

■ **SANDY SHAFFER**

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is stepping down to focus on some well-deserved downtime.

**Accomplishments**

Sandy co-led the development of the Applegate Fire Plan—the nation’s first Community Wildfire Protection Plan, covering all lands in the 500,000-acre Applegate Watershed. The fire plan addresses fire suppression and protection, fuels reduction, and emergency communications. Sandy and other volunteers on the fire plan team convened 40 public meetings in ten months. Ultimately, the development of the plan involved 28 different partners, ranging from government agencies to community groups. The team was awarded a National Fire Plan grant in October 2001, and the plan was printed ten months later—an impressive accomplishment. Some results of the fire plan: Over 18,000 federal acres were treated, 600-plus homes have defensible space, and 50 neighborhood telephone trees were set up for emergency communications.

Sandy was also active in the development of the Jackson County Fire Plan, including the Jackson-Josephine local coordinating group, the outreach and education committee, and fuels committees. Another effort was her leadership of a survey of Wildland Urban Interface residents in portions of Jackson County that produced some valuable insights into resident attitudes and activities around wildlife.

Sandy served on the Western Governor’s forest health advisory committee and several subcommittees in the early 2000s, helped with the National Fire Plan’s ten-year implementation plan, and worked with a team to devise a cohesive national wildfire strategy.

In addition to all the above, Sandy served as president of the Applegate Valley Fire District board of directors.

We will miss Sandy’s incisive and educational articles as well as her high standards, which contributed to the quality of the *Applegater*. We wish Sandy safe travels and offer some heartfelt words from fellow editorial committee members, past and present.

“I always appreciated Sandy’s keen eye for assessing articles, and I grew to respect very much her opinions about what should and should not be accepted in the *Applegater* and her candid approach. Hers was a long-time voice on the editorial committee. I will miss it sorely. Actually, I will miss the friendship aspect of serving on the committee with her, as well.”

—Diana Coogle, *Applegater* chair, editorial committee member

“It’s hard to say which is deeper: Sandy’s experience in the Applegate Valley (especially regarding firefighting) or how deeply she cares for the valley. What is easy to say is that both—combined with her readiness to share her recommendations—made her an invaluable member of the team furthering the *Applegater’s* mission. Her contributions made it a better paper. Thank you, Sandy!”

—Bert Etling, former *Applegater* editor in chief, now executive editor of the *Ashland.news*.

“Sandy is a demon typo-spotter! More than that, though, she had strong and valued opinions about every article submitted to the *Applegater* over the decades she spent on the editorial committee. That’s devotion above and beyond. I will miss her candor, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness. I wish Sandy, her husband, and Maggie the best. But I also hope Sandy will continue to inform us with an occasional article about fire.”

—Barbara Holiday, *Applegater* editor in chief; chair, editorial committee

“I believe Sandy has done more than most people realize in working on fire issues between federal and state agencies and the public. Her work on the fire plan for the Applegate watershed was indispensable, and her fire articles for the *Applegater* were some of the most educational pieces we ran. Sandy’s dedication will be hard to replace.”

—J.D. Rogers, former *Applegater* editor in chief

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**Message from Sandy  
Earth, air, trees:  
I guess it’s just kismet**

After nearly 23 years of writing articles for and sitting on the editorial committee of the *Applegater*, I’m finally pulling back to have a bit more time to spend with Don, my husband of 48 years, and our Akita dog, Maggie. As well, we are planning some more traveling soon.

Don and I met almost 50 years ago when we both were working part-time at a take-out pizza store in southern California. When the phones were slow for orders, we talked a lot about what we wanted for our futures. Neither of us wanted to have children. We “clicked” all the way, and were married in 1975, shortly after he finished college. Soon after, Don was offered a position in the San Francisco area, and we jumped at the opportunity. We purchased a house in California’s East Bay.

Over the years we did a lot of traveling, mainly up and down the western coast. We both loved the state of Oregon (Don was born in Oregon!) and started looking where we might like to settle down in the future. We particularly liked the Applegate Valley and the large, forested properties for sale. After visiting the town of Jacksonville, we decided to find our forever home in this area. In 1992 we purchased a 20-acre forested property in the Applegate and designed and built our home here. And we’ve never looked back.

So now we’re in our seventies and still on our 20 acres. Both Don and I are healthy; those walks with Maggie up and down the hills keep us in good shape! We want to travel more (one trip is already planned) and see more of the Northwest.

I do thank all of you *Applegater* friends for putting up with my sometimes strange articles! I blame my mother, who also liked to write.

Sandy Shaffer  
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■ **THE STATION**

*Continued from page 1*

in town, home of the now shuttered Applegate Store & Cafe. Elise met my enthusiasm, however, and when the property had officially sold, Elise and Jeff agreed to meet me there.

On the appointed day, not only was the smoke thick, but I misjudged my five-mile commute and arrived too early. The “Open” sign was not lit. I parked in my usual spot, killed the engine, and savored the fleeting traces of AC as I exited my truck.

Just as heat and oxygen deprivation were setting in, another car arrived. Through the haze, a young, attractive, well-groomed, *smiling* couple emerged from the vehicle. These folks were either a mirage or some very confused tourists. In actuality, I was about to meet the new managers: Elise and Jeff’s son, Will, and his partner, Amelia.

Inside the store, things were cool and quiet. It was nice to be back, sitting down and chatting, even if nobody was offering a menu. Will and Amelia had recently

moved home after a few years in New York City, where Will worked as a bartender and barista and Amelia picked up serving jobs between acting gigs. When COVID put a damper on things, their visits here to the “Little Apple” got longer and longer. Then a very serendipitous opportunity arose.

By now, Elise and Jeff Higley had arrived. Jeff’s a tall, laid-back dude. While he got comfortable by using some barstools behind him as armrests, Elise jumped right in. “We pass by the store a lot, and we’ve always dreamed of things we wished were here in the community. When we saw that this property was an option, we were definitely excited.”

“But it was still just a daydream,” Will added. It wasn’t until family friends offered to partner on the project that the dreams became real. Their partners are technically the new owners of the property, but they have entrusted management and oversight to the Higleys. Elise summed it up this way with a laugh: “They had the capital to put down, and we have sweat equity.” Their friends were willing to place a big bet on them, and rightly so. As the owners

of Oshala Farm, now a 290-acre certified organic herb farm in the Applegate, Elise and Jeff have the credentials.

They are still dreaming up the final vision, but Will and Amelia’s priority is to get the store and café, to be called “The Station,” back up and running as soon as possible. Already the demand was clear—hungry passersby came banging on the door like zombies and interrupted our interview more than once.

Jeff explained this phenomenon: Along the road now known as Highway 238, a man and his horse never had to go more than eight miles or so from one outpost to the next. Provolt, Applegate, and Ruch are all spaced just right. But with one store out of service, there’s a seed missing at the core. And to think that even in the modern era a fellow is forced to travel a dozen miles without a chance to refresh himself with a cold drink...well, that just doesn’t sit right with the Higleys. Yes, there will be beer. Gasoline too. They’re striving for all

the essentials. But the valley is home to a diverse crowd, so expect a wide range of options—from a six-pack to a local merlot or a cup of joe to an excellent cappuccino. The Higleys want The Station to be a place for all locals, so they’ve created a website for you to let them know what you want. To input your wish list of products you’d like to see at the new market and café, scan the QR code below.

There’s a long wooden sign that still hangs above the cash register. I noticed it for the first time on my way out. In big block letters, it says, “See you later, Applegater,” and still reads true. I’ll see you at the Station soon.

James “Buck” Reinders  
james.b.reinders@gmail.com



Scan this QR code to send your wish list for The Station to the new owners.

**~ IMPORTANT REMINDER ~**

In order to assure that your donation is doubled, please be sure to date your check no earlier than November 1, 2023, and no later than December 31, 2023.

*Thank you for your support!*

**Recreation site now open every day**

Walkers and runners, equestrians, and nature lovers rejoice! Thanks to a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Land Management and a dedicated team of community volunteers, the Provolt Recreation Site is now open every day of the week. Located across from the Provolt Store on Highway 238, the site gates are now open daily for winter hours from 7:30 am to sunset.

Liz Shen, Chair, Provolt Volunteer Team  
liz\_shen@hotmail.com

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