate's only winery at the time.)

"We started literally on a wing and a prayer," Joanna says. "We hawked

everything— savings, jewelry, a stamp collection. I sold everything but my body."

That got them a foundation.

Joanna's motto is posted on a wall of the lodge: "Where there's a will there's a way." The will to build the Applegate Lodge was strong.

The way opened when Applegaters Jack and Margaret Kramer loaned the family \$250,000, paid task by task as the lodge was built.

Another way opened when Jacksonville Lumber fronted \$200,000 in materials.

For decorating the rooms, Joanna joined the Applegate Historical Society to learn about the early settlers: Native Americans, miners, cattlemen, sportsmen, loggers. Each room honors an Applegate group.

People in the Applegate donated bear rugs, old tables, and other historic items. Delbert Kaufman from Kaufman Woods traded furniture for meals at the restaurant.

"Trade was my middle name," Joanna says.

The family created Applegate Bucks to raise money, a scheme that also benefited the community: buy a booklet of Applegate

Bucks for \$100 and get \$110 worth of Applegate merchandise or services.

Taxes were enormous, and the family didn't know how they were going to pay off their debts, but from a wing and a prayer and out of the blue, Pacific Continental from Eugene offered a buyout loan for \$300,000. Joanna and Richard paid everyone back.

Each member of the family contributed to the success of the lodge. Richard designed it. They all peeled logs. Dusty and Duke both ran the restaurant. Dusty did the landscaping and rock walls. Duke, who at 12 years old played the saxophone and started the Applegation music group to play for Wednesday night dinners, runs the music scene. Joanna runs the lodge and the business.



Joanna Davis on the balcony of the Applegate River Lodge.
Photo: Diana Coogle.

Until four years ago, Joanna also coordinated weddings at the lodge, sometimes three in a single weekend. "I loved helping my brides make their weddings special," she says, but she is

See **APPLEGATE LODGE**, page 2

Paragliding race set to return June 19-26

BY TERRI STEWART

Nearly one year after a massive US shutdown, we all recognize that life is a little bit different in the Applegate Valley and beyond. We greet each other with smiles in our eyes because the ones across our cheeks are covered; we forgo the handshake and instead give an elbow bump; but, most importantly, we recognize that we have all struggled tremendously in the past year and offer a little more kindness towards one another as a result.

Planning a national championship paragliding event during a pandemic makes you appreciate the simple things in life. When COVID-19 emerged in 2020, it was apparent that the annual paragliding race had to be canceled due to public health concerns and travel restrictions. Fast



Paragliders take flight during an event at Woodrat Mountain. Photo: Terri Stewart.

forward to 2021. With the understanding that those face coverings really do make a difference, and crossing our fingers that vaccinations worldwide will bring this bad dream to a halt, the new year offers us a glimmer of hope that we will be able to hold our traditional event in a safe manner.

The Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (RVHPA) wants local businesses and residents to know that every precaution will be taken

during race week to be certain public health and safety are not compromised. We will be upholding any orders given by the governor, in addition to following Centers for Disease Control guidelines. These seemingly change by the minute and hour, but some of the precautions we already plan to have in place include the requirement for registering pilots to be fully vaccinated prior to the race. In other

See **PARAGLIDING**, page 2

'Volunteers Needed' for what?

BY SANDY SHAFFER

I've been a member of our Applegate Valley Rural Fire District's (AVRFD) Board of Directors for more than five years, and lately I've had several folks ask me about the multitude of "Volunteers Needed" signs that we are again seeing along most of the roads in the valley.

"Why do they always need volunteers?"

"We see these signs every year!"

There are many reasons the AVRFD needs volunteers, but first—a little bit of history from an interview with former Fire Chief Brett Fillis.

Brett explained that, early on, the west side of the Applegate Valley was protected by a private company, the Grants Pass Rural Fire Department (GPRFD). A private resident had to sign a contract with GPRFD for protection; but Applegaters soon realized that residents of Grants Pass were receiving better responses than they were! Huh!

See **VOLUNTEERS**, page 12

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COMMERCE - COMMUNITY

Welcome to new Applegater board member, Mike Schneider

The *Applegater* Board of Directors is pleased to welcome its newest member, Mike Schneider.

Mike, who lives with his wife, Liv, on North Applegate Road, has brought a passel of experience and talent to our board. As principal of his own management consulting firm, MAS Associates, he guided and advised companies seeking to maximize returns on their consumer databases. Prior to that, he served as president and CEO of Affinity Group (now called Good Sam Enterprises, Inc.), a \$500-million consumer services company then based in Ventura, California (now in Illinois).

Besides this valuable business experience, Mike brings practical knowledge from work in both law and journalism and from having served on numerous boards.

In his interview for the position with the *Applegater*, Mike emphasized how much he and his family, all of whom read the *Applegater*, love the Applegate. They feel fortunate to be here. Mike thinks the *Applegater* helps people, and he said he would like to help the paper do that.

Though he still makes periodic trips to California, his life is increasingly Applegate-focused.

The interviewing committee said of him, "We were impressed by Mike's friendly, humble personality. His responses were forthcoming, thoughtful, and responsive to our inquiries. He seemed intelligent, good-humored, gregarious, and well-meaning."

Sounds like a good fit for the *Applegater*! Welcome, Mike.

The *Applegater*
gater@applegater.org

Spotlighting Applegate Valley's diversity: forging a new vision

BY BARBARA SUMMERHAWK

The initial Zoom meeting of the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council's (APWC) Cultural Committee brought together multicultural representatives from across the valley and beyond to create a more visible presence of the first people on the land and the various communities who later had claims on and settled in the Applegate. According to committee organizer and longtime valley resident, Janis Mohr-Tipton, the purpose of the Applegate Cultural Committee is "to create a forum for stakeholders that will help us develop a process to ensure authentic interpretive and educational materials that clearly represent the history and culture of all early peoples of the Applegate Valley and beyond: Tribal, Black, Chinese, Hawaiian, and White inhabitants."

The committee's first project will be in the Applegate watershed. Janis hopes it will have a "rippling-out" benefit to a much larger region.

The "virtual" table seated 23 participants with a wide range of talent, experience, enthusiasm, and identities. They represented the Agnes Pilgrim Legacy Fund, Oregon Black Pioneers, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Cow Creek Tribe of Umpqua, McKee Bridge Historical Society, community supporters, multigenerational settlers, and staff and board members of APWC. The Bureau of Land Management, Woodland Charter School, Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS), and the "Upriver to Morning" Environmental and Cultural Education Program represented the environmental and cultural education field.

The focus of this first meeting, besides introducing the purpose and the interested parties, was to build interest in two projects proposed at Cantrall Buckley Park. The first project is to honor Grandmother Agnes Taowhywee (Morning Star) Baker Pilgrim, Takelma Indian Elder of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, who passed away last year. The second is to create a cultural demonstration area at the park. Developing this area will help us brainstorm future projects about the valley's cultural heritage and how to present it.

First out of the post-pandemic gate will be Takelma Grandmother's Memorial Site at Cantrall Buckley Park, led by Jackson County Parks manager, Steve Lambert. Grandmother Agnes was revered as a treasure by her people and by many communities, local to international. The website of the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers quotes her: "We grandmothers have come from far and wide to speak the knowledge we hold inside. In many languages we have been told it is time to make the right changes for our families, for the lands we love. We can be the voice for the voiceless. We are at the threshold. We are going to see change."

The APWC will work with the cultural committee participants and volunteers to plan and restore native plant species around the memorial area and add seating, a guided nature trail, and interpretive signage describing our



The planned Takelma Grandmother's Memorial Site at Cantrall Buckley Park will honor Agnes Baker Pilgrim, who passed away in 2020.



Janis Mohr-Tipton at the future memorial site for Agnes Baker Pilgrim.
Photo: Jonathan, Jackson County Parks.

■ APPLAGATE LODGE

Continued from page 1

relieved to have now given that job to a wedding coordinator.

One day, unexpectedly, Gordon Ramsay, from the reality TV show *Hotel Hell*, called, wanting to do an episode at the lodge. "The show brought us a lot of curiosity and a lot of publicity," Joanna says, "good or bad. At least, it brought the boys together. And Gordon Ramsay treated me like a queen," she adds. The show aired on August 4, 2014.

"It's been a journey," Joanna says, reminiscing. "Sometimes I would call this a 'cursed effin' place,' and in the next moment I knew I loved it. I'm honored to have been a steward of this property. All the family feel that way. We put our hearts and souls into it. It's the saddest thing to let it go."

Nonetheless, she says, "It's time to see if we can accomplish something else in the time we have left. I'm 71. If not now, when?"

When the lodge sells, she will buy a motor home and travel.

But until then, Joanna and her family are still around. They still give 50 entrees a week to the Compassion Highway Project in Medford, a service Dusty started last



The front entrance of the lodge.
Photo: Diana Coogle.

March. They have been repainting and repairing while the restaurant is closed for the pandemic.

Joanna recognizes the specialness of the lodge to the Applegate. She intends to see that it stays special to the community she loves and has served for 29 years.

Diana Coogle
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■ PARAGLIDING

Continued from page 1

words, to be eligible to participate in the event, pilots must show proof of COVID vaccination at least 10 days prior to the sign-in date or provide documentation of a negative COVID test within 72 hours of signing in. Pilots who don't comply with these protocols will be barred from competing.



Competitors float over Woodrat Mountain during a paragliding event.
Photo: Dan Wells.

While we understand this will hinder some from participating, it is the appropriate step in assuring public safety. We hope this assurance will offer peace of mind to local businesses that will certainly see an increase in patrons during the event week. Please feel free to contact the organizer for more information by email at AO-organizer@RVHPA.org.

Additionally, we are excited to announce that this year's event will be hosted by Wells Land Vineyard. The team at Wells Land is well versed in coordinating and providing events from concerts to weddings. Check out Wells Land Vineyard on Facebook and learn more about this local gem.

While the event is subject to cancellation, we are really looking forward to sharing this amazing sport with you. Look for the Applegate sky to be filled with gliders this June 19-26.

Terri Stewart, President
Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and
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Native American heritage and flora surrounding the area.

The second project will use a flat area of the park for a visual exhibit, future storytelling events, and presentations on cultural icons and historical events, with room for informative and recreational interactive activities.

At the committee meeting, Zachary Stocks, executive director of Oregon Black Pioneers (Oregon's Black historical society), told the story of Ben Johnson and the renaming of Negro Ben Mountain. Because the park sits at the foot of Ben Johnson Mountain, it is the perfect setting for a cultural area and exhibit telling the story of this pioneer. (You can also read about Ben Johnson in a front-page story by Suzie Savoie in the winter 2020 issue of the *Applegater*.)

Participants at the inaugural meeting were excited to discuss ideas about using stationary and portable traveling exhibits for telling authentic history and stories. They discussed funding possibilities and opportunities for community members to engage in and contribute toward these cultural resources. They also suggested partnering with a number of other history-oriented groups to create a cultural trail throughout the Applegate watershed and beyond.

The APWC is excited to support this committee's work by including biocultural information on signage and in educational materials of our Outdoor Education Program.

All at this inaugural meeting felt the importance of the work of rediscovering and celebrating all our diverse roots. If you are interested in working with the APWC Cultural Committee or would like more information, contact Janis Mohr-Tipton at janis.agapark@gmail.com or applegatepartnership.org.

Barbara Summerhawk
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Watershed Council
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APPLEGATE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

ATA seeks community help creating trails

BY SCOTT PROSE

The Applegate Valley boasts numerous trails that our community members use every day to hike, walk, and explore the valley's charming beauty. The Applegate Trails Association (ATA) works to expand and improve our valley's nonmotorized trails.

The ATA consists of a diverse group of volunteers like you who work towards improving and expanding trails in the Applegate Valley. COVID-19 is impacting many of our usual activities, such as interactive hikes, work parties, and fundraisers. Nevertheless, ATA's brand-new board is hard at work, outlining trails, writing grants, and lining up areas that need maintenance.

One of the ATA's current projects is creating the central section of the Center Applegate Ridge Trail. This "Center ART" will connect the popular East Applegate Ridge Trail (East ART) to one or more new Humbug Creek trailheads. The new section of trail will have a breathtaking view of the Wellington Wildlands, stunning oak savannas, and many panoramas of the Applegate Valley and surrounding mountains.

We all know our valley is memorably beautiful, and the participation of community members is invaluable in creating trails that best serve our valley. For example, volunteers with ATA are assisting the Provolt Volunteer Team in

building a riverside trail at the Provolt Recreation Site.

The ATA is currently recruiting folks to help with various initiatives, including trail maintenance, newsletter creation, fundraising, photography, hike leaders, volunteer organizing, grant writing, graphics, public relations, and website design. As mentioned, some of these tasks will need to wait till we can gather in large groups, but many can start this spring, and the office work is ongoing.

If you'd like to get involved with the ATA or support our mission of improving the Applegate Valley's trails, please contact us at info@applegatetrails.org. Being able to meet in person may take longer



ATA volunteers scout possible Center Applegate Ridge Trail routes in January. Photo: Tom Carstens.

than we wish because of COVID-19 and the restrictions that come with it, but we plan to do a few socially distant events in the coming months. Join us! See our spring schedule at our website, applegatetrails.org.

Scott Prose, Board Member
Applegate Trails Association
scott@applegatetrails.org

Work on upper watershed restoration to begin

BY DONNA MICKLEY

After many years of planning and effort from the community, the Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District and the Rogue Forest Partners are excited to begin implementation of the Upper Applegate Watershed (UAW) Restoration Project. Over the past year, the US Forest Service and the Rogue Forest Partners have been busy collecting data, developing prescriptions, laying out unit boundaries, and marking trees to guide implementation.

In 2019, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) granted funding to the Rogue Forest Partners to conduct dry forest restoration in

the Rogue River Basin. As part of this effort, the Upper Applegate Watershed Restoration Project is one of six projects being implemented under the initiative. Funding from OWEB will go to support vegetation treatments, monitoring, and public engagement.

The plan is to begin implementation of vegetation treatments in spring 2021. Crews will work on noncommercial thinning of small-diameter material to reduce stand competition, improve overall structure, and reduce wildfire risk. During the first phase of the project, we expect to complete 300 acres of this noncommercial thinning.

Also planned for the spring, Klamath Bird Observatory will be conducting pretreatment surveys for songbirds within the planning area. Bird counts and associated vegetation surveys will occur in units planned for treatment, as well

as in adjacent forest patches where no treatment will occur. Surveys in these same sites will follow treatment to measure changes in bird species composition in response to harvest-related changes in vegetation.

The bird community provides a good indicator of ecosystem health because birds are relatively cost effective to monitor, they respond relatively quickly to habitat change, and individual species respond differently to changes in their environment. Measuring birds' response to restoration provides a more meaningful and multidimensional assessment of restoration success than traditional vegetation metrics alone.

We anticipate implementation of commercial thinning in the fall of 2021. The forest service and the Rogue Forest Partners will be using a stewardship agreement to conduct this and other restoration work. This arrangement differs from traditional timber sale contracts with the forest service in that revenue generated by the sale of timber will fund other restoration work in the project area.

Restrictions on gatherings over the past year have kept us from conducting



The Western Tanager's song can easily be mistaken for the more common American Robin's, but by sight, they are unmistakable to any onlooker. This species is expected to benefit from a less dense, patchy forest canopy following restoration. Photo: Frank Lospalluto.

community meetings and field trips that we would typically offer before implementation of the UAW project. We will be providing more information in a virtual format in the coming months and hope to be back in the field with you all soon. Please visit go.usa.gov/xAzrg for more information on the Upper Applegate Restoration Project, or contact me at 541-899-3810. For more information on the Rogue Forest Partnership, visit rogueforestpartners.org.

Donna Mickley
Siskiyou Mountains District Ranger
donna.mickley@usda.gov

Tree thinning will improve stand health and vigor in the Upper Applegate Watershed, according to project partners. Photo: US Forest Service.



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Severe wildfires and persistent smoke are a threat to the lives and livelihoods of our communities. We offer a science-based, practical, long-term approach to forest management – rooted in the belief that the connections that tie all of us to the forest are more powerful than our differences.

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POETRY CORNER

The All in All

by John Sack
cyberscribe2@gmail.com

Just now You Are a tawny tassel
On a reed of ornamental grass
That I see waving
To the south.

And when I face the north,
You Are a fledgling
Steller's Jay,
Exploring the outdoor Adirondack—
No larger than a sparrow,
Though already fully crested,

And then You Are the tripod cat
Hopping to the slider
While harboring a fantasy
Of captured baby jay.

And now You Are the Spirit
Splaying wide my heart,
Urging every cell to dance,
And laugh,
And clap its hands,

Leaving me to marvel
How You Are
The All in All.

John and his wife (Applegater book reviewer Christin Lore Weber) hermit and write near Buncom on Sterling Creek Road. Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to Applegater poetry editor, Paul Tipton, at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.

Voices of the Applegate

Pause continues for Voices of the Applegate

We are sorry to say that, due to the pandemic,
Voices of the Applegate is still on hold.
You can keep in touch with us on
Facebook (Voices of the Applegate).
If things change during the next few months,
we will certainly let you know.

We hope you will all stay healthy and
hopefully we'll see you soon.

Joan Peterson
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BOOK REVIEW

Piranesi

Susanna Clarke
Bloomsbury Publishing
New York, 2020

BY CHRISTIN LORE WEBER

When this book came in the mail from my dear friend Kath, I anticipated a good read. She had given no clue regarding it, but I was pretty sure I'd seen it as one of the top titles of the winter season on the readers' go-to internet site, literaryhub.com. Anyway, Kath would never suggest any book but the best. I turned it over to read the back of the dust jacket. Words like "astonished, gripping, haunting, beauty, tension, restraint, pitch-perfect" leapt out at me. Then Erin Morgenstern's line: "Precisely the sort of book that I love wordlessly handing to someone so they can have the pleasure of uncovering its secrets for themselves." Ah! Ergo: Kath's lack of clues.

I opened it and read the first two pages. Wow! Then I disturbed my husband, John, who was engrossed in his own book. "Just listen to this!" At first I only intended to read a couple of paragraphs but couldn't stop and read the first section—short, only two pages, but hey. I couldn't make myself stop.

"I'm reminded of Jorge Borges," I told him. "The Labyrinth."

"Teresa of Avila," he ventured. "Interior Castle."

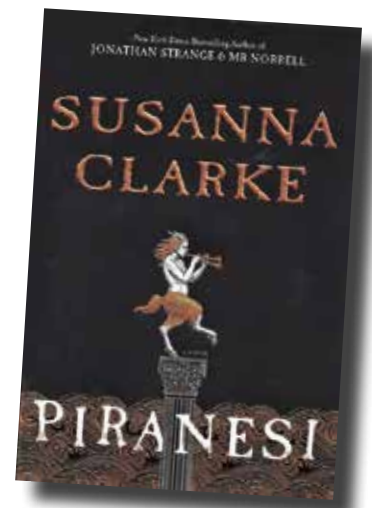
"I can see that. Hints of both. But different. I already like the narrator—the way he notices everything so precisely."

"How do you know it's a 'he'?"

I smirked. He grinned. We both went back to reading.

After an hour I began to understand that while I felt eager to review this book, it would be quite difficult without spoiling it for you. I wanted you to be as amazed as I was by the strangeness of it, as tantalized by the world that pulled me deeper and deeper into its halls and vestibules. It was eerily like a mystery, but unlike any that I'd read or seen on PBS. And what was to be solved? Or found? Or discovered? Or understood?

I texted Kath. All she would say was, "It's a magnificent act of imagination." Those vestibules and halls, and now I was caught in them. When I needed to leave



the book to fix a meal or watch the news or pay a bill or any of the other ills or fortunes this flesh is heir to, I kept scrambling to get back into that other world—the one Susanna Clarke had conjured and put between the covers of this book. It haunted and transported me. It terrified and seduced me.

What follows is a bit of Clarke's description close to the novel's beginning. I'm hoping to share some little part of the experience of reading *Piranesi* without giving any spoilers:

I am determined to explore as much of the World as I can in my lifetime. . . I have explored the Drowned Halls where the Dark Waters are carpeted with white water lilies. I have seen the Derelict Halls of the East where Ceilings, Floors—sometimes even Walls!—have collapsed and the dimness is split by shafts of grey Light.

In all these places I have stood in Doorways and looked ahead. I have never seen any indication that the World was coming to an End, but only the regular progression of Halls and Passageways into the Far Distance. (p.5)

Opening the pages of this novel, you might wonder, "Where exactly am I?" And then the question could arise, "...and who is Piranesi?" Settle in. This is your chance to become a sleuth, an archeologist, a student of architecture in Venice or in Rome, an interpreter of myths, maybe a Jungian analyst. It wouldn't hurt to search for "Piranesi" on Wikipedia. (That didn't occur to me until I'd finished reading the entire book.) I don't think the encyclopedic references would spoil the read; they might even deepen the mystery.

Christin Lore Weber
storyweaver1@gmail.com

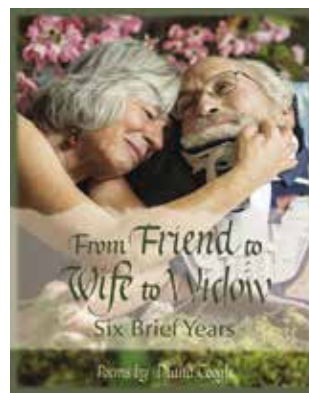


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~ FINE PRINT ~

The Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc. (AVCN) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to the publication of the *Applegater* newsmagazine, which, we feel, reflects the heart and soul of our community.

Our Mission

The Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., provides the many rural and diverse communities of the Applegate Watershed with a communications vehicle, the *Applegater* newsmagazine, free of charge to all watershed residents. Our quarterly paper presents constructive, relevant, educational, and entertaining reports on a wide variety of subjects such as:

- natural resources
- ecology and other science information
- historical and current events
- community news and opinions

AVCN encourages and publishes differing viewpoints and, through the *Applegater* newsmagazine, acts as a clearinghouse for this diverse community. We are dedicated to working together with community members to maintain and enhance the quality of life that is unique to the Applegate Watershed.

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Letters to the editor must be 200 words or less. Opinion pieces cannot exceed 500 words (no images). Articles cannot exceed 700 words. Obituaries are limited to 500 words and one photo. Essays are limited to 500 words.

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All photos submitted must be high resolution (300 dpi) or "large format" (e.g., 30" x 40"). If you have questions, email gater@applegater.org.

Photos submitted for the front-page flag are on a volunteer basis. Credit is given in the issue in which it appears, on our website, and on our Facebook page.

Submissions for the next issue must be received at bert@applegater.org by the deadline (see Editorial Calendar).

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Robert Hendrix, Grants Pass, OR
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Sandra Heyer, Grants Pass, OR
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In Honor of Lisa Baldwin, Bend, OR
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Dean Sorensen, Sherwood, OR
George Staack Read, Bend, OR
Jack States, Jacksonville, OR
The 'Woodwalker' Family,
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Janice Thornquest
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Jacksonville, OR
Williams Valley Ranch, Williams, OR
Janice Wilt, Jacksonville, OR
Robert Wolk
Shirley Woodriff, Grants Pass, OR

DEER

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Anonymous, Ashland, OR
Anonymous, Berkeley, CA
Anonymous, Canby, OR
Anonymous, Grants Pass, OR (5)
Anonymous, Jacksonville, OR (8)
Anonymous, Williams, OR (3)
Melany Bailey, Jacksonville, OR
Lisa Baldwin, Grants Pass, OR
Nicholas Baldwin, Grants Pass, OR
Cheryl Bruner, Williams, OR
Elizabeth Cole, Jacksonville, OR
Dennis & Barbara Crawford,
Williams, OR
Merridy & Glen Cross, Williams, OR
Two O'clock Dan, Williams, OR
Emily Demmin, Jacksonville, OR
Mary Lee Denton
Kathleen Dotson, Salem, OR
Audrey Eldridge, Applegate, OR
Bert Etling, Ashland, OR
Megan Fehrman, Jacksonville, OR
Christopher Friend
Pat & Steve Gehres, Applegate, OR
Bruce Gibbs
Patricia Gordon, Jacksonville, OR
Deborah Grady, Ruston, WA
Kenneth Greg
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Theodore Plautz, Phoenix, OR
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Alan & Diana Potts, Applegate, OR

See DONORS, page 24

Editorial Calendar	
ISSUE	DEADLINE
SUMMER (June - Aug)	May 1
<i>Environment-Fire-Recreation</i>	
FALL (Sept - Nov)	August 1
<i>Agriculture-Wine</i>	
WINTER (Dec - Feb).....	November 1
<i>Holiday-Arts</i>	
SPRING (March - May) ...	February 1
<i>Commerce-Community</i>	

Corrections

The *Applegater* is committed to publishing accurate information in its news articles, correcting errors of fact, and clarifying misleading statements. Send suggested corrections to Editor in Chief Bert Etling at bert@applegater.org, or call 541-631-1313.

Two photo captions for BizBits on page 20 of the winter *Applegater* were inadvertently omitted. The photo with the Pot Rack story, taken by Kira Anderson, shows Erika Bishop and family. The nails photo for Wicked Sharp Salon was taken by Beth Henderson.

Cover Photo Credit

Thanks to Suzie Savoie for the photo of poppies on the Wellington Wildlands looking down Humbug Creek. Have a photo for the summer *Applegater*? Email it to bert@applegater.org.

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— Ruch Library — Still here to serve, safely

BY THALIA TRUESDELL



At Jackson County Libraries we are happy to be here to serve you. When you come into the lobby at Ruch Library, we can check out your holds or even browse for materials for you. If you would like to call in advance and request certain titles or genres, we can have them ready for you when you arrive.

Like you, we are eagerly awaiting the time when we can let you come in and browse, but this is being written in January, and there is no telling now when it will be safe to do that. You will be the first to know! Many people are utilizing our card catalog and ordering items online, through jcls.org. The number of DVDs you can have at once has been raised to 25, and most items are checked out for three weeks. In the lobby we do have an array of new books for all ages, and all our newest magazines for you to check out.

We do have Wi-Fi at the library and in the parking lot. Need technical help with a phone, e-reader, or other device? Our very helpful JCLS Digital Services staff is here to help. They are not coming to the libraries now but are available for telephone consultations by appointment. You can reach them at digitalservices@jcls.org, or by phone at 541-734-3990. We do have computers in the library for you to use or you can bring your computer into the library for one 50-minute session per day.

Beethoven's birthday was over a month ago, and we were hoping to celebrate it in a big way with a rescheduled Beethoven "Concert" on March 13, but we will still be unable to have people in the library at that

time. Check the reader board by Ramsay Realty for current updates on our reopening.

On April 13, at 2 pm, Diana Coogle will do a reading, on Zoom, from her new book, *From Friend to Wife to Widow - Six Brief Years*. This beautiful book of poems is about her relationship with her late husband, Mike Kohn, especially about his days on hospice and the aftermath of her grief. Email medref@jcls.org to register for this Zoom program.

April 22 is Earth Day, a national day for everyone to focus on the environment and caring for our planet. We will be giving out "kits" containing a variety of fun and educational activities for the whole family to do at home. Kits will be available after April 13, while supplies last.

We are hoping it will be safe to have outdoor, in-person programs this summer. If you have any ideas for programs that might interest the Ruch Community, we would love to hear them! And don't forget that Summer Reading for all ages is just around the corner. This year's theme is "Readers are Leaders."

We hope you are enjoying a good book while staying safe. We look forward to a time when we can once again be a "full-service" library, reconnect with the school children, and have in-person community programs. We miss you so!

Thalia Truesdell

Branch Manager, Ruch Library
541-899-7438 / ttruesdell@jcls.org
The Ruch Branch Library is at 7919 Highway 238.

— Williams Library —

Services during COVID

While access to library buildings is restricted due to health concerns, all four library branches in Grants Pass, Illinois Valley, Williams, and Wolf Creek continue to offer the following services:

- Curbside pickup available on Fridays and Saturdays from noon - 4 pm. Use your library card number to place requests through your account online or by phone. Library staff will notify you when your items are ready for curbside pickup.
- Black and white document printing. Email documents@josephinelibrary.org, and library staff will notify you when your printouts are ready for pickup.
- Phone support, available Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11 am - 4 pm.
- Instant online library cards, available on our website at josephinelibrary.org. Instantly access thousands of e-books, audiobooks, interactive and educational databases, and other entertainment for all ages.
- Internet and password-free Wi-Fi, available outside each library branch 24/7. In addition, laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots are available to borrow from the Library of Things collection.
- Book drops, open all day on Thursdays and Fridays.

JosephineLINK

JosephineLINK is an online community resource directory where community members can access current information for hundreds of community service organizations. You can browse by category or search by keyword. Categories include rent assistance, volunteer opportunities, food assistance, family services, recovery support, veterans' services, and much

more. JosephineLINK can be found on the library website at josephinelink.org.

Sewing classes for all skill levels

Use your library card to access on-demand sewing classes for all skill levels in Creativebug. Classes include tote bags, buttonholes, pockets, purses, pillows, clothing, and so much more! Need a sewing machine? Check one out from the Library of Things collection at your preferred library branch.

Monthly Craft Kits

Stop by the library during curbside hours on Fridays and Saturdays from noon - 4 pm to pick up a craft kit to take home. Different kits are available each month for both adults and children.

Winter Reading Challenge

This year make your family reading goal a super easy one—read more books! Get motivated by joining the library's Winter Reading Challenge. Track reading time each day to unlock badges, earn a free book giveaway, and enter raffles.

The challenge can be completed at your own pace through March 31. Individuals and families should get started by registering their account online. For mobile devices, the Beanstack Tracker app is also available for free. Join the challenge from the "KIDS/FAMILY" page on the library website at josephinelibrary.org.

Recommended reading from your librarians

Having trouble deciding what to read next? Whether you are looking for an audiobook for that road trip, a date-night DVD, or books for a family read-aloud, Shelf Shopper can meet all of your family's reading, listening, and viewing needs. Simply submit the Shelf Shopper form; a local librarian will pick a selection of materials and notify you when

— Applegate Library — A virtual plethora of events offered

BY CHRISTINE GRUBB

The Applegate Branch Library is bucking the difficulties of the coronavirus restrictions with valiant fortitude. We had to cancel our outdoor book sale in November because of inclement weather, but we are open during our normal hours (Tuesday and Friday, 2-6 pm; Wednesday and Saturday, 10 am - 2 pm) for patrons to use computers, as space allows, and for enhanced front-door services. In addition, we have a number of programs and activities planned for the next few months.

Online Zoom presentations

For help registering for these programs, contact information@jcls.org.

- March 5, 11 am-12:15 pm—"Life, Loss, and Legacy," a presentation by Lily Myers Kaplan based on her award-winning book, *Loss to Legacy*. As COVID-19 spreads loss of all kinds in our lives, we can find comfort and inspiration in Lily's concept of a "living legacy"—an ever-evolving way of living with life's twists, turns, loves, and losses. Have pencil and paper ready for this experiential presentation.
- March 12, noon-1 pm—EOLCOR (End of Life Choices of Oregon). Local retired RN and hospice volunteer Jan Rowe discusses end-of-life choices as outlined by EOLCOR, an organization of doctors and regional volunteers trained to provide skilled professional guidance with the Death with Dignity Act and other end-of-life options.
- April 16, noon-1 pm—Applegate author Diana Coogle will read poems from her new book, *From Friend to Wife to Widow - Six Brief Years*. These poems cover the time of Diana's relationship with her late husband, Mike Kohn, from falling in love with him to their

wedding to his bouts with cancer, his three weeks on hospice, and the various ways she dealt with her grief after his death. Listener response is welcome. Discussion will follow the reading.

Outdoor workshops

May 4—Ready to Roll: A Hands-On Bicycle Repair Workshop. Celebrate Bike to Work Month with a workshop by a local bike mechanic who will teach you the basics of bike repair so you can be ready to roll to work, to the coffee shop, or on one of the many bike trails throughout the Rogue Valley. This program will take place outside with social distancing.

Take & Make Craft Kits

- March 26, 2 pm—Spring Take & Make Craft Kit. Pick up supplies to make a spring craft while supplies last.
- May 1, 2 pm—Mother's Day Take & Make Craft Kit. Pick up supplies to make a Mother's Day craft while supplies last.

Here's a reminder of other things Jackson County Library Services, including the Applegate branch, has to offer:

- Borrow books, movies, music CDs, and other library materials
- Borrow items from the Library of Things
- Download e-books, audiobooks, music, and videos
- Place holds on items online
- Use online databases and resources
- Access public computers in the library
- Borrow items through Interlibrary Loan
- Use free Wi-Fi at all library locations

Christine Grubb

Applegate Branch Library Manager

451-846-7346

cgrubb@jcls.org

The Applegate Branch Library is at 18485 North Applegate Road.

News from Friends of the Applegate Library (FOAL)

Our "New Year's resolution" is to revitalize FOAL membership. Join us!

All you have to do is tell us you want to be a member and give us your email address. Then you're in. Membership is free and carries no obligations.

The difference between being a member and just being a library user is one of cumulative energy, but, in addition, as an official Friend of the Applegate Library:

- you could become a programs chair.
- you could help with book sales (the main source of income for FOAL).
- you could oversee our Facebook page.
- you could get us set up for and oversee Amazon sales.
- you'll become a part of a network of Applegaters supporting the library and a contributor to an ideas bank of things the library can do for our community.
- you will be invited to quarterly board meetings, if you want to attend.
- you could, if you like, become a board member.

What we want most from FOAL members is ideas and energy.

Join FOAL! Contact me with an enthusiastic "count me in," and we'll add your name to the list.

On behalf of the board and the library itself, thank you!

Diana Coogle

Chair, Friends of the Applegate Library

dicoog@gmail.com

they are ready to be picked up during curbside service. Find the Shelf Shopper form under the CATALOG menu at josephinelibrary.org.

Discover local history

Access historic periodicals, browse books on Oregon's history, and learn about upcoming lectures and special events through the local history subject guide. To start exploring these local history resources, choose the local history subject guide from the "Education/

Research" tab on the library website at josephinelibrary.org.

Need more information?

- Drop by the Williams branch of the Josephine Community Library District, which is located at 20695 Williams Highway, Williams.
- Email branch manager Amber Guient at aguient@josephinelibrary.org or call 541-846-7020.
- Email info@josephinelibrary.org.
- Visit the website at josephinelibrary.org.

NONPROFIT NEWS AND UPDATES

Finally, it's 2021! Let's try that again.

BY SETH KAPLAN

Spring is the time for renewal, so no better time than now to announce that A Greater Applegate (AGA) is calling a "do-over" on 2020. Readers who follow AGA may remember that 2020 was the year we intended to visit every part of the Applegate Valley to hear your ideas for our collective future. We made it to Little Applegate, Upper Applegate, and Humbug Creek before COVID-19 put an end to community gatherings.

Now, ever hopeful, we replace 20/20 Community Vision with Applegate Valley Vision and move forward with our plan to visit Thompson Creek, North Applegate/Slagle Road, Ruch, Provolt, Williams, Griffin Lane/Sterling Creek, Murphy, Wilderville/Wonder, and Elliott Creek/Carberry Creek during the coming months. Still uncertain about COVID-19 and its impact on the Applegate, our intention is to conduct listening sessions in each of these areas during the outdoor months and use the indoor months to draft a vision document based on what we learned.

We are looking for outdoor settings in each of these areas where we can gather in groups of 25-40 (or whatever the restrictions are at the time) to break bread (at a distance) and share ideas about your neighborhood's and your community's future. Please contact us if you (1) can provide or know of a good outdoor location in one of these areas, (2) want to help plan or recruit for the listening session in your area, or (3) want to be notified when the listening session is scheduled for your area.

More good news from AGA

Our popular Small Business Technical Assistance program, funded by Business Oregon, has been extended until June 2021! Designed to support local businesses impacted by the pandemic, this program provides Applegate Valley businesses and startups with free support to sustain or grow your business during this extended challenging time. Local businesses have used this program to develop a marketing or communication plan, design or upgrade a website, set up online bookkeeping



Back to the vision-drawing board: Outdoor gatherings are planned in Applegate Valley neighborhoods so residents can share ideas about the community's future.

procedures, receive tax advice, and more. This program was previously used to create the still-available online eight-session e-commerce training, available at the AGA website (agreaterapplegate.org), and the Applegate Marketplace (applegatemarket.org). If you are a sole proprietor or a small business with employees, you are eligible for this free technical assistance.

In 2020, AGA used COVID-19 emergency funds from the Oregon Community Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation, and local donors to create the Mutual Aid Network and to provide food and other resources to Applegaters. One of these efforts has become the Farm to Food Pantry program, funded by Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation. This program will enable us to provide meat and produce from local farms and ranches to the Ruch and Williams food pantries with a local in-kind match. Applegate Valley producers interested in participating in this program should contact Megan Fehrman at megan@agreaterapplegate.org.

Contact us at info@agreaterapplegate.org to learn more about any of these programs or other offerings and opportunities from AGA.

Seth Kaplan, Executive Director
A Greater Applegate
seth@agreaterapplegate.org

Food bank still here to help

Your friends at the Ruch Food Pantry would like to take a moment and give special thanks to those who really stepped up with donations during this pandemic. We appreciate all of our supporters, and we look forward to seeing you.

Our hours are 11:30 am to 1 pm on Mondays (closed holidays) on the backside of Ruch School. Come check us out!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.
Deborah Price, Manager, 541-826-9149
Michelle Bollinger, Assistant Manager
541-218-6471

You can now hit the Upper Applegate History Trail

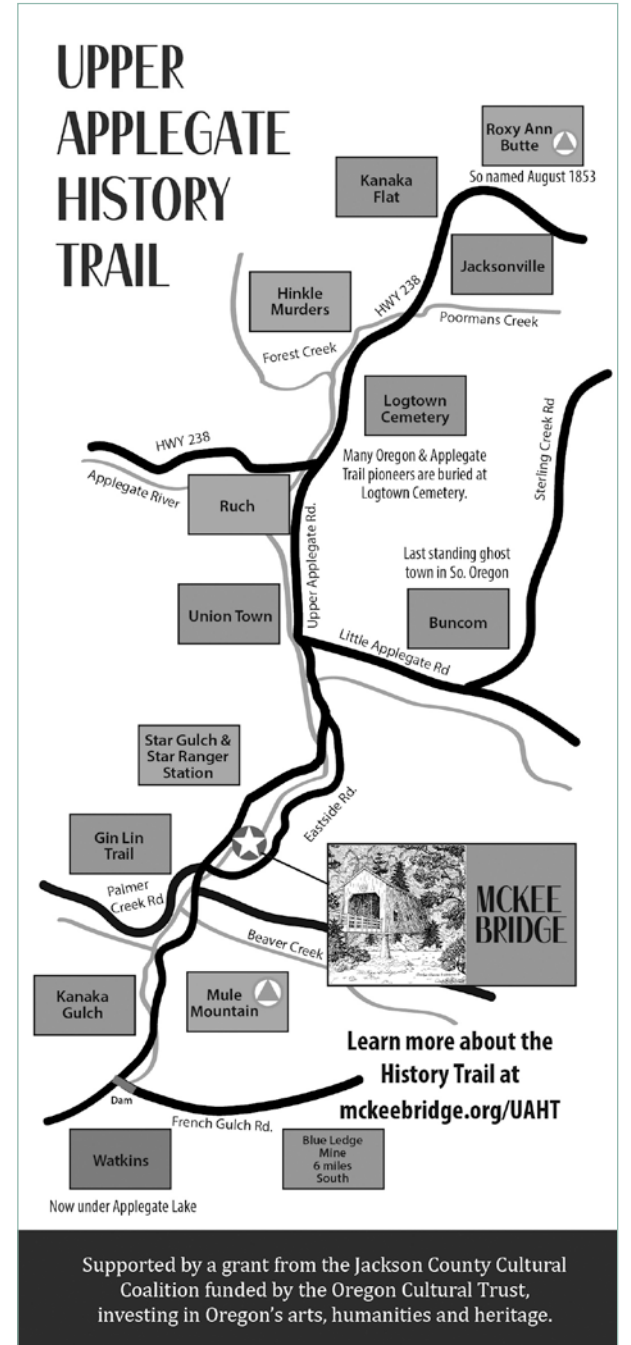
BY LAURA AHEARN

McKee Bridge Historical Society has a treasury of vintage photos and historical relics collected by founder Evelyn Byrne Williams and her mother, Pearl McKee Byrne, which has inspired the Society to relaunch its website and inaugurate an Upper Applegate History Trail. The Society received a \$1,500 grant from the Jackson County Cultural Coalition to develop the History Trail, and by the time you read this article you should be able to take a look at the "work in progress" at mckeebridge.org.

Information about the History Trail will be provided on the MBHS "rack card," a dedicated page on the website, and (soon, we hope) on a printed and downloadable nine- by 16-inch, two-sided map. Don't worry if your favorite Upper Applegate saga or site isn't included in the rollout—the web page is dynamic, so send us your recommendations at mckeebridge1917@gmail.com.

In 2021 the society will apply for more grants to install interpretive panels at McKee Bridge. There are conceptual designs for panels at additional locations—Seattle Bar, for example, where the Blue Ledge Mining Company had a placer camp in 1906-09 and attempted to build a hydro plant and even a massive smelter. The MBHS collection includes original journals, logs, and correspondence from the Blue Ledge Mine, revealing true statistics about operations in contrast to the hyperbolic descriptions published in the early 1900s about the mine's performance and potential.

Applegater Chelsea Rose, at Southern Oregon University's Laboratory of Anthropology, serves as academic advisor on these projects. Robert Kentta, Cultural Specialist for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, has provided invaluable guidance. Ruch resident Christina Ammon has pitched in to edit text. Laurel Briggs, Creative Marketing Design, is the graphics and website designer.



The McKee Bridge Historical Society has created an Upper Applegate History Trail that is available as a printed card and on its website.

If you're a Facebook user, follow McKee Bridge Historical Society for posts about fascinating Applegate pioneers like the Collings and Byrne families of Watkins, Mary Terrier Buckley (she had five husbands), and the Culy and Shearers of Steamboat.

If you are not a Facebook fan, you can find these stories at mckeebridge.org.

Become a member of the society to enjoy access to the Virtual Museum and other members-only benefits. Membership is still only \$20 per year for your entire household.

Laura Ahearn
McKee Bridge Historical Society
mckeebridge1917@gmail.com

Nonprofit organizations in the Applegate Valley are welcome to submit news and event information to the Applegater. Email gater@applegater.org.

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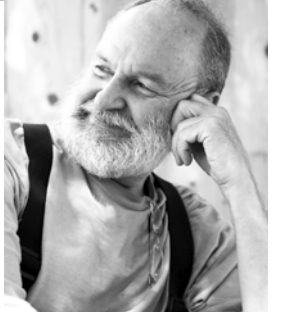
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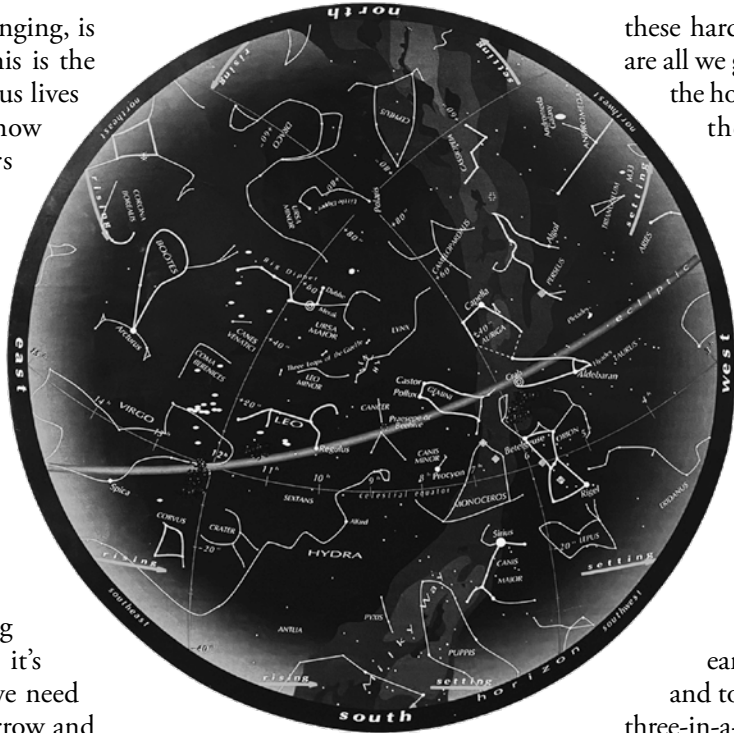
BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

Notice how everything is changing, is different, and is destructible. This is the universe we live in, and none of us lives forever. These times seem to show this up strongly. Astronomers have computed that even our steady, faithful moon is getting about a quarter of an inch further from us each year (as Edwin Hubble put it, it's receding at the speed of our fingernail growth), so eventually it's going to escape our pull of gravity and fly off!

Here on Earth the coronavirus has brought about enormous changes in our lives. Who knows how long it's going to last and what more damage it's going to do? So, in all of this, we need to not succumb to anger and sorrow and sadness and do the best we can to enjoy



Guy Ottewell's Astronomical Calendar

these hard and wonderful moments that are all we get. We need to pay attention to the horrible things we assumed weren't there but that are now loudly demanding change, asking us to make everything better than it was. Not back to what we called "normal" before, but to a new and greatly improved universe.

In the meantime, the skies give us the same reliable changes. At the new year you might have seen our brightest star, Sirius, due south and at his highest at midnight. Now, making his usual changes, he's on the way to that high point earlier in the evening. Just ahead and to the right of Sirius is Orion, his three-in-a-row belt so obvious. Next comes Taurus the Bull (the bright star Aldebaran

is sometimes called "the eye of Taurus"), and then the seven daughters of Atlas—the stars forming the snugly, little-teeny dipper shape of the Pleiades. These starry sights are all in a row along the southwest horizon line with Orion standing brave, tall, and upright.

Above Orion and towards the middle of the sky, you'll find Castor and Pollux, the twins, also standing completely upright. Almost at the zenith of the sky overhead is the wonderfully bright Capella in the constellation Auriga. Off behind us to the north, the Big Dipper is rising high in the easterly sky while always pointing faithfully to the North Star. Parallel with the Dipper and also rising is Leo the Lion, another stalwart of the spring, with its backwards question mark shape ending with a bright period: Regulus. Regulus is actually Leo's heart; above it is the curve of the lion's mane. It's all a truly beautiful winter's end delight.

Cassiopeia, the "W," is now down below Polaris, the North Star, in the west. My northern mountain will soon completely cover her. This is all so predictable and stable compared to all we've been through.

I must confess my joy at the results of our elections this year as I look forward to what we all can do together! May winter's end and the spring equinox bring new life and ideas and actions toward a better world unfolding.

Greeley Wells
greeley@greeley.me

OF NOTE

Meteors

April 22, before dawn, the Lyrids create about 10 to 15 meteors per hour, the predicted peak of a shower stretching from April 16 to 25. The best time to watch may be the hour or two between moonset and dawn. The radiant for this shower is near the bright star Vega, which rises in the northeast at about 10 pm.

May 5, before dawn, is the predicted peak of the Eta Aquariids. Hopefully, the waning crescent moon won't too seriously dampen this year's production. The radiant comes over the eastern horizon at about 4am local time. In the southern half of the US there'll be 10 to 20 meteors per hour. Might not be so great for us northerners.

Planets

Mercury is low in dawn in March. It is not visible in April, when it has moved around the back side of the sun, and it is out of sight into dusk by May.

Venus doesn't appear at all for us this season, as it's behind the sun.

Mars is in each of our season's evenings. It's not as big as it was but is still its red self.

Saturn and Jupiter are visible in the morning through the season. (Jupiter is that brightest "star.")

Got News?

The *Applegater* welcomes submissions! We're your newspaper and want to share your news with readers throughout the Applegate Valley watershed's many neighborhoods. What's going on around you? Let us know! Send your writeup and photos to gater@applegater.org. Thanks! See you in the *Applegater*....

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Catalog nights and hot buttered rum

BY SIOUX ROGERS



Sioux Rogers

I sat in front of a roaring fire, my two dogs sprawled at my feet as I sipped on a steaming cup of hot buttered rum, staring at 18 seed catalogs, at least, spread everywhere. Winter is when the “real gardener” begins the obsessive task of ordering seeds, dreaming of this year’s “perfect” garden. This year I am consciously (as opposed to unconsciously) considering where to plant everything. This is called a “plot plan.”

Then what? Spring arrives. Then what? All the “mistakes” arrive in the mail. Lordy, Lordy, I certainly did not order 68 packages of seeds. I am positive there is a mistake. Now what? I double-check my well-thought-out plot plan of where to plant everything. Now I need to reassess the plot plan. I thought it was so brilliant and perfect, but maybe not. After all, where would I ever have space for seeds from 68 packages, especially if all the seeds germinated? Whew, I better check again. My plot plan was designed for the contents of 43 seed packs. I couldn’t possibly have ordered 68 packages of seeds. So now what? Need to make numerous phone calls and set the seed catalog folks straight. Right!

Do you know what a “mystery paper” is? It is a lost piece of scrap paper with a list of at least 25 different flowers you want to grow. Slap my forehead. Now what? Well, for the moment I am just claiming insanity for an aging brain.

Next I will plead, still claiming insanity, to all my gardener friends (wonder if I have enough of them) that they honestly need to plant clarkia, blue salvias, marigolds,

zinnias, nasturtiums, amaranths, petunias, more zinnias, snap dragons, and then more I forgot. They, my gardener friends, can plant my flower seeds and then bring me beautiful bouquets of “my” flowers all summer.

That plan has only moderate success, as I do not have enough insane friends.

Ordering from seed catalogs is a challenge: so many choices, too many seeds, where to plant what. If this is so difficult and can become so complicated, why don’t I just buy vegetables and

flowers at the local growers mart? Answer: no idea!

When ordering seeds from catalogs, pay attention to the variety of what you are considering. Here is what I mean. I like radishes because they are so easy to grow, but I don’t like hot and bitter radishes. Read the label and find a radish variety that says, “Tastes sweet.” Lettuce, and all green leaf stuff, for that matter, tends to bolt. Look for lettuce seeds that say, “Slow to bolt” or “No bolting.” If you are partial to certain flower colors, here is the time

to “paint your garden” as you like. If your local nursery has zinnias but not the colors you are craving, grow them yourself. Get the color you like. You are the artist, so please yourself.

Before ordering from the seed catalogs, make sure you check the growing conditions for what you want. Don’t ignore “best grown in shade” and then plant in full sun. Study colors, ultimate height, whether it needs staking, trellis, or something else. You get to order what suits you and your garden plot.

Order from the seed catalogs the plants and special varieties of plants you cannot find locally. Start germinating those seeds so they are ready to plant about the same time you plant the small nursery seedlings. Actually, some of your seeds probably can be directly sowed when the soil is ready. Read the back of the seed packages for planting dates.

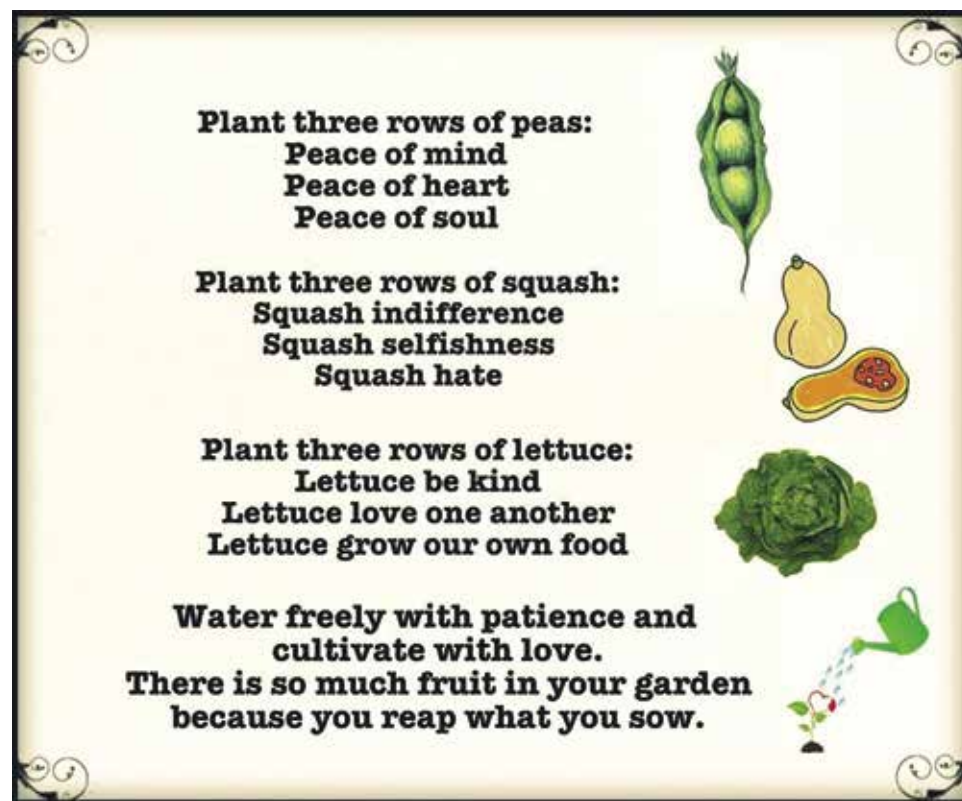
If you need an abundance of any particular plant, say lettuce, then by all means sow seeds directly into the garden soil. However, I usually buy vegetable starts of Japanese eggplant, cauliflower, cabbage, and broccoli. I have not had great luck germinating those, and I have very limited germinating space.

Flower seeds are different. I never have enough flowers. Mind you, I struggle with germination, but it’s so worth it, even with moderate success. Flower power for me.

So here you are with still time to order, really. Paint your garden with colors, just as you like. It is your garden, and you are the artist.

Sioux Rogers • littlemuddyred@gmail.com

Thoughts for gardens (author unknown).



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2021 brings humble thoughts for us to ponder

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

Being thankful: For rain that is soaking into our park's soil, supporting all of the root systems.

Looking forward: To the waning days of the pandemic, so we can see more of each other, and spring can bring all the beautiful wildflowers' colors and fragrances to the park.

Very grateful: For park users who have been thoughtful and courteous to the park hosts, rangers, and staff who have been working with reduced staff due to COVID restrictions and have just as much work as before the pandemic.

Being ever so grateful: For the wonderful donors, volunteers, and supporters of Cantrall Buckley throughout all of its development, growth, and transitions since it became a park 51 years ago.

Patience: So appreciated as we wait for projects to be completed and new ones to begin for enhancing, restoring, and maintaining this 88-acre forest park.

With positivity in our hearts: Looking forward toward the future with new ideas and plans taking shape as we move from virtual to on-the-ground work again in 2021.

Remembering: That gratitude is an important part of keeping our lives healthy so we can take walks, picnic, swim, and enjoy seeing others at our community's park.

Best of thoughts in 2021.

Janis Mohr-Tipton,
the Park Enhancement Team,
and A Greater Applegate (AGA)

Now: What are the park plans for this year?

We have still been meeting virtually, but are starting to assess what upkeep, restoration, and development are possible to address on the ground, working in small groups of people (in interesting arrays of color and design of masks as needed). This is the summary of what is being planned:

- Small work groups (ten maximum) throughout the spring for removing weeds and invasive plants, amending the soil, and mulching in landscaped beds along the parking area of the lower area.

- A cleanup day in partnership with SOLVE for Earth Day on April 17. Sign up online at solveoregon.org (project location is in Jacksonville) or contact Janis.

- Art projects. The artists for our two art projects in the park (Cheryl D. Garcia

and Jeremy Criswell) are slowly moving back into their work as their bodies are healing from injuries. Still looking at completion in 2021. And by then, we hope to be able to gather to celebrate!

- Trail maintenance. Watch for the date to participate in the Applegate Trails Association's trail maintenance work in the park.

- Outdoor Education in the park. Scheduling is now beginning for small groups, spread throughout the park, to do studies, art, and service work. This is a partnership with the park team, AGA, and the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council's (APWC) Environmental and Cultural Education Program.

- Riparian Restoration along the park side of the Applegate River. This is a partnership with Jackson County Parks and APWC, with the park team and AGA supporting the plan and providing volunteer teams for some labor hours. The invasive species that have overtaken the young native trees and shrubs will be removed, aging trees will be trimmed, and new native species planted. This will create a healthier zone, help to mitigate the spread of fire, and develop better food sources for animal and bird species. There will be interpretative signage for education and cultural awareness for all ages. Steve Lambert, Jackson County Parks Manager, said that after he had seen the devastation on the greenway from the Almeda Fire in September, he was happy for this restoration in the park, especially for educating the public on the importance of having more fire-safe riparian zones for both private and public areas.

- A Hiker-Biker site in the Cantrall Buckley Campground. Community donations can be specified for this project. Fundraising will be ongoing. The project will begin when the campground is closed for the winter season.

We will list the dates and times for each project that needs volunteer support on the AGA weekly bulletin, Applegate Connect, and the APWC website, as well as provide flyers at multiple businesses and public locations. If you would like to be placed on a volunteer list to be called as needed, you can contact Janis at janis.agapark@gmail.com.

Janis Mohr-Tipton • 541-846-7501
janis.agapark@gmail.com

Pacifica trails offer escape from COVID trials

BY PEG PRAG

It's *spring*, and *everyone* should be outdoors enjoying it...unfortunately, just not together. Hiking and walking, however, are permitted, even encouraged, at Pacifica.

So here's the plan for "COVID-Trial Trail-Trekkers."

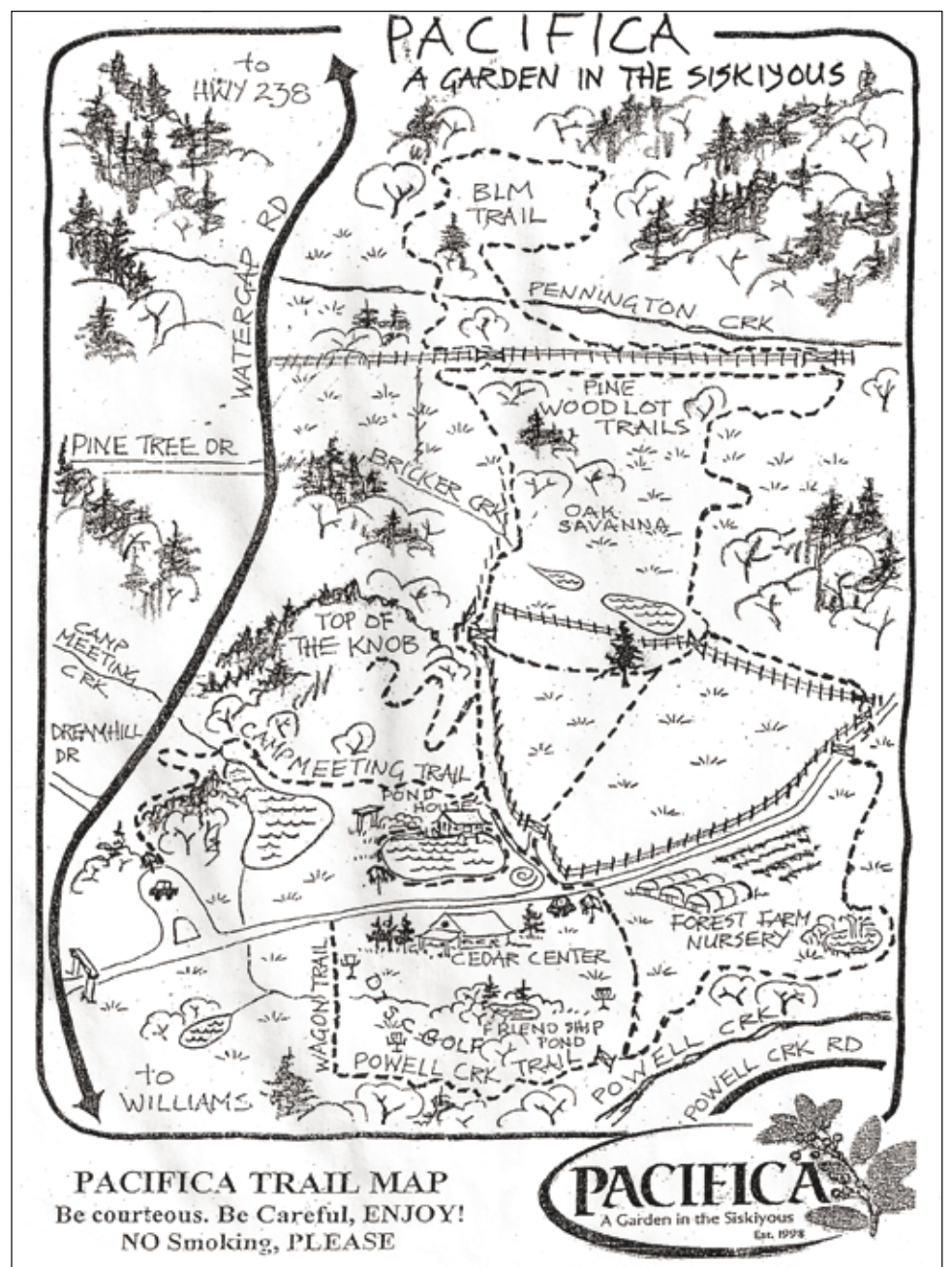
Pacifica, a 420-acre, education-based nonprofit, is open (except during events) and free to the public during daylight hours for catch-and-release fishing, hiking, dog-walking, horseback-riding, and disc golf. There are six or seven miles of trails. All, except one, are very easy and pleasant walking.

The trails take you through woods and oak meadows and by ponds, with great views of the Siskiyou. The Nature Center is working on interpretive activity stations along the Camp Meeting Creek Trail that explain the five different habitats you're walking through. Hopefully, by March 1 we'll have a box at each trailhead kiosk where you can pick up a map; a variety of changing printed scavenger hunts and activities for families; a self-guided, create-your-own nature journal hike; and color identification sheets (to be returned at the trail-end kiosk) of flowers, birds and trees.

Every month there will be a new themed hike, such as a Habitat Hike, Scavenger Hunt, Learn Leaves, etc. *Anyone* can play—families, kids, adults, dogs—just not in groups other than those you're living with. Please remember, if you should, by unlikely chance, meet anyone, respect social distancing and stay at least six feet away. You can pick up the appropriate activity instructions from the waterproof box at either trail head. Please keep these papers; don't return them to the box. If, at the end of this challenging time, you have at least three hike papers, you'll receive a COVID-Trial Trail-Trekker Star (if you can say it three times fast in a row!).

In March, a great wildflower show will begin, and by April you might start to see the migrating warblers. Pacifica is an excellent bird-watching site because of its different habitats. In April, also, the plants in the large Fragrant Garden and Pollinator Garden should begin to bloom. Be sure to stop to enjoy them.

Clean hands, busy feet,
and happy hearts!
Peg Prag
peg@pacificagarden.org



Miles of trails at Pacifica are open to the public for free, socially distanced use. Map by Ann Gunter.

The owners of Applegate Valley Realty realize that these are extraordinary times and that many among us could use a little help.

We want to do our part, so we are offering \$1000 off our 5% seller's commission until July 1, 2021. Or, if the seller also wants to help, we will give the seller \$750 and the Medford Food Bank \$500 (paid at close of escrow).

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The maddening search for morels

BY CHRISTINA AMMON

It's a sign of the season each spring when, at the end of my dirt road, mushroom buyers park their pickup trucks, set up their scales, and wait for the pickers to arrive. They are in the market for the coveted morel mushroom, which is prized by chefs for its deep, butter-holding cavities and meaty, umami flavor. They can't be easily cultivated, so are mainly gathered, and since I see the hunters hauling bags to the scales, I assume the surrounding hills must be abundant.

Last year, I decided to hunt for some myself. I know that my travels have always been enhanced by a quest. During a layover in Frankfurt, I sought out the house of Goethe. In Marrakech, I scoured the medina for nutmeg during a time when there was a shortage, and last year in Mexico, I wandered the old town looking for the perfect pair of flip-flops. A good quest winnows this chaotic world

down to a simple search image and infuses your otherwise random wanderings with purpose. Perhaps morel hunting would enhance my daily hikes in the same way.

I waited for the right weather sequence to arrive—a few wet days followed by sunshine—and then set off in the mornings, full of a first-cup-of-coffee optimism. My eyes were keen and searching, and the dog seemed to love my new slow hiking style—we moved across the land at sniffing-speed, and he nosed every bush and tree stump. I liked it too—the way it heightened my attention to detail and stilled me in the sharp light of early morning. We'd wander until my pant cuffs were soaked with forest dew and my stomach growled for breakfast. I didn't find a single morel.

"Morels are everywhere but impossible to find," a saying goes. My friend Malu said she wondered if they really even existed. It

was clear from the buyers on my road that they did, but the pickers are famously protective of their spots. I don't know the secret. Perhaps you just have to put in the time, or just get plain lucky.

I'd like to say I don't mind—that the thrill of the hunt is enough. And for a while, this was true. But as poison oak rashes began to irritate my arms and ankles and as I found myself disoriented more than once, frustration set in. I could no



The quest for the morel can lend purpose to one's walk.
Illustration: Christina Ammon.

longer enjoy a walk in the woods because I was now too obsessed with looking at the ground in fear of missing a morel.

At one point my friend Caroline sent me a text: *I found nearly two pounds of morels!* She went out with some old-timers, and they had a perfect day of mushroom hunting. She generously brought some over to my house to share. Each bite was proof that they exist.

The day grew hot, the land drier. The likelihood of finding morels diminished by the minute. "You know you can just buy them off Amazon," a neighbor told me when we crossed paths on the road. But, of course, this would ruin the mystique of this Oregon pursuit. I'd have to resume my search the following year, which was fine by me. I was ready to raise up my head and start enjoying hikes again.

Christina Ammon
info@deptravelworkshops.com

Pacific lampreys: Intrepid, misunderstood travelers need some help getting past upstream obstacles

BY NATHAN GEHRES

The Pacific Lamprey is an often sadly misunderstood fish. Here in the Northwest, lampreys are often referred to as "eels," which they are not. Some people have the mistaken impression that the lamprey is a harmful invasive parasite or pest, but this could not be further from the truth. While the Atlantic Sea Lamprey became an invasive species in the Great Lakes, that is not the case with our native lamprey. In fact, Pacific Lamprey are an important ecological and cultural component in coastal rivers from Japan to Baja California. Rich in nutrients, Pacific Lamprey is also a sought-after food for all sorts of wildlife, as well as for many indigenous peoples.

These ancient creatures lack the jaws, scales, and paired fins of the typical fish. They even lack a substantial internal skeleton. Most famous for their round, sucker-like mouth filled with teeth, adult Pacific Lampreys may cause trepidation in those that peer into their maws, but they pose no threat to humans.

Like salmon, Pacific Lamprey are anadromous, meaning they start life in fresh water, migrate to the ocean as adults, and return to freshwater streams to spawn. Larval lamprey, known as ammocoetes, have no eyes or teeth, burrow into streambeds after hatching, and are filter feeders, cleaning the water. These "larvae" remain in freshwater for up to seven years, growing to the size of a pencil. Then they develop eyes, teeth, and a sucker mouth before riding rising river flows out into the ocean in late fall or early spring. They stay in the ocean one to three years and grow up to two feet in length.

Lampreys have been found at depths of 2,600 feet and feed parasitically on a

wide array of fishes and even whales, but we really don't know much about their life at sea. After adults return to freshwater (February-June), they migrate upstream but live in the river for about a year before spawning. During this time, adults go on a crash diet, stop eating, and lose about 25 percent of their size.

Lampreys can swim efficiently, but they are not fast, and they can't jump. Instead, they climb up cascades, waterfalls, and other obstacles using only their mouths. Nevertheless, they historically migrated as far inland as Idaho. Spawning adults do not necessarily return to the stream where they hatched. Both sexes help with nest construction (March-June), using their mouths to move small rocks and forming a shallow bowl in the streambed.

Like salmon, lamprey die after spawning. The remains of spawned-out lampreys add nutrients to streams, supporting their young and everything else living there.

The populations of Pacific Lamprey are declining. Many factors have led to this sad situation, but perhaps the biggest obstacle to lamprey population growth is just that: obstacles—barriers that they cannot get past. In the natural world lampreys often climb past cascades and waterfalls that block even salmonids, following smooth wetted surfaces. Unfortunately, since lampreys climb using their sucker-like mouths, they have difficulties moving past simple 90-degree lips or corners, u-shaped channels, or dry walls, all of which are commonly found on dams, weirs, and even fish ladders.

Passage improvement project

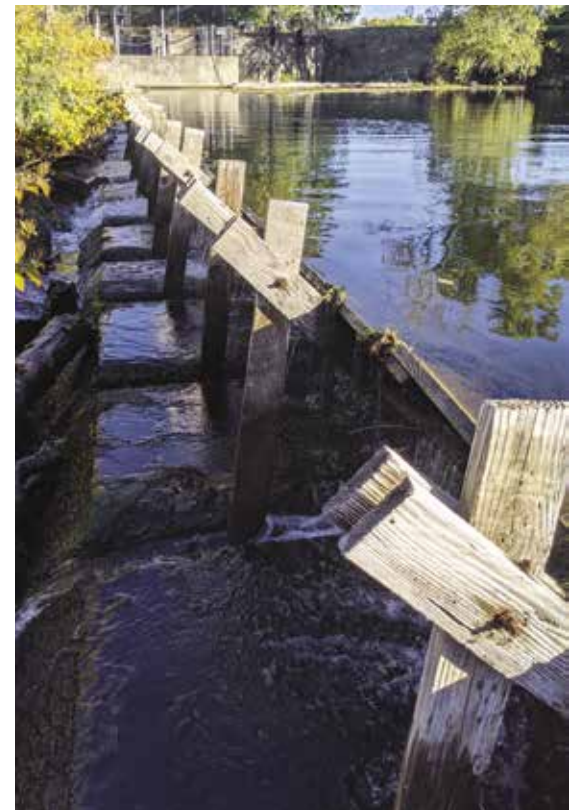
The Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC) has initiated

a lamprey passage improvement project with Stewart Reid, PhD, a local lamprey biologist. The focus is to mitigate passage issues at six dam sites in the Applegate Valley. Fixes that allow lamprey to pass barriers are often surprisingly simple and inexpensive and do not impede function of the structure.

Pacific Lamprey are amazing animals that provide multiple benefits to rivers in which they live. They clean the water when young, then cycle oceanic nutrients back through those same streams when they die after spawning and provide a rich food source for many animals during all life stages.

Salmon are venerated for marathon migrations, but lamprey, which can migrate even farther using their unique climbing ability, are often held in low esteem. These maligned and misunderstood animals deserve better, and it is my hope that we are beginning to recognize that in the Applegate.

Nathan Gehres, Staff Member
Applegate Partnership and
Watershed Council
contact@apwc.info



Irrigation diversions with sharp angles, like this one on Murphy Dam on the Applegate River, are difficult for lampreys to climb and are candidates for lamprey passage improvements.
Photo: APWC staff.

A Pacific lamprey climbs a concrete water diversion. Photo: Stewart Reid.



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■ VOLUNTEERS

Continued from page 1

Time to “huddle.” A meeting of the Applegate Lions Club was the perfect place to talk. Through pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners, the Lions Club members tried to raise money to start their own fire district in our valley. According to Brett, they eventually realized that “the only way to raise the kind of funds needed would be through the formation of a district.” So, on May 12, 1980, the Applegate Valley Fire District was officially founded.

The district’s first station was built by Lions Club members in the town of Applegate on North Applegate Road, just off what is now Highway 238. Since then, we’ve added six more stations across the valley: Station 2 is out near McKee Bridge on Upper Applegate Road; Station 3 is on Upper Applegate Road in Ruch (now district headquarters). Station 4 is on Highway 238 at Water Gap Road; Station 5 is at the top of the Jacksonville Hill; Station 6 is on Kubli Road east of Highway 238, and Station 7 is just off Sterling Creek Road on Griffin Lane.

Headquarters (HQ) is staffed by the fire chief, operations chief, maintenance chief, and the office manager. In addition, three captains, many volunteer firefighters, and six student firefighters rotate 24-hour stints at HQ. All are trained as firefighters, first-responders for medical calls, and water rescuers. (Don’t forget—we’ve got a river running through our valley!) So, most volunteers are fully trained for just about anything the Applegate can throw at them!

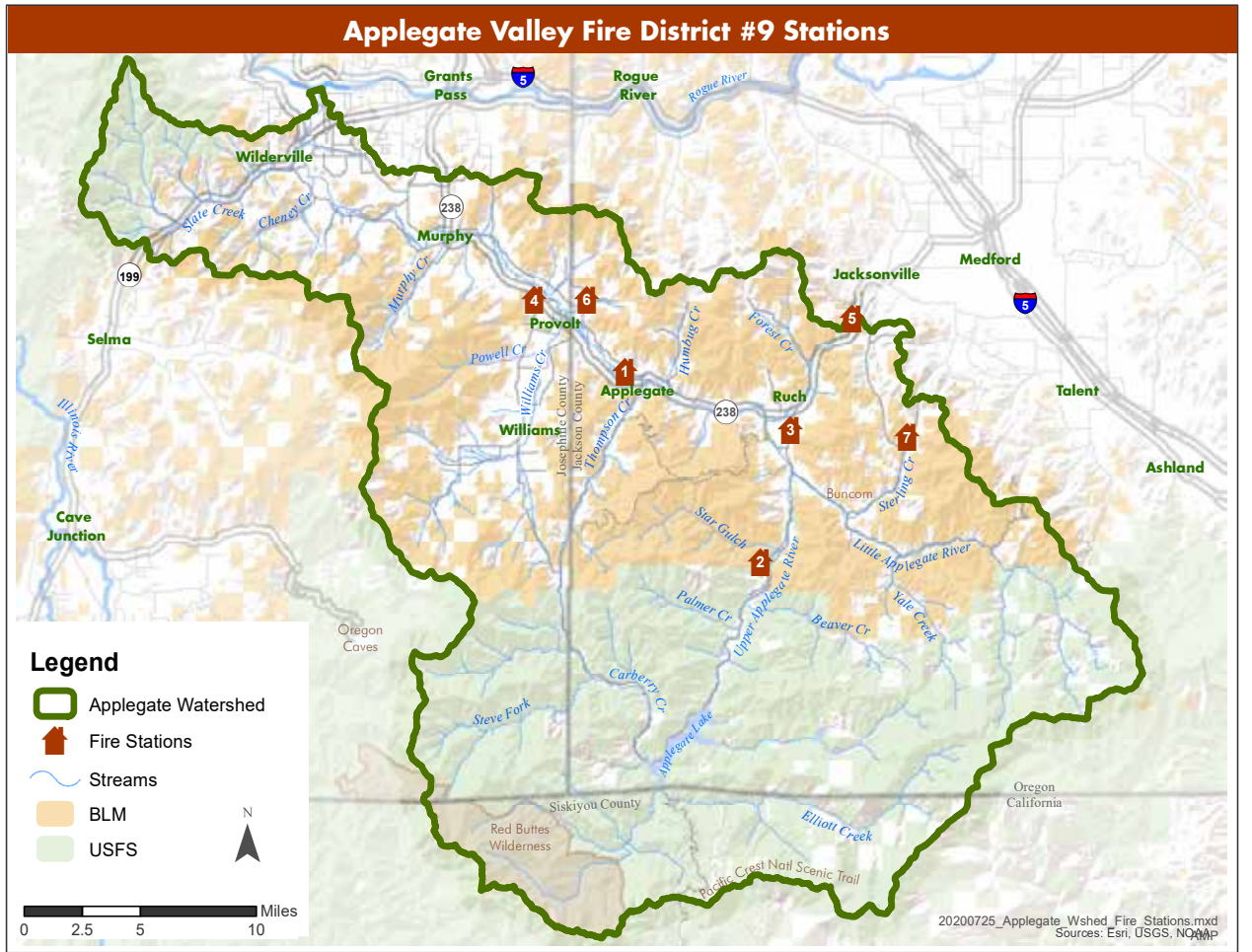
Volunteers fill many jobs at HQ, and trained volunteer firefighters/first responders from across the valley cover the needs in the other six stations.

You can see why we are always looking for more volunteers.

All of our firefighters wear pagers, and if a call is in their neighborhood, they quickly respond to their “home” station, gear up, and drive the appropriate engine to the incident.

Many of the AVRFD’s residents are retirees, a demographic that generates numerous 911 calls for general assistance, fall victims, illness, and such. Some of these calls may be covered by firefighters who live in the neighborhood, depending upon the severity of the situation. Being the Applegate, we also have a number of emergency calls during the summer recreation season, including those from sightseers visiting our local wineries.

As someone who usually has a scanner turned on to hear 911 calls, I’ve often heard several different emergency calls come in for AVRFD at the same time. HQ firefighters respond to the first call. All other volunteers know to “move up”



Volunteers are key to staffing the seven stations in Applegate Valley Fire District #9. Map by Annette Parsons.

to their closest station or prepare to head to HQ. The HQ team keeps rolling to their call. They know our volunteers have their backs!

FYI: Multiple calls are frequent when a lightning storm rolls across our valley. On a hot, dry summer evening this situation challenges AVRFD staff and volunteers alike. When a lightning storm is brewing, every firefighter is on alert, and some will bunk at their station for the night.

Probably not getting too much sleep, though!

So, yes, we really do need more volunteers in every corner of the district, but not just as firefighters! Our valley and our fire district are growing in more than one way. Think about it: This valley is all of ours.

Talk to Chief Michael McLaughlin for his thoughts on growth, training, and resources.

Sandy Shaffer • sassyoneor@gmail.com

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Free anti-overdose drugs distributed

Free distribution of lifesaving overdose medication and HIV tests is set for 10:30 am to 1:30 pm Sunday, March 7, at the Sugarloaf Center, 206 Tetherow Road, in Williams. Park in the parking lot and take a short walk to the center, which is at the end of the gated driveway.

Volunteers from the nonprofit group Rogue Harm Reduction will offer free doses of naloxone to take home, along with instructions for use. They’ll also give out free fentanyl test strips, take-home HIV tests, and condoms.

Free overdose response training takes about 20 minutes. Safety protocols include masks, gloves, and social distancing.

Rogue Harm Reduction, a volunteer-run, nonprofit health collective, promotes community wellness and harm reduction strategies in response to substance use disorders and other community health concerns. The events are held the first Sunday of each month.

For more information, email rogueharmreduction@gmail.com.

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The Common Checkered Skipper can turn blue!

BY LINDA KAPPEN

The Common Checkered Skipper, *Burnsius communis*, formerly known as *Pyrgus communis*, is of the Hesperidae family of butterflies. The taxonomic revision came in the year 2020. Guidebooks and other articles may still show the former *pyrgus* taxonomy for years to come.

The wingspan of this small butterfly is one to one-and-a-half inches. The dorsal view of the wings (see photo) displays a tessellated pattern of white checkered spots and a black background. The ventral view shows bands of olive and tan with black outlines.

The Common Checkered Skipper uses plants in the Mallow family (Malvaceae) as host plants. In mid elevations of mountain ranges, it may use streambank globemallow as a host plant.

The female lays eggs singly on host plants, where the caterpillars live and feed inside folded leaf nests. Up to three generations can occur throughout spring to fall. Fully grown larvae will overwinter.

This butterfly ranges in all of Oregon except in the very far northwest corner of the state. It also occurs in much of the United States and southern Canada.

Common Checkered Skippers like many varieties of habitat and can be found in disturbed spots of our foothills and towns and in open spaces such as pastures, yards, gardens, fields, and forest openings.

They like to nectar on many annual varieties, many wildflowers, and even the flowers of the hostplants.

There is something special about having this butterfly around most of the butterfly season from March to nearly fall. This Skipper has long hairs that refract in the sunlight to make the wings look blue! Seeing this as the butterfly is in flight tricks many adults and children into thinking they are seeing or chasing a *blue* butterfly—until it lands, which is when the black-and-white checkered pattern pops out as it sits with its wings open. An experienced eye still sees the flash of blue as the butterfly quickly skips by.

It is quite amazing to see this butterfly turn blue before your very eyes with the right combination of sunlight, fur, and color!

Linda Kappen
 humbugkapps@hotmail.com
Linda Kappen is a southern Oregon naturalist specializing in lepidoptera.



Photo, top right: The dorsal (upper side) view of a female Common Checkered Skipper.
 Photo, bottom right: The dorsal view of a male Common Checkered Skipper.
 Photos: Linda Kappen.

Opening up scouting opportunities for girls

BY ERIK JOHNSEN

Hello again, neighbors! I wanted to give you an update on what local scouts are up to. It's certainly been a challenging six months, but we've been trying to meet those challenges with optimism and resilience.

As we all know, some devastating fires ripped through Talent and Phoenix in September, but our local scout groups tried to rise to the occasion.

Scouts BSA Troop 17 in Jacksonville gathered food, clothing, and necessities at the Bigham Knoll Campus and delivered them to the Jacksonville Presbyterian Church, which served as a shelter to displaced families. Cub Scout Pack 17 used its regular meeting to organize school supply kits for displaced families and wrote thank-you cards to first responders.

In October, both groups helped with fall clean-up at the Jacksonville Cemetery, and we participated in the annual Scouting for Food drive in November to help needy families over the holidays. In December, our Cub Scout pack joined up with the Salvation Army to help sort and distribute toys and clothes at their annual Toys for Tots event, which was very rewarding for our youth and a lot of fun!

While the latest COVID lock-down has certainly put a damper on things, we're still finding creative ways to stay active. Our Cub Scout pack hiked the Enchanted Forest Trail in the Applegate in December, followed by an astronomy evening at Ruch Outdoor Community School to view the Jupiter and Saturn convergence. In January, we went sledding at Table Mountain Snow Park, which replaced our annual sledding event with the Crater Lake Council, canceled due to COVID restrictions.

Our latest initiative, which I am most excited to share with you, is that our Scout Troop 17 in Jacksonville will begin accepting girls this February! While the national BSA organization permitted girls to enter the Scouts BSA program a couple of years ago, it is up to each troop to determine if, when, and how they can incorporate girls into their program. Much of this is based on interest and demand, and our Cub Scout Pack 17 is graduating our first group of girls to the troop, so now is our time! To make this an awesome experience for all, we're looking for interested families to come check us out! With scouting, it really is "the more, the merrier!"



In December 2020, Cub Scouts hiked and explored the Enchanted Forest Trail in the Applegate. That evening they attended an astronomy viewing at Ruch Outdoor Community School.
 Photo: Erik Johnsen.

On Sunday, February 21, we held an open house on the Bigham Knoll campus in Jacksonville that was timed to include a live stream from the national BSA organization, which honored the first girls in the nation to earn their Eagle Scout award. We also provided information about scouting and our troop and demonstrations of what we do.

Most girls inquiring about our program seem to be interested in the outdoor activities and wilderness survival aspects of what we do, so we'll be sure to offer some exciting demonstrations about that. We hope you come check us out!

Erik Johnsen
 Pack 3017 Committee Chair
 Pack17jacksonville@gmail.com

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Early blooming wildflowers in the Applegate

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

The cheerful sight of spring wildflowers enlivens the soul after a long, cold winter. With warm, sunny days ahead, it's time to get out and enjoy the spectacular early blooming wildflowers on display throughout the Applegate. After flowering and setting seed, these species will go completely dormant in the summer, an adaptation for surviving the Applegate's dry summer months.

Douglas' grasswidow

Olsynium douglasii

One of the earliest wildflowers to bloom in the spring, Douglas' grasswidow inhabits rocky, vernal wet places that turn very dry in the summer. You will see it growing on dry, rocky bluffs, in meadows, and in open oak woodlands from low to mid elevations. Early season native bees appreciate the early blooms of grasswidows.

Indian warrior

Pedicularis densiflora

The much-loved, bright red flowers of Indian warrior stand out in early spring. Native only in Oregon and California, this perennial wildflower is in the broomrape family, and, like other plants in the genus *Pedicularis*, it is parasitic. Indian warrior attaches to the roots of other plants, most often plants in the heath family, like manzanita and madrone, in order to obtain nutrients and water. It is considered a hemiparasite because parasitism isn't necessary for its survival, but it takes the opportunity to parasitize when it can in order to increase its survivability and vigor. Indian warrior grows at low elevations in oak woodland, mixed conifer forest, and chaparral in the Applegate, primarily from

Humbug Creek and Thompson Creek, through Williams and North Applegate.

Henderson's fawn lily

Erythronium hendersonii

A springtime display of thousands of Henderson's fawn lilies carpeting an oak woodland is sure to bring a smile to your face. An endemic species in southwest Oregon where it is abundant, Henderson's fawn lily is listed as a rare and sensitive species in California, where its population is very limited. The pinkish purple to lavender flower color is distinctive among fawn lilies in the West, where most are white to yellow. Henderson's fawn lily can be found growing in dry, open oak or madrone woodland, mixed woodland, or pine forest.

Pacific hound's tongue

Cynoglossum grande

This early-blooming native perennial wildflower in the borage family prefers to grow in light, dappled shade and is commonly found growing beneath Oregon white oak. The striking foliage of hound's tongue is followed by one- to two-foot flowering stalks with bold, blue flowers and white centers that resemble forget-me-nots. The uniquely intense blue flower color, with distinct white centers, may have evolved to help pollinators zero in on the pollen. Hound's tongue attracts native bees and hummingbirds and is a larval host plant for the hound's tongue woolly bear moth.

Nuttall's larkspur

Delphinium nuttallianum

This cheerful, widely distributed, and variable larkspur is low-growing, generally one to two feet, with deeply lobed leaves

and a spurred, dark purple to light blue flower. Loved by many pollinators, meadow larkspur can be found in low-elevation open meadows, dry grasslands, chaparral, open woodlands, and at edges of forests or near streams.

Common lomatium

Lomatium utriculatum

Common lomatium is also referred to as spring gold because of its early spring, bright yellow flowers. This perennial wildflower is a member of the carrot family and is native to western North America. It grows in many habitat types, including chaparral, oak woodland, sunny open slopes, dry meadows, and openings in coniferous forest. Common lomatium is a larval host plant for the anise swallowtail butterfly. Many small pollinating insects are attracted to the yellow umbel flowers. It has long been used as a traditional food by Native American tribes and as a medicinal plant.

Henderson's shooting star

Dodecatheon hendersonii

An inhabitant of open woodlands, cheerful Henderson's shooting stars are neighborhood wildflowers for many in the Applegate. The unique, nodding, vibrant magenta flowers arise from a tuber-like root. Henderson's shooting star requires "buzz pollination" from bees for successful pollination and seed production, and bumble bees are their primary pollinator.

Western trillium

Trillium ovatum

Western trillium is an elegant, highly revered, and endearing wildflower that is native to the western United States. The early spring blooms of Western trillium



Douglas' grasswidow is one of the earliest wildflowers to bloom in the spring. Photo: Suzie Savoie.

are unmistakable. The large white petals are one-half to three inches long, fading to pink or dark magenta as they age. Western trillium inhabits moist mixed conifer forest, oak woodland, and riparian areas in the Applegate. It grows from a slowly spreading rhizome and prefers part shade or dappled sunlight and moist, rich soil with good drainage. The flowers are attractive to many pollinators, including bumblebees, moths, and beetles. The seeds are distributed by ants and yellowjackets which are attracted to the fleshy seed coat.

Suzie Savoie
klamathsiskiyou@gmail.com

Photo, left: Common lomatium is a member of the carrot family. Photo, center: Henderson's shooting stars are neighborhood wildflowers for many in the Applegate. Photo, right: Western trillium's seeds are distributed by ants and yellowjackets. Photos: Suzie Savoie.



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Annual Maintenance

from Tami Quinn Hollenbeck

Murphy's Law for well & pump systems is - they will cease to function when you need them the most.

This law also applies to the family car, and if you think it makes you crazy to be without transportation, you don't even want to know how it feels not to be able to get a drink of water, a shower, or (worse) flush the toilet. An annual maintenance check and service for your well's pump system can save you a lot of unhappiness.

Similar to the annual tune-up for your vehicle or regular oil changes, the annual pump maintenance helps to ensure the smooth functioning of your water system. A qualified service technician should examine the pump, check to see that it is functioning properly, make certain that the amperage is neither too high or low, and check the points on the motor. Such annual maintenance can help avoid future problems and should also reveal whether the pressure tank is waterlogged.

Water is a geological cocktail so DRINK MORE WATER!

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Extension fire specialist seeks community partners on fire-related issues

BY CHRIS ADLAM

How can the Applegate Valley community move towards a more fire-adapted future? This question has motivated residents to take action for decades, and now the new Oregon State University Extension Fire Program seeks to support this grassroots momentum. Established through the Oregon legislature under the OSU College of Forestry, the Fire Program is represented by six regional fire specialists located throughout Oregon. Last October, I assumed this position in southwestern Oregon, and I look forward to working with individuals and communities throughout the area on a range of topics relating to wildfire and prescribed fire.

My background is in fire ecology and collaborative landscape planning. During my PhD at the University of California, Davis, I worked with several tribal nations in California to support initiatives for revitalizing traditional burning practices. Tribes have been working for decades to reform fire management, and I believe that learning from them about what a culture of living well with fire can look like is important for solving the current wildfire crisis. I also spent time burning with Prescribed Burn Associations in California.

These cooperatives of neighbors-helping-neighbors are making it possible for private landowners to access this critical tool for keeping our landscapes and communities healthy. In their own way, they also show us how we can re-imagine our relationship with fire, turning it into an ally instead of an enemy. I hope residents of the Applegate and Rogue valleys can soon get a taste of the transformative power of putting fire into the skillful hands of tribes, ranchers, and trained rural residents.

The Applegate Valley is fertile ground for this sort of work, thanks to decades of mobilization around the issue of fire. Today, groups like the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council and the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative are engaged with agencies to spur cross-boundary forest restoration projects. With support from the Oregon Department of Forestry, community members have come together under the Firewise banner to reduce fuels in their neighborhoods and along important ingress/egress routes. Others have sought training in prescribed fire and are building partnerships to increase its use locally.

As your local Extension fire specialist, I am privileged to offer my support to such projects. The Fire Program works on all aspects of fire, from preparedness and planning, to prescribed fire and fuels reduction, to recovery and adaptation. We use classic Extension tools such as education and outreach and can also support funding acquisition, legislative



OSU Extension fire specialist Chris Adlam looks forward to partnering with the Applegate community on fire-related issues.

Photo: Kiliiii Yuyan.

change, agency contacts, and community organization. I am particularly interested in hearing from people who are curious

about the use of prescribed fire and from existing or new collaborative efforts that bring together residents, community groups, and agencies. If you have a fire-related question I can't answer, I will direct you to someone among our many partners who can!

You can learn more about the Fire Program online at extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program. To get in touch, you can email me at chris.adlam@oregonstate.edu or call 971-318-0350. I will be moving to the Little Applegate Valley soon with my family, so to my future neighbors: I look forward to meeting you!

Chris Adlam, PhD
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The OSU Fire Program seeks to partner with local communities to support the use of prescribed burning. Photo: Chris Adlam.





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THE SISKIYOU MOUNTAIN ADVOCATE

Protections needed for watershed wildlands

BY LUKE RUEDIGER

For those of us who care for our environment, love the land, and work for wildlife, water, or wildlands, the last four years have been dark and uncertain times. From the national monuments stripped of protection and regulations gutted for the benefit of industry to the xenophobic, environmentally destructive border wall, widespread anti-science policy and climate denial, we have had little to nothing to applaud about the Trump Administration and its frenzy of shortsighted, profit-driven resource extraction.

Now with a new administration calling the shots, and in a flurry of executive orders, the Biden administration has begun dismantling the destructive legacy of Trump-era anti-environment policies. These executive orders have set forth a new policy agenda focused on environmental justice, climate change, and land and water protection. They commit federal land managers and regulatory agencies to science-based management, climate-smart policy, and the protection of 30 percent of the American land base by 2030.

The lofty goals and words of these executive orders sound hopeful, but will only become meaningful when they are fully enacted and backed up with permanent wildland protections, long-needed endangered-species protections, and transformative changes to our economy, our food-production system, our transportation system, and our way of life. These changes will require innovative thinking and consistent political pressure. No matter how lofty and progressive their words might be, our elected officials must be encouraged by citizens like you and me to turn those words into meaningful action.



A view from the Siskiyou Crest across the vast, carbon-rich, old-growth forests at the headwaters of the Applegate River. Photo: Luke Ruediger.

All too often people view the climate and extinction crisis as something affecting far-off lands, with solutions in the carbon-rich forests of the Amazon in South America and the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. However, both the impacts and the solutions can also be found right here in the Applegate. We have seen the impact of highly variable and erratic weather patterns, warming temperatures, reduced snow loads, extended droughts, and low stream-flows. What we don't often appreciate is how the public lands of the Applegate watershed can also be part of the solution.

World-class diversity

The Siskiyou Mountains are known for their world-class biodiversity, incredible

habitat connectivity, towering ancient forests, and wild, clear-flowing streams. Protecting these mountains is an important part of fighting climate change on the local level, but with global implications. The forests of the Siskiyou Mountains, and in particular the ancient, fire-adapted, old-growth forests, sequester significant amounts of carbon. In fact, recent research shows that forests and other vegetation can absorb up to 40 percent of the emissions generated in the lower 48 states. Ironically, the timber industry is instead the largest single source of emissions in Oregon, but if managed properly for carbon sequestration and biodiversity, rather than industrial timber production, our forests could be a significant part of the climate solution.

Protecting the Siskiyou Crest and the surrounding wildlands in the Applegate watershed as part of Biden's initiative to protect 30 percent of America's ecosystem by 2030 would not just protect these carbon-rich forests. It would also protect some of the most botanically diverse wildland habitats in the West. The Siskiyou Crest contains widely varying plant communities, endemic plant species found nowhere else in the world, and strongholds for endangered wildlife like the Northern Spotted Owl and Pacific Fisher.

A broad, protected area straddling the Siskiyou Crest, expanding the Red Buttes Wilderness Area, designating new wilderness areas, and encompassing the many wildlands of the Applegate would protect the region's important biodiversity, maintain connectivity in a changing climate, facilitate species dispersal, promote carbon storage in old-forest habitats, and protect important regional climate refugia.

Local Applegate residents are also strongly supportive of new Wild and Scenic River designation proposals on tributaries of the Applegate River and hope to see these included in exciting new legislation soon to be proposed by Senators Wyden and Merkley, expanding Oregon's Wild and Scenic River system.

Alter our lives and economy

If we are to weather the coming storms, high dry winds, atmospheric rivers, and extended droughts of climate change, while maintaining the planet's spectacular biodiversity and sustaining a livable future, we must alter many aspects of our daily lives and economy. We must also preserve what remains of our wild, old forests and woodlands, our rivers and high mountain peaks. Finally, we must build movements that ensure the lofty words of the Biden Administration translate into real action on climate change and biodiversity.

Luke Ruediger • siskiyoucrest@gmail.com

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Essay

Before it's gone

BY GAY BRADSHAW

A few years back, I received a call from a biologist living overseas. He had traveled for many years in nature reserves and wilderness areas around the world. After reading my books on psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in wildlife, he wanted to share some of his own experiences. His accounts were a cavalcade of fascinating detail and soaring drama, knowledge of which is only acquired by those willing to witness animals up close and personal with patience and keen eyes. Of all of the stories, there was one in particular that has lingered, and, I venture to say, haunted my memories.

The biologist described one day when, deep in the Amazon interior, he sat veiled in a thick hide of green fronds near a small stream. It was just after dawn. The air was pungent with flowers, bird calls, and humming insects. Every inch of the tree canopy and ground pulsed with life. All manner of wildlife was going about its business—eating, drinking, talking, grooming, and socializing. The forest was a mosaic of tapirs, sloths, ants, tree frogs, and vivid green and red parrots flashing by. But despite the vibrant activity, quiet serenity prevailed. Everyone and

everything fitted seamlessly, even the jaguar who disinterestedly co-existed with her erstwhile prey. For all intents and purposes, the scene was a tropical recreation of Claude Monet's "Luncheon on the Grass."

Suddenly, the pastoral cadence broke with a crash of branches and swishing boughs. The biologist was startled by the noise. Tense, apprehensive of who or what menace might be approaching, he remained motionless, waiting. Then, he saw...a cow. The shattering noise was a cow pushing her way through the brush to drink at the water's edge.

To his surprise, the man found that the wildlife were unperturbed. The cow's ungainly entrance had not caused any detectable commotion aside from his own pounding heart. Everyone had continued browsing, grooming, and doing whatever they had been doing. He concluded his narrative with this: "I realized that if it had been I, not the cow, who had walked up, all the animals would have run away in fear. At that moment, I felt lonelier than ever before in my entire life."

The biologist and I remain in touch, sending emails every so often about one event or another. His experience

revealed something beyond words: an unuttered mutuality drawn from the pain of being human. It is perhaps this recognition, and pain, that fuels the deep love for animals that so many humans naturally feel.

People often credit unconditional love as the reason humans are drawn to other animals. Such love is believed to be free of contract and condition. No matter our mood, station in life, slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and bad hair days, when a cat turns her head with a smile and a dog runs and jumps with unabashed glee upon the glimpse of our return, we feel endless love. We are accepted with no holds barred.

This does not mean that cows and horses do not buckle to their knees from the fury meted out by humans. Nor are cats and dogs immune to human callousness. Neuroscience shows that all animals—including the steelhead, bears, cougars, deer, ground squirrels, coyotes and the wild turkeys who grace our beautiful valley—are vulnerable to emotional wounding and trauma just as any human is. As we are painfully learning with climate change and extinctions, Nature has limits.

The past drought and wildfire threat have taxed us all, including wildlife of all species. The lack of water, browse, and other food which supported our wild neighbors historically has dwindled, the scarcity doubly severe because of increased human habitation and land use.

So when a deer eats your flowers, a ground squirrel digs an inconvenient burrow, a bear eats your apples, or a cougar roams nearby, open your hearts. Let us learn to live around wildlife rather than the other way around. Usher in a new ethic for our neighbors in nature, one of open appreciation, tolerance, sharing, and caring. Share all that you can to help them through this difficult time.

This land is their land, the skies and waters their heritage. By respecting the wild's right to peace and dignity, we recover our own. As poet Joni Mitchell put it, let us not wait to know what we have until it's gone.

G.A. Bradshaw

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for Nonviolence

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Essays are limited to one per issue and 500 words. Submit your essay and high-resolution photo to gater@applegater.org.

Donate your hair and share the love

BY MAGGIE SHREVE

Are your tresses overgrown, gray, or shaggy due to last year's salon closures? Perhaps your locks are long and glossy due to statements of non-conformity? Are you thinking of a short, sassy, wash-and-go change? Before you head to the salon or grab those shears, have you ever thought about donating your hair for a great cause?

As a student of sustainable living, I always look for ways to re-use or re-purpose. So, naturally, this included my hair when I was ready to cut it. My hair had grown for eight years and was now down to my waist. I began to wonder if "Locks of Love" was real and if donated human hair was really used to create wigs for children. This is the long and short of how I donated my hair and how you can too.

The first thing I did was Google "Locks of Love." I was delighted to find that they really do accept hair for making wigs for kids. I also discovered a website called Cancer.Net. There are dozens of sites guiding potential hair donors, but this site summed up the process in "5 Simple Steps to Donate Your Hair."

The first step is to choose where you want to send your hair. This will require research, as there are several national and local organizations. I suggest watching "Where Is the Best Place To Donate Hair? A Comparison of Charities" by Farm Dad on YouTube. After watching this and other

YouTube videos, I chose to send my hair to a charity called Kids with Hair Loss. Once you choose your charity, you need to review its specific requirements and make sure you are a match. For example, most organizations require cut hair to be eight to twelve inches long. Some will not accept chemically treated or gray hair, as this hair tends to be too weak to withstand the wig making process. Next, you need to clean and dry your hair. This is important as hair that is transported damp may become moldy.

Now comes the final commitment. Decide if you will cut your own hair or go to a salon. I went to Wicked Sharp in Ruch, where Sandy Reynolds did the honors. Before you cut your hair, you must bind it securely. As you can see from my picture, I used several elastics down the length of both sections of hair. If your hair arrives as a loose mass, it will be immediately discarded! Finally, you must package your secured hair for shipment. I wrapped mine in tissue paper then in a zip-top baggie. I put the baggie in a large manila envelop that I had already weighed (including hair, tissue, envelop), stamped, and addressed. I also included a small donation towards the \$1,800 wig processing fee.

Voila. I have to say that the process of donating my hair was exciting. It was a family effort. My husband helped with my



Before: A bathroom selfie shows the long locks prior to cutting.
Photo: Maggie Shreve.



After: All done, all smiles.
Photo: Maggie Shreve.

research, and Mom was involved with the cutting. As much as I might have thought myself Lady Godiva with my long blond hair, I love, love, love having short hair now. Mostly, I imagine a child realizing his or her dream of having a wig made for

them—using my hair! As you can see, it is easy and immensely rewarding. So, please consider donating your hair to a charity or suggest it to a friend and spread the love.

Maggie Shreve
Maggieth39@gmail.com



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Water rights and preparing for irrigation season

BY SCOTT PROSE



Applegate Lake in December 2020. Photo: Ben Thorpe.

The Applegate Valley is fortunate to have an incredible water source in the river and its tributaries.

As a resident of the Applegate and an employee of the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), I spend a significant amount of time in our area helping landowners with water use concerns. Working with people in the valley is enjoyable and a privilege. However, I often find that folks have misunderstandings about water law and how it might affect them. Water law can be complicated, so I would like to cover some basics that are helpful to know and provide useful contact information.

What are water rights?

Water rights authorize people to use water for nonexempt purposes. There are exempt uses of groundwater for domestic and residential use, but irrigation or another use that exceeds those exemptions requires a water right.

For example, the irrigation of a commercial crop requires a water right or other legal water source. Water rights usually come in two types: surface water or groundwater. Water rights are issued for a particular source, place of use, type of use, and quantity, and generally have a time frame for which part of the year they apply.

While most surface water bodies are fully allocated—meaning there may be no water available for new water rights—the Applegate main stem and Rogue River benefit from water still available in Applegate Lake and Lost Creek Lake. You can apply for water rights through these facilities—often called “contract water” (see note)—at OWRD and the Bureau of Reclamation. (Note: Many water users close to the Applegate River have water rights under contract with the United States Bureau of Reclamation. This is a good time of year to verify that your contracts are current. If you have questions about contracts, please contact your local watermaster.)

Do I need a water right to water my lawn, garden, or personal orchard from my well?

If your lawn, garden, or orchard are—in total—not more than half an acre and you are not growing a crop for sale, your use of groundwater is considered “domestic use” and is allowed without a water right under ORS 537.545. However, you may not use *surface* water to irrigate your lawn or garden without the appropriate water right or authorization to do so.

How do I know if I have water rights?

OWRD’s water right mapping tool on our website lets you search for your property and will show many water rights, but it is best to request a water right research from OWRD staff to clarify water right information for your property.

As many new farmers are moving to the area, it’s crucial that anyone desiring to have a commercial farm do due diligence and look into the water situation. Unfortunately, some folks invest a large sum of money in property and irrigation infrastructure, only to receive a visit from the Watermaster informing them they don’t have the necessary authorization to use their well or creek.

What does “grandfathered water rights” mean?

As much as people use the term “grandfathered water rights,” it has no legal meaning in Oregon Water Law and has so many colloquial definitions that the term is not useful.

Water rights generally have priority dates associated with them. Older dates are referred to as “senior” water rights on a system. This creates an order in which “junior” water rights can be regulated off in favor of “senior” water rights during times of scarcity. This process is referred to as a “call for water.” If you have water rights and live in Williams, you’ve experienced this nearly every season over the past decade.

What do I do if I believe someone is appropriating water illegally?

Please contact the OWRD SW Region Office and share your concern. If applicable and resources permit it, an investigation will occur. You will likely talk to Christi, our office manager in Medford. She works incredibly hard and is deserving of your politeness. Please be patient, as our District 14 and District 13 watermasters receive a high volume of calls. You can reach the SW Region Office at 541-774-6880.

Shavon Haynes is the Watermaster for District 13, which covers Jackson County. He can be reached at Shavon.L.Haynes@oregon.gov or 541-218-5125.

Scott Ceciliani is in District 14, covering Josephine and Curry counties, and he can be reached at Scott.C.Ceciliani@oregon.gov or 541-476-1288.

Scott Prose
Southwest Region
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OPINION

What can we do about housing?

BY ANYA PARADISO

We had a housing crunch in Jackson County before the fires last fall. It is even worse since we lost 2,500 homes in the Almeda fire alone. We have such a severe housing shortage in the Applegate that people are living in vehicles, sheds, and even tents this winter, some on private property, some hidden away in state and federal forests.

If I lived in the city of Medford or other local cities and owned just a city lot, it would be legal for me to build a guest house or accessory dwelling unit (ADU) as long as I could meet the setbacks. For those of us who live in the country, Jackson County forbids us to put any kind of second living unit on our property no matter how many hundred acres we might own.

How did this happen?

In the 1960s and ’70s, when the economy was not wonderful, people with acreage began subdividing and selling off pieces of their property. Our legislature saw that and worried we would soon go the way of California, where whole counties full of orchards, ranches, and farms had been turned into subdivisions. Some of you might remember those ubiquitous bumper stickers that proclaimed: “Don’t Californicate Oregon.”

The legislature decided it needed more stringent land use laws and passed Senate Bill 100 in 1973, specifying that every county had to formulate a rural zoning plan in compliance with the state plan, which forbade selling off parts of rural acreage.

None of us want to see rural Applegate land turned into subdivisions, but the laws

passed in the ’70s and ’80s didn’t anticipate modern needs. In public meetings, Jackson County discovered that most rural landowners were furious that the right to do what they wanted on their own land was being taken away.

Peter Sage, one of the Jackson County Commissioners working at the time to comply with the new state laws, said they had a hard time working out what they thought was a fair compromise. Lowering farmland taxes and declaring needs of working farmers took precedence over rural residents.

It’s unfair to allow Oregon residents living in cities to build guest houses and ADUs on small city lots but not allow those with more land in rural areas to do the same thing. Allowing one ADU under 1,000 square feet would give owners a space for family (parents or children), medical caregivers, hired hands, or supplemental rental income.

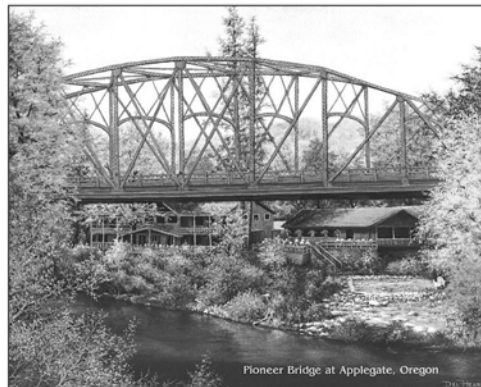
State Senator Jeff Golden says there have been several attempts in recent years to get the state to allow rural ADUs, but none have passed. With our desperate need for housing, now might be the time for an organized fight to get back this right.

It is time for a concerted effort to lobby the state and county governments to allow this change. Any Applegaters who are interested should contact me, and I will facilitate putting everyone together to work towards this goal.

anya paradiso

anyap@integra.net

Editor’s note: At author’s request, her name appears uncapitalized.



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For more information, contact:

Jackson County

Ron Turpen @ 541-601-1867 or ron.turpen@gmail.com

Josephine County

Max Unger @ 541-373-1445 or imaxunger@gmail.com

Next deadline: May 1

OPINION

Time for a change in fire district leadership

BY GARY DESIMONE

I have been serving the Applegate Valley Fire District for more than nine years: five years as a volunteer firefighter, more than seven years as chairman of the safety committee, and, since 2019, as an elected board director. I serve on the board with four other elected directors.

Here are some facts you might not have known:

- An anonymous survey given to staff and volunteers in late 2019 shows that 23 percent of the staff and volunteers rate morale at the district as “poor,” and 50 percent rate morale as “poor or average.” This survey, conducted by Emergency Services Consulting International as part of a study commissioned by the fire district, also found that 46 percent of staff and volunteers thought that overall employee morale was lower than the year before.

- During the April 15, 2020, board meeting, I was the only board director to advocate for meeting with staff and volunteers to obtain objective data for Chief Michael McLaughlin’s annual performance evaluation and contract negotiations. The other four board directors voted for using input solely from the chief himself for determining how well he manages staff.

- Our policy states that the standards, criteria, and policy directives to be used in evaluating the chief must first be adopted by the board in meetings open to the public in which there is an opportunity for public comment.

- Last year I filed a complaint with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) against the district board regarding the way the board handled the disposition of an alleged claim of a hostile work environment against Chief McLaughlin during an executive session (see note). After an investigation, the commission found that the board did violate the executive session provisions of

Oregon Public Meetings law. (Note: I have not and am not making any statements and/or judgments about the alleged claims. The findings from the OGEC were about Oregon Public Meeting laws regarding executive session in the handling of the alleged claims and not about the alleged claims by the employee.)

- As per district policy, any resident may request that matters be placed on the board’s agenda up to two days prior to the board meeting. The Fire Board shall provide in the agenda of its regular meeting a specific time to hear the comments, concerns, and suggestions from its citizens or from visitors with interests in the district.

- A week before the January 20, 2021, board meeting, I asked Board President Michael Parker to put on the agenda the following item: Motion to seek legal advice from neutral third party to investigate cause of executive session meeting violations in 2020 (Oregon Government Ethics Commission Findings). He did not put it on the agenda, even though several changes and additions to the agenda were made up to two days before our board meeting.

My goal as director is to serve the taxpayers and constituents of the district with courage, honor, integrity, and transparency. I feel there is a need for a change in district leadership. This spring there are two board director positions open for election. If you want to find out more about what is happening in the district from one board member’s perspective, please attend our monthly board meetings or email me at gdesimone@applegatefd.com.

You can also visit the district’s website, applegatefd.com/board.html, to read board meeting minutes, see agendas for upcoming meetings, and get the information you need to “virtually attend” any upcoming board meetings.

Gary DeSimone • garyd24@yahoo.com

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Opinion pieces. Limited to 500 words; no images. Opinion pieces submitted by the same person will not be run consecutively. Responses to previously published opinion pieces will not be published. Must include publishable contact information (phone number and/or email address).

Letters. Limited to 200 words; must be signed, with a full street address or PO Box and phone number. Only the writer’s name and hometown will be published.

Anonymous letters and opinion pieces, reprinted articles, press releases, and political campaign articles will not be published. Individual letters and opinion pieces may or may not be published. All submissions will be edited for grammar and length.

Email opinion pieces and letters to gater@applegater.org or mail to *Applegater*, Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Thanks to you, we've met our (News) Match!

BY BERT ETLING

Wow!

The last year has been a heck of a ride for all of us. But thanks to all of you in the *Applegater* family, we ended it on a high note.

As in most of the rest of the world, the ground seemingly dropped out beneath our feet last March with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and closure of the world as we knew it. Our habitual ways of doing things necessarily fell away.

The *Applegater* was in danger of falling away, too. Your community newspaper has traditionally been supported by something of a three-legged stool of advertising, donations, and fundraisers.

With the fundraising leg kicked away due to the danger of holding large in-person gatherings, we were in danger of falling over. Treasurer’s reports were laden with ominous wording, like “enough funds for one or two editions” and “saving something for winding down operations.”

But then you, our readers, our contributors, our neighbors, responded to keep the Gater upright—first with a burst of donations in the summer, then, spurred by the promise of doubling your donations after the Gater qualified for the NewsMatch fundraising campaign, a veritable tsunami of contributions in November and, mostly, December.

Our treasurer now offers up more encouraging phrases, like “astonishing success” and “the highest balance in years.” We not only met but exceeded the \$12,500 match cap of the NewsMatch campaign, meaning that up to \$12,500 that you, our local donors, gave out of your pockets will be matched by national donors supporting nonprofit journalism!

We know that’s not about us—that’s about you, our *Applegater* family. With that wind under our wings, confident we have more runway ahead of us, more track before our train, we want to know how we can best serve you, our readers, donors, advertisers, neighbors, and contributors.

I’ve worked in community journalism for decades, for a variety of enterprises, from sole proprietorships to public corporations. I’ve always been somewhat torn at having to serve two masters: readers and owners. Their goals are not always the same.

That’s not the case here, at the *Applegater*, a nonprofit organization whose purpose is publication of a communications vehicle that, as we say in the “Fine Print” on page five of every edition, “reflects the heart and soul of our community.” That’s the sole goal of the *Applegater*.

After all you’ve given, I’m going to ask just a bit more. In coming weeks, as COVID-19 permits, your *Applegater* Board of Directors will have a retreat—a meeting where we take some time to reflect on our broader goals, instead of the day-to-day business of getting out a newspaper.

Here’s the ask: Let me know what you want the *Applegater* to be, to do. You’ve kept us going; now let us know where you want us to go. Email your suggestions to me at the address below, and I’ll share them with the board. Together, we can make the years ahead better than the year we just went through.

Thank you, again!

Bert Etling, Editor in Chief

Applegater Newsmagazine

541-631-1313

bert@applegater.org

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Love in the time of COVID

BY SANDY OLKEN

Regardless of political affiliation, the COVID pandemic has most likely had an influence on your readers in some, if not many, ways. We are all dealing with the challenges and changes as best we can, each in our own way.

If you are among the relatives, friends, or colleagues reading this who have lost someone during this last year, my most sincere condolences go out to you. The experience of missing a loved one is universal. It hurts, and the emptiness left by that absence knows no borders.

The economic repercussions have many of us spending less on nonessentials. Many, like myself, are discovering what it’s like to live more simply. Our former pleasures of going out to eat, dance, and gather in all the previous ways have mostly vanished.

What remains for me is more time and space for a deeper gratitude for where I live and a more acute knowledge of how lucky I am to be residing in a home replete with nature, including the forests that support our waters. Our forests, rivers, and mountains offer their sanctuary for our renewal.

This moment’s breath of something other than a mad dash to shop, consume, and fill up space actually leaves enough

space for us to feel, to find, and to cultivate within ourselves and our community new avenues for a life more aligned with love than hate, with help than harm, and with creation instead of destruction.

Meeting critical needs of the community, including the forests, waterways, flora, and fauna, could become our priority during this time of transition. Helping each other to fill the gaps left by a changing economy could become the new economy: an economy based on the protection of life, our elders, our children, our neighbors. Sustainability is not only a viable economy, but an imperative one. According to the *Harvard Business Review*, “Companies that value and integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into their strategic plans are best positioned for the future.”

Because of our gratitude and for the protection of our water, Williams Community Forest Project (WCFP) continues to work toward saving the Pipe Fork Creek area from clear-cutting. WCFP invites you to join us in using this time of new knowledge, of renewed perception, and of this new year to herald the coming of a more balanced existence on our planet.

Sandy Olken

Williams, OR

ASK THE GATER

Who does Fallen Heroes Memorial Highway honor?

BY LISA BALDWIN

This issue's "Ask the Gater" question was submitted by Paul Fattig.

Folks familiar with the stretch of Highway 238 that runs between Ruch and Jacksonville have certainly noticed the two signs designating it as a Fallen Hero Memorial Highway, honoring brothers James Herbert Rowden and John Wayne Rowden. Both were killed in action in Vietnam.

Marine Corps Private James Herbert Rowden was killed on March 5, 1966, in combat near Quang Ngai, Vietnam. He was 21 years old and four months away from finishing his tour of duty. James was the first Jackson County resident to die in the Vietnam War.

John Wayne Rowden, James' younger brother, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1967 as a way to honor his fallen brother. He told his parents he and James always had each other's back. Marine Corps Private John Wayne Rowden was killed February 10, 1968, on a mission in Thua Thien Province, Vietnam. John's death made the Rowdens the first double Gold Star Family in Oregon.

About two weeks after John was killed in action, younger brother Douglas Rowden received his draft notice. Parents Harvey and Grace Rowden, having already

lost two of their four sons to the war that continued to rage on in Southeast Asia, could not bear the thought of potentially losing a third.

"I feel we have donated enough to the Vietnam cause," Grace Rowden said at the time.

The Rowdens appealed to the Draft Board, and with help from Governor Tom McCall and Senator Wayne Morse, Douglas Rowden's draft notice was rescinded.

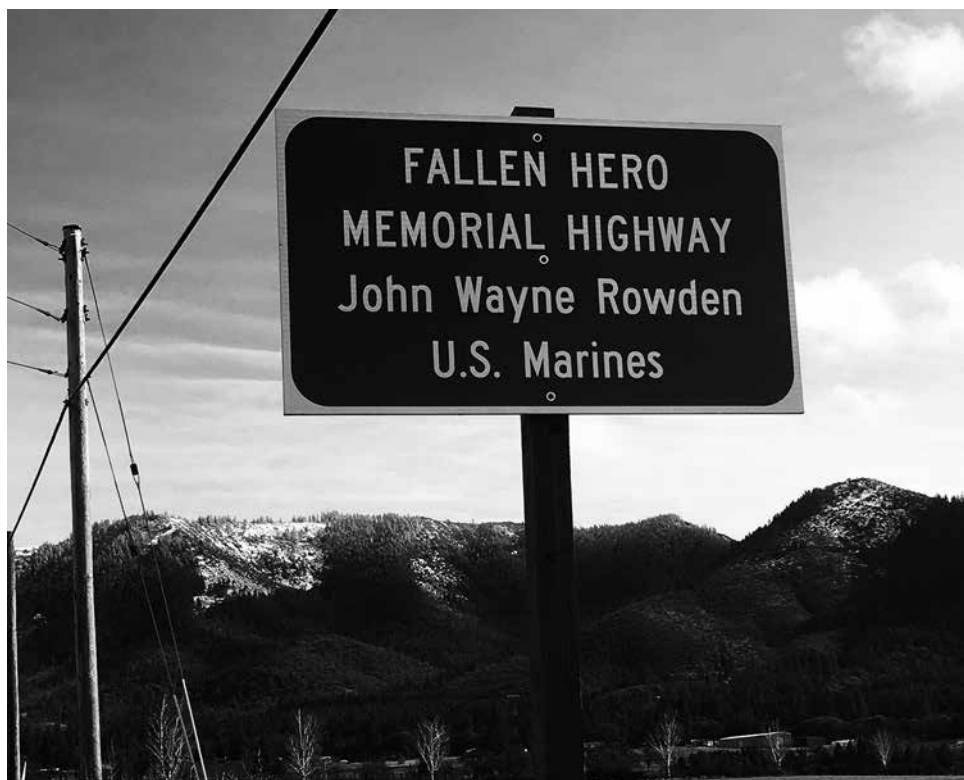
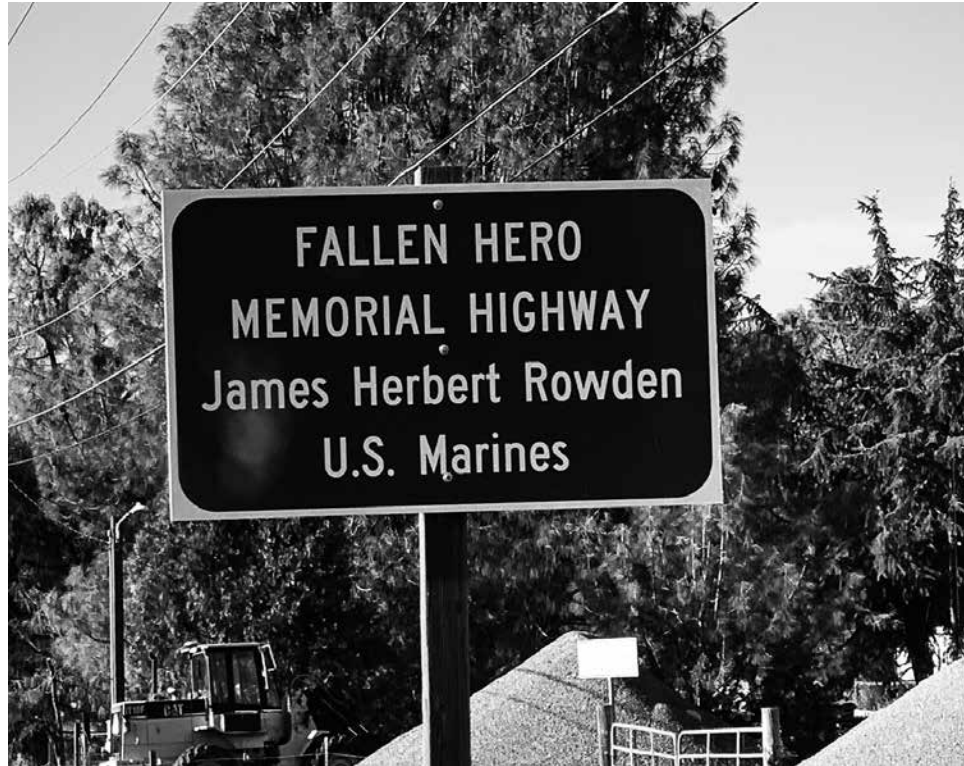
To commemorate James and John and the sacrifice made by the Rowden family, the Fallen Hero signs and Memorial Highway designations were approved by resolution in the Oregon State Legislature in 2017.

Since the Rowden family lived near McKee Bridge when their boys were very young, and later moved to Ruch, the two signs were placed on 238 near milepost 26, close to their childhood home. There is one sign on each side of the highway, one facing east and one facing west, so the brothers still have each other's back.

Lisa Baldwin

leb.97527@gmail.com

Have a question about the Applegate Valley? Ask the Gater! Send your query to gater@applegater.org.



Memorial signs mark a stretch of highway dedicated to two brothers from Ruch. Photos: Diana Coogle.

••• BIZBITS •••

The Feral Farm Plant Stand opened early in 2020 and offers certified organic vegetable and flower starts, largely from seeds grown on the farm and from local seed companies. Run on the honor system, it is open 24/7 from the beginning of February through the end of October. Customers pay by cash or check in the honor box. This year, owner Cacia Huff expanded the stand to include a seed rack featuring 75 varieties of organic vegetable and flower seeds grown by Feral Farm. All packets are \$3.



Early spring offerings will include artichokes, snap and snow peas, greens and salad fixings, and early flowers like poppies and calendula. Cacia is excited to be offering an expanded selection of tomatoes and peppers later in the season, and she has also installed a rainwater catchment system for watering the plants.

The farm consists of four leases along Thompson Creek Road owned by Cacia. It has been in operation since 2017. "I have a small handful of friends and neighbors that help me on a part-time basis," she says, "especially during the seed harvest season in fall, when I sometimes invite the community to come help with big projects like pumpkin and melon seeding."

The primary focus of the farm is growing certified organic, open pollinated seed for a dozen national and local seed companies—including Siskiyou and Restoration—and participating in a small heritage grains trial for Hardy Seeds. "This year we are growing over 90 seed crop varieties! We also grow ten varieties of organic heirloom seed garlic, which will be available through the farm stand in the fall and also online," Cacia said.

Feral Farm Plant Stand: 4441 Thompson Creek Road

Contact: feralfarm4@gmail.com

feralfarmseeds.com • seedwise.com/farmers/115/feral-farm

Instagram: page @feralfarm4

•••



Mountain View Landscaping & New Hope Nursery

is a local, family-operated business owned by Jedediah Jester and Christin Bryk, who purchased the Pennies Worth Acres nursery six years ago and recently changed the name. They enjoy finding the highest quality of plant material to share with southern Oregon and are open to contractors and the general public. The nursery has over four acres of Japanese maples, conifers, shade trees, and flowering trees, with a large selection

of shrubs, perennials, ground covers, and ornamental grasses. Jedediah and Christin also possess a Landscape Contractor's license. "Jedediah and I grew up in the area, are Hidden Valley High School graduates, and love being part of this community," Christin said. "We call the area where our nursery is located 'the heart of new hope' and feel so blessed to be living here. We look forward to helping transform your yard into an outdoor living space!"

New Hope Nursery: 7016 New Hope Road, Grants Pass

Winter Hours (Nov. 30 through Feb. 20): Monday - Friday, 8 am - 5 pm

Spring, Summer and Fall Hours: Monday - Saturday, 8 am - 5 pm

Contact: 541-474-0224 (office) • 541-761-1912 (cell)

info@heartofnewhope.com • heartofnewhope.com

•••

Pony Espresso

in Jacksonville is celebrating its 25th anniversary! It was founded in 1995 and was the first drive-through coffeehouse in southern Oregon. Known for its rustic "barn-like" design, with wide plank, reclaimed-wood floors and walls, antique furniture, and expansive deck seating, "The Pony" became a hub for the citizens of Jacksonville and the Rogue Valley alike. Current owners Christopher and Kadie Boivin brought their love of quality food, superb coffee, and fine wine from their home in the Napa Valley to the Rogue Valley in the '90s. They bought the Pony and opened in March of 1998. Drawing on their background in the Napa culinary and coffee roasting scene, they feel fortunate to operate one of the oldest continuously run cafes in the region, and one of the most innovative in the metamorphosis of the concept of a coffeehouse. Kadie says, "When we purchased Pony, I was 23 and Chris was 25 and we were very determined to succeed. We knew we had no other choice. We didn't have any friends or family in the area, so we just worked seven days a week for several months. Our customers definitely became our family." Chris and Kadie continually modify the menu by bringing some of the influences from their background in fine dining, incorporating it into their coffeehouse cuisine. The menu features breakfast and lunch entrées with Pony's popular gourmet sandwiches, baked goods, soups, and salads. "As always, all of our food is made in-house from scratch by our talented kitchen staff," says Chris. The Pony offers a wide array of espresso and coffee drinks, featuring Allann Bros coffee beans. Chris adds, "We are very proud to feature Allann Bros coffee. Allan Stuart, the owner and roastmaster, is really a national treasure and icon of roasting, and he started right here in southern Oregon in 1972. I wish more people were familiar with his background because it really is one of the more compelling Rogue Valley success stories."



Pony Espresso: 545 North 5th Street, Jacksonville

Hours: Monday - Friday, 6:30 am - 5 pm; Saturday - Sunday, 7 am - 5 pm

Contact: 541-899-3757 • ponyespresso.jville@gmail.com

ponyespresso.cafe.com

•••

Jeanette LeTourneux • jeanette@applegater.org

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.

Limpy Botanical Trail

BY EVELYN ROETHER

This is an easy, fun trail! Likely named for the Takelma Chief (Tye) Limpy, whose Athapascan-speaking people lived along the lower Applegate River, the Limpy Botanical Trail is comprised of two relatively easy loops. Both offer a glimpse into several contrasting habitats. Illustrated interpretive signs inform hikers about what they are seeing along the way. This is one of the best trails in the Siskiyou to see and learn about the world-renowned botanical diversity of this region. Over 250 plant species are found along the trail, including 43 types of shrubs and trees. The parade of flowers continues for months, with nearly every step a delight for the senses. In March and April, a plethora of purple flowering fawn lilies in the parking area greets you before you even start walking. In May, fields of blue camas and bushes of wild azaleas are among the more tantalizing flores du jour.

At the trailhead, a detailed three-paneled interpretive display, illustrated by local artist Paula Fong, introduces visitors to many flowering plants seen along the trail. Both the Upper and Lower Loop trails begin and end at this kiosk.

Summary

Difficulty: Lower Loop—Easy; Upper Loop—Moderately easy

Distance: Lower Loop—0.3 miles; Upper Loop—1.1 miles

Elevation gain: Lower Loop—minimal; Upper Loop—00 feet

Open: Year-round

Map: Onion Mountain USGS

Directions

From Murphy go west on Southside Road. Proceed for 4.2 miles, then turn left at the stop sign onto Fish Hatchery

Road. After 4.6 miles turn right at the 'T' intersection towards Redwood Highway. Take Redwood Highway east towards Grants Pass for 0.6 mile. Just before crossing the Applegate River turn left onto Riverbanks Road. Follow this road for 4.5 miles, and then turn left onto Limpy Creek Road. Proceed 2.4 miles on this paved road, the last 0.5 mile of which is single lane. Shortly before the road heads uphill there is a road sign: "Commercial Use Prohibited Without Permit." The entrance to the unmarked trailhead parking is just before this sign on the left. Once you pull in, you will see a gravel parking area, a restroom, and a picnic table.

Lower Loop

At the kiosk, go right following the trail through a forest of bay laurel, incense cedar, and ponderosa pine. In a short time, you'll see a wooden bridge leading to the first of several scenically placed benches, this one on the far side of Limpy Creek. The main trail continues on the left side of the creek. Just before the second bridge, at the junction, turn uphill and to the left. The Lower Loop trail passes through mixed Douglas fir forest before joining the Upper Loop trail again at mile 0.2. Go straight at the fork where the Upper Loop goes up and pass the "Forest Edge" interpretive sign. Cross the serpentine meadow, keeping an eye out for the multi-flowered stems of blue camas. At the far edge of the meadow, cross another wooden bridge and head down the hill for another few hundred yards back to the trailhead.

Upper Loop

The Lower and Upper loops are one and the same for the few hundred yards. After the first wooden bridge on the right,



At the trailhead, look for an interpretive display illustrated by local artist Paula Fong. And watch for several scenically placed benches along the trail. Map by Ann Gunter.

the main trail continues on the left side of the creek. Just before the second bridge, the Lower Loop goes up to the left. The longer Upper Loop trail continues across the bridge, under a canopy of yew and Port Orford cedar. From there the trail switchbacks upslope into the realm of Pacific dogwood, tan oak, and canyon live oak. A little further on, a tucked-away bench awaits you at the foot of a magnificent 20-foot waterfall.

After the trail meanders through an avenue of coffeeberry shrubs, it becomes a boardwalk through a serpentine meadow. Here, notice the Jeffrey pine, which looks much like ponderosa pine but is more tolerant of the heavy metal-laden serpentine soils. Continuing through more flower-strewn open meadows with views

of the neighborhood, the Upper Loop reconnects with the Lower Loop at mile 1.0. When you reach the seasonal creek, cross the footbridge and head downhill back to the trailhead.

Hiking Trails of the Lower Applegate, a trail guide describing 20 trails in the Lower Applegate area, is available at the Williams General Store and Takubeh Natural Market in Williams, Provolt Store and Whistling Duck Farm and Store in Provolt, Rebel Heart Books in Jacksonville, Oregon Books and Games in Grants Pass, and Northwest Nature Shop and Bloomsbury Books in Ashland. Trail guides can also be purchased directly from the author at lowerapplegatetrails@gmail.com.

Evelyn Roether • evelynkr@gmail.com

Internet survey a step toward better service

BY PRISCILLA WEAVER

Fellow Applegate residents: Are your children or grandchildren going to school online? Does your doctor suggest or even insist on "telemedicine" rather than office visits? Are you trying to work online from home? Do you take *Rogue Community College* classes remotely? If the answer is "yes" to any of these or similar situations, you know how challenging it can be when your internet connection drops, the faces and even the voices on your Zoom or Facetime calls are garbled, or the feedback delay makes it impossible to understand what the teacher or meeting leader is saying.

It is scant consolation to know you can reliably work online or download something only if you set the alarm for 3:00 am. If you have experienced a phone outage recently or are one of the countless families in our community with either no cell service or service only through a feeble internet connection, you know how frightening it is to realize you cannot reach help through 911.

That's the bad news. The good news is that in typical Applegate can-do fashion, a group of educators and other professionals, elected state legislators, and community members are working on solutions to mitigate these interlocking challenges.

And now for the sales pitch: This working group needs your help and here's why.

All of us have stories about bad or non-existent service. But the working

group needs actual data to illustrate the magnitude and urgency of the connectivity crisis to service providers, government personnel, and potential sources of financial assistance. We need to demonstrate how many children and families are being deprived of education, medical assistance, and the ability to summon help in emergencies in areas with unreliable or nonexistent internet and/or cell service.

To that end, the working group created a brief survey—only five questions—to obtain the core data we need to map the problem. If you have not already done so, please take a few minutes to fill out the survey online: forms.gle/6m7yVCrRa2YNfboH6. If you are unable to fill it out online or would prefer not to, hard copies are also available at the Ruch Library. Please note that although we need everyone's street address in order to map out the "dead zones," we are not asking for phone numbers and we will not share your email addresses.

You may return your completed survey by hitting "reply" in your email or by printing it out and dropping it off at Ruch Outdoor Community School or the Ruch Public Library. You also can phone in your survey answers or ask other questions by calling me (Priscilla Weaver) at 541-899-1672. Please respond as soon as possible. Please ask your neighbors and friends to fill out surveys as well.

Thanks for your help and your support in this important effort. The more complete we can make the map of our service areas, the more powerful the case we can make for obtaining fiber optic cable, cell towers, and whatever other robust and reliable transmission solutions may be out there for all areas of our community.

We do not know, of course, what the ultimate answers are, but the working group is committed to finding them for the good of everyone. Pandemic or no pandemic, online learning and telemedicine in some form are both here to stay, and we owe it to our children and to ourselves to be able to participate fully in whatever the new paradigm will be.

Priscilla Weaver
541-899-1672
priscilla@saltmarshranch.com

The survey that a working group is asking Applegate Valley residents to complete in hopes of finding ways to improve internet service.

Internet & Cell Service Accessibility

Please answer questions about service(s) at your home.

* Required

Email address *

Your email

Do you have consistent & reliable internet at your home?

Yes

No

Who is your internet provider

Your answer

Do you have consistent & reliable cell service at your home?

Yes

No

Who is your cell phone provider

Your answer

What is your physical home address?

Your answer

Three Rivers School District bond on May ballot

BY TOM CARSTENS

“Students should be safe, warm, and dry.” This is the stated goal of the Three Rivers School District facilities managers. With 15 schools and 4,500 students in a two-county district the size of Rhode Island, this is no small task.

To that end, the district has just paid off its last 20-year, \$24 million facilities bond, which was sold at a tax rate of \$0.74 per \$1,000 assessed property value. With that money and several smaller funding sources, the district built two new schools and continued improvements and repairs at the others. Since the district uses state funds for our schools generally to cover classroom costs and teacher salaries, facilities maintenance is up to the taxpayers. And it’s not cheap.

According to Three Rivers School District superintendent Dave Valenzuela, it’s again time for repairs. And they’re big ones—all related to keeping our students *safe, warm, and dry*. The school board has identified what they call “the Big Four” because every school requires extensive repairs in these four crucial areas. The repair bill is expected to come to around \$66.5 million.

No. 1: Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC). The systems range in age from 73 years to 17 years. They are barely able to keep up. Cost to repair: \$28.6 million. Just last year, one school suffered a boiler failure and had to suspend classes for several days.

No. 2: Water Systems. The water pipes and drainage systems are old and deteriorating. Cost to repair: \$2 million. As an example, Lincoln Savage’s sewer system has completely failed and must be replaced.

No. 3: Roofing. *All* building roofs must be replaced. Many are over 30 years old, and some are leaking badly. Repairs are no longer cost-effective. Cost to replace: \$29.2 million.

No. 4: Pavement. Parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, walk areas, and play areas are crumbling, creating hazards for the kids. Cost to repair: \$6.7 million.

But there’s more. After an exhaustive, wrenching process, each of the 15 schools has identified its own top three priorities outside of the Big Four. These cover various items like ceiling tiles, security fencing, outdoor lighting, fire alarms, door locks, flooring, wood rot, exterior paint, and outdoor classrooms. These basic repairs come to an additional \$18 million.

The grand total? It’s \$85 million.

Valenzuela says there’s no padding here. In fact, the list has been pruned quite a bit. The district’s own Master Facilities Plan has identified a whopping \$152 million in needed repairs and construction. The \$85 million addresses only the most crucial half of that figure.

As of mid-February, it looks like the school board has decided to put forth an \$85 million, 20-year bond levy on

the May ballot. This would tally out to a property tax rate of \$0.93 per \$1,000 of assessed value, or 23 cents more than the last district levy. For the median price of a home in Josephine County, \$220,000, this comes to an annual bond bill of \$211. This represents an average annual increase of about \$100. This comes to about \$8.30 per month, or less than two grande-size vanilla lattes at Starbucks.

Indications are that the annual bill to taxpayers will compare favorably with other local tax rates. This bond issue will cost a typical property owner:

- about half of what Applegaters pay for Applegate Valley Fire District services.
- about twice what Jackson County residents pay for library services.
- about two-thirds of the tax bill contemplated for the proposed Josephine County Fire District.

- quite a bit less than what is being charged in other local school districts.

So the proposed bond issue generally compares favorably with some of the other tax rates around us, but the question voters will have to decide is “Is it worth keeping our kids *safe, warm, and dry*?”

As Valenzuela puts it, “Facilities upgrades are needed now.” And he doesn’t want to divert state funds away from the classrooms to make that happen.

Ballots will be mailed May 18.

Tom Carstens

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For technical help in preparing this article, the author would like to thank Lisa Cross, accounting manager, Three Rivers School District; and John Petach, finance controller, Medford School District. Any errors belong to the author.

An introduction to bond — school bond

Bond rates are a bit difficult to understand. Their value is expressed as a ratio of the dollar assessment to the taxpayer per thousand dollars of the *assessed* value of the owned property. The rate as expressed at the sale of the bond will generally decrease over the life of the bond, largely because (a) the assessed value of most property will inflate over this period, and (b) new construction sales during this period add to the pool of contributing taxpayers. Neither of these factors, however, has much effect on a taxpayer’s annual bill, which usually stays fairly constant until the bond is paid off.

So when you read, for example, of a bond *rate* shrinking over 20 years from 74 cents to 47 cents, as happened with the last bond issued by the Three Rivers School District, you should remember that your total annual tax bill did not appreciably change.

—Tom Carstens

Home school promises to teach children well

BY AMBER BISHOP

Did you hear? The world is changing, and so is education.

This past fall a new school opened its doors in the Applegate Community—virtual doors, that is. This unique school might better be considered a bridge between homeschoolers and educational resources—a school that genuinely supports each student on his or her individual path of learning. Many of the families involved are excited, too, about partnering with this school to build a campus for uniquely Applegate-designed and implemented learning programs for our children *and high school students*.

In the words of Director Bill Watkins: “TEACH-NW stands for Transforming Educational Access in Communities and Homes. TNW operates on the mission to meet the diverse educational needs of learners through its application of the 3W principles: Wherever, Whenever, Whatever: Wherever the student is located (home, school, or mobile); Whenever the student needs access to content (any time of the day); and Whatever the content needs may be with diverse course offerings

regardless of the student’s geographic location in Oregon.”

In TNW, families are free to design their children’s own education from scratch or to follow whichever curriculum most appeals to them from Waldorf to Montessori, Classical Education to Sudbury School and many more. Each family works with an Educational Facilitator (EF) to develop an Individual Learning Plan, a “living” document stating the topics each student will be learning over the course of a year and the plan for learning them. Families are encouraged to update it frequently. The EF helps families express their work in terms the state accepts. Families are in weekly contact with the EF and submit quarterly reports with photos demonstrating students’ growth and subject matter proficiency or the results of standardized testing, whichever the family prefers.

Families are also allotted \$2,000 per year per student for education-related expenses. This money can cover a variety of things: books, art supplies, online classes, a microscope, entrance fees to

ScienceWorks or OMSI, tutoring, a school laptop or tablet, martial arts classes, gymnastics, etc. Given the sacrifices taxpaying families make in order to homeschool, this allotment can be a real game changer for many.

Studies show greater happiness and long-term success among homeschooled children. This makes sense, since most people learn best when following their own interests and learning in a hands-on, relevant way. Some homeschoolers learn basic math skills through a passion for baking, building, or starting their own small businesses. Others learn science through participating in farm life such as gardening and animal care, while many polish their reading and writing skills as an essential means in pursuing their various personal goals or sharing their adventures with others through letters or a blog.

My family loves listening to audiobooks of stories set during a given time period while completing tasks such as folding laundry, picking through elderberries, or pulling weeds. Many subjects are offered through online classes, as well. There are certainly as many ways to homeschool as there are homeschoolers.

While not for everybody, homeschooling works wonderfully for many families. Children gain practical skills and deeper understanding of systems integration, cause and effect, and teamwork. Most homeschoolers receive broad socialization

as they are often learning in real-world settings with interaction among diverse age groups. Often, homeschooling parents even report great satisfaction with the arrangement, citing improved family relationships and more confidence in their children’s wellbeing.

TEACH-NW is a wonderful source of support and accountability for local families interested in homeschooling. Technological advances make these services easily accessible, an element especially important for rural communities.

We have gained additional options for our children *and* are actively working toward the goal of building a centrally located Applegate campus that will include high school. The TNW is fulfilling its mission of facilitating innovative, hybrid approaches to education with limitless potential for hands-on, real-world learning.

If you would like further information about TEACH-NW, its history, and/or homeschooling, please take the time to look at the following resources:

- marcola.k12.or.us/teach-nw is the main TNW website, which includes links to the waiting list and vendor/employment applications.

- nheri.org is the website of The National Home Education Research Institute.

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NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

Ruch School mural finalized

BY JENNIFER PAYNE



Local artist Gregg Payne has created a 110-foot mural at Ruch Outdoor Community School. Photo: Gregg Payne.

Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS) has a new look. Four front classrooms now feature stylized graphics of native animals, birds, and wildflowers of the Applegate Valley. Local artist Gregg Payne and school principal, Julie Barry, have transformed the front walkway into a 110-foot river scene.

Gregg's mural tells a story of the Applegate River Watershed. It begins in the high country where the Applegate River's headwaters are located, and it

ends where the Applegate River meets the Rogue River. Geese, beaver, frogs, butterflies, woodpeckers, milkweed, large pines, and the school mascot, a leaping cougar, are painted along the front wall of the school.

Gregg designed the mural not only to beautify the school, but also to make an outdoor education backdrop for teachers and outdoor education partners to use when teaching students about their watershed (the area of land that drains to

the local river). Already, Ms. Major's fourth graders have been inspired to create their own nature art as a way to thank Gregg for his work. This was the best thank-you the artist could receive! He was so impressed by the students' talent, effort, and awareness.

Julie is a great supporter of the arts. Her campus feels like a walk through an outdoor art gallery with different artists' styles on display, but all with the common theme of nature and the outdoors. Julie

feels that giving artists the space to be creative benefits students and faculty as it creates an inspiring learning environment. ROCS students feel valued, and educators can utilize the aesthetics in their teaching.

Julie says, "I am always conscious of offering our students, staff, and community a beautiful, inspiring place to learn, work, and gather. These elements are evident in the landscape, the outdoor classrooms, and most recently in our amazing mural that engages our students and supports the outdoor education and environmental stewardship that is our mission at Ruch Outdoor Community School. We all love Gregg's vision and his participation to bring the wonder and appreciation of visual arts to the campus of ROCS."

Gregg says of Julie, "Julie had the original idea to portray the Applegate River along the front walkway, and we shared the enthusiasm for celebrating the valley's natural beauty. She was a joy to work with. She was very open to allowing me creative freedom and artistic license. I came to know her as a genuine champion for her students and the community."

More critters and plants will appear over time, as Gregg loves to surprise ROCS students and staff with new characters in the Applegate River story mural. Last year was very challenging for all students and



Fourth graders have been inspired to create their own nature art, including this work by Sarah Dehaas. Photo: Gregg Payne.

educators. Gregg's idea to beautify the face of the school has helped to lift spirits and kindle hope for the future. We all look forward to the day when kids are swarming through the school and playground again.

Gregg is a public artist and graphic designer who lives in Ruch. He has designed logos for local nonprofits, the Applegate Partnership, the Beaver Coalition, and the Applegate Valley logo for A Greater Applegate. He designed the Applegate River Watershed map and many of the new signs for Cantrall Buckley Park. Gregg also creates large, interactive sound art for public spaces. He was part of the design team for the Tower of Voices, Flight 93 project, and he is currently working on two large musical pieces for the City of Tucson in Arizona.

Jennifer Payne
jenniferlpayne@me.com

AmeriCorps member helps out at Ruch School

BY HANNAH BORGERSON

Hello everyone. My name is Hannah Borgerson, and I am serving as the AmeriCorps Rural Schools Coordinator for Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS). I am a southern Oregon local—born and raised in Ashland! I am currently teaching outdoor education and environmental science classes at Ruch and hope to continue this work as the year progresses.



Hannah Borgerson.
Photo: Brandee Tolner.

I developed my love for nature while frolicking among the nearby woods and parks of southern Oregon. For college, I moved north to attend the University of Puget Sound in Washington, where I studied Sociology and Education Studies. While there, my love for the outdoors grew. By my second year in college, I was a leader of my university's outdoor club and eventually helped coordinate the outdoor portion of my school's orientation program. After college, I moved all around the US, working at various summer camps and outdoor education sites until I made my way back home to southern Oregon last spring.

I believe that the more time students spend outside, interacting with and learning about their local environment, the happier and healthier people they become. ROCS has placed a strong emphasis on outdoor learning for their students, and the results are powerful. Even during this year, when schools closed down and most students Zoomed classes at home, Ruch has been able to keep its passion for being an outdoor-focused school alive. Students who were on campus for limited in-person instruction this fall and winter engaged with outdoor education classes in the school's garden and took classes on

biodiversity, habitat health, and water quality.

As one of the main instructors for these outdoor education courses, I could see how much the kids thrived while learning outdoors. I think many of us are feeling the effects of "Zoom fatigue" and long for connection with others and the natural world. Ruch has been dedicated to offering kids

outdoor learning since the start of the school year and more of such outdoor learning will continue on into the spring.

Ruch is constructing an onsite educational tree nursery this month which each student will be responsible to help manage. The tree nursery and the school garden will teach students about root growth, native plants, restoration, and plant propagation. Another exciting outdoor education event to look forward to is the Earth Day festival that I will be coordinating this April.

As I continue my service at Ruch, I hope to get as many students as possible outside learning. There is nothing more magical for me than seeing a student's eyes light up with the discovery of a new insect that burrows beneath the leaves in the school's yard, or the smiles when students get to run around collecting pinecones for a class activity. These are the things students have missed the most while learning virtually, and I am honored to be the one to take the brilliant young learners back outside as we begin to open schools safely. We are ready to re-emphasize the *Outdoor* in Ruch Outdoor Community School.

Hannah Borgerson
facebook.com/
ruchoutdoorcommunityschool

HVHS keeps a close eye on COVID-19 numbers

BY LISA BALDWIN

A year into the pandemic, a return to full-time, in-person learning continues to be an unachievable goal as community spread of coronavirus waxes and wanes, surges and subsides. But February's numbers did make a return to a hybrid model at Hidden Valley High School (HVHS) possible, something that was due to start on February 22.

Students were divided into two cohorts based on their home address. Those with odd numbered addresses are in the A group and attend classes on campus on Mondays and Wednesdays; students with even-numbered addresses are in the B group and attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

During these on-campus days, from 8:40 am to 12:30 pm, students have in-person instruction in four classes. An A/B schedule facilitates the social distancing required by state guidelines by reducing the number of students on campus by half (300 at a time rather than 600) and reducing class sizes.

Parents with questions should contact office manager Susie Biller by email at susie.biller@threerivers.k12.or.us. Meanwhile, there is quite a bit going on at Hidden Valley. The student leadership classes are back at work, planning activities for the spring with guidance from Ms. Townes and Ms. Wright.

Mr. Pendleton and Mr. Haley are keeping the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter engaged using a virtual model. The agricultural program teacher, Ms. Shodin, is working with community members on a fencing project so animals can be safely pastured.

Over several days in February, five HVHS students qualified to represent their school in the 38th annual Academic Masters competition at the countywide finals on March 10, hosted this year by Grants Pass High School. The Mustangs team members—senior Kaiah Fisher

in math; junior Alyssa Kelly in science; junior Leah Beachy in social studies; sophomore Jianna Bents in music; and freshman Michael deSouza in English—will compete against their counterparts from North Valley, Illinois Valley, and Grants Pass high schools. In each academic area, first place is awarded \$1,500; second place, \$1,200; third place, \$1,000; and fourth place, \$800.

February 3 was National Letter of Intent Signing Day for high school athletes. At Hidden Valley, six student athletes signed scholarship agreements with universities.

Track-and-field athlete Kaiah Fisher—nationally ranked (fifth in discus, seventh in shot put) and recruited by 30 Division 1 schools—signed with Stanford University. Sam Vidlak committed to playing football for Oregon State University (OSU), and is the only HVHS football player to be named Player of the Year in Oregon and the first Josephine County student to be awarded a PAC-12 conference quarterback scholarship since the 1960s. Jeremiah Noga, who holds school records for receiving yards and touchdowns in a season, also will play football for OSU. Gabriel Burchfield signed on as a two-sport athlete (football and track and field) for Western Oregon University (WOU). Lawrence Matusik and Matthew Iwamizu will also play football at WOU.

Principal Crowson expressed pride in all the students and staff, and gratitude for the Hidden Valley community for their support and persistence. "We had daily conversations about how much we missed the kids," he said. "Without them, HVHS is just a building."

Principal Crowson emphasized that they all want the students back on campus full-time and to get back to normal as soon as possible.

Lisa Baldwin • leb.97527@gmail.com

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Former Jerome Prairie resident **Dianne Baldwin Sanders** reads the *Gater* at her home in Ocean Park, Washington. Her subscription mailing label lets her keep up on the news from our Applegate Valley.

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