



Applegater

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Celebrating
~27~
Years



The inside of a black market hoop house near Central Point that was raided by a multi-agency task force in July. Similar operations in the Applegate are being targeted for code violations. Photo: Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

New state funding boosts hoop house code crackdown

BY TOM CARSTENS

Why is the Applegate Valley swamped with plastic “hoop houses”? They’re not necessarily for hemp, which normally does just fine in an open field, but they are a good idea for marijuana, partly because light deprivation can spur growth, increase the number of harvests, and boost the plant’s tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical that enables the psychoactive effect. Hemp THC content cannot legally exceed 0.3 percent. But with marijuana, the more the better (and the greater the profit).

Since both crops are of the same cannabis species and virtually identical

in appearance, some commercial growers have chosen to subvert the regulations and mix unregistered marijuana plants with registered hemp grows.

This is not the route chosen by honest farmers who obey the regulations and produce legal cannabis. This is the route chosen by folks who circumvent the law. Hoop houses have the additional benefit of shielding bootleg operations from prying eyes.

So the Applegate Valley is seeing an uptick in leased land with these hoop houses. Landowners can command top **See REGULATORY HOOPS, page 3**

Betty and Barney Smith left a legacy to Applegate wineries

BY DIANA COOGLE

Last fall, vineyard owners in the Applegate mourned the loss of two people intimately associated with wine growing in this area: Betty and Barnard (Barney) Smith, of The Academy, at 18200 Highway 238, who both died in that sad season of many losses.

Betty died on September 11, 2020, and Barney 18 days later, on September 29. They had just celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in August. Both died of Alzheimer-type illnesses.

The Smiths left a remarkable legacy. The Applegate is known as a wine-growing region, with wines characteristic of the locale, in large part because it is officially recognized as an American Viticultural Area (AVA), one of only 18 in Oregon. It has that important designation because of the work of Barney Smith.

What an AVA, also called an appellation of origin, means is that the grapes grown in that area are distinct because of the particular attributes of the locale: climate, geology, soils, and so forth. It allows wines made with at least 85 percent of the AVA area’s grapes to bear labels displaying that name. AVA is a distinction to be proud of, one that not only makes sommeliers nod wisely but gives grape growers and wine makers a joint marketing approach



Betty and Barnard Smith of The Academy. Photo: From the Wine of Southern Oregon collection, courtesy of Southern Oregon University Hannon Library Special Collections.

for the unique microclimate of their area. The Applegate’s AVA gives our vineyards prestige and increases the price our winemakers can put on a bottle of Applegate wine.

In an article for vinepair.com about the process of obtaining an AVA from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Laura Burgess says, “From analyzing soil maps to drafting boundary lines, there’s enough to discourage even historically relevant wine-growing areas from applying. In comparison, the IRS tax code sounds like fun.” But Barney was up for the challenge, stuck with the process, and in 2001 succeeded in having the Applegate recognized as an AVA.

See BETTY AND BARNEY SMITH, page 2

Dragonfly Place: Park monument to honor Grandmother Aggie

BY JANELLE DUNLEVY

The board of the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC) has recently established a Cultural Committee with a commitment to diversity and inclusion. This committee is actively seeking members to represent the broad diversity of people who contributed to the rich history of the Applegate Valley and Rogue Basin. The Cultural Committee will help introduce and authenticate history and stories of the cultures living with and on the lands in the Applegate, providing education and interpretation at our public parks and recreation sites.

The first project of the Cultural Committee is to develop a memorial for Agnes Baker Pilgrim, called “Dragonfly

Place,” at Cantrall Buckley County Park. This memorial will also serve as a template for Native American interpretive signs.

Agnes Baker Pilgrim, also known as Grandmother Aggie, was a celebrated Takelma Elder, a member of the Confederated Tribe of the Siletz Indians, and one of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers who advocated for our mother earth. She was especially fond of the Applegate Valley communities. She passed in November 2019, yet her enduring Indigenous wisdom lives on.

Dragonfly Place is a large multi-level cement platform at Cantrall Buckley County Park. This memorial will feature Grandmother Aggie’s life, family, and



Grandmother Aggie teaching about Takelma ways with a traditional canoe made by Gray Eagle and George Fence. Photo: Julie Norman.

accomplishments, as well as the history of her tribal groups both before and after their removal to reservations. It is a place

where dragonflies thrive and visitors can hear water flowing to the nearby Applegate River, a peaceful place for remembering and learning about this region’s earliest inhabitants. The content for this memorial site will be verified through Grandmother Aggie’s family and the website dedicated to her life.

The project includes design and installation of a commemorative sign for Grandmother Aggie and restoration of the site’s surrounding area by removing invasive species, releasing suppressed native species, and reestablishing native flora. The Cultural Committee will also create a study area to facilitate thought through interpretive and educational materials.

The public is invited to support and get involved in this first project of APWC’s Cultural Committee. The project’s funding goal is \$20,000, including more than \$8,000 of in-kind volunteer **See DRAGONFLY PLACE, page 2**

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