

Applegater

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Photo: Jim Hughes

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Postal Patron



Tana from Wooldridge Creek Winery was kept busy pouring wines, as were other Applegate Valley vintners Applegate Red, Devitt, Quady North, Schmidt, and Troon.

Thank you for your generous support!

On Sunday, April 26, the Applegate River Lodge & Restaurant hosted a fundraiser to support our very own *Applegater* newspaper. And what a day it was!

Mother Nature cooperated with a sunny day, we enjoyed delicious food, and local wineries poured lots of wine. Excellent live music was provided by Duke Davis & Friends. A successful silent auction generated funds to help support the *Applegater*.

We appreciate everyone who attended and helped make this event a success. Enough funds were raised to cover the publication of two issues of the *Applegater*.

The *Applegater* newspaper Board of Directors would like to express our gratitude to the Applegate River Lodge & Restaurant and the Davis family for their generosity in donating this event to support our community newspaper. We also want to acknowledge the following wineries for their generous donations of wine: Applegate Red, Devitt, Quady North, Schmidt, Troon and Wooldridge Creek. A special thank you to Blue Fox Farms for their donation of salad greens—they were yummy! Thanks also to everyone in the community who donated unique and wonderful items for our silent auction.

The response to this event was tremendous and the *Applegater* would like to acknowledge all of you!

See FUNDRAISER, page 17

White buffalo move to Applegate Farm

BY A. PARADISO

There are far too many grapevines in the Applegate. One of them has been carrying tails...er, tales about some of the newest Applegate residents. You wouldn't think it would be that difficult to hide 11 white buffalo in a valley this large—one family has successfully hidden a whole castle complete with moat and drawbridge—but that's another story.

Yes, as you may have already heard,

there is a herd of rare white buffaloes now living in the Applegate. They arrived in April, three generations descended from Miracle Moon, born in 1997. White buffaloes are so rare that there were only two born in the early 20th century, the last in 1939, prior to the 1990s. These buffaloes are not albinos, but carry a rare white gene. Miracle Moon was genetically tested as having 100% American Bison DNA.



The dark brown buffalo is Big Mama, mother of the first of three generations of white buffaloes. (They appear more tan, but a buffalo's idea of a bath is rolling in dirt. And the winter coat is usually more white.)

A call for help

Food Pantry seeks coordinator as Donna Epstein retires

BY SANDY SHAFFER

Fourteen years ago Donna Epstein accepted an invitation to attend a Community Forum meeting. We in the Applegate should be forever grateful that she did.

That night so many years ago Donna listened to Ben Benjamin from ACCESS Inc. talk about the growing need for a food pantry in the Applegate. Once-a-week van service to Ruch was not doing the job, Benjamin said. Even though Donna and her husband Matt had retired to the Applegate less than a year earlier, by the end of that meeting Donna had volunteered to undertake starting up a food pantry in Ruch to serve those in need. She and Matt have been working the pantry every Monday ever since, but it is now time for them to *really* retire.

Donna said she has always volunteered, beginning at age 20 with the YWCA. Always ready to solve a puzzle or a challenge, Donna has an "innate sense

of understanding people and their needs," said Matt. There was definitely a need for an Applegate food pantry, and the project challenged Donna's organizational skills to the max!

In 1995 there were only 3-5 families being served in the Applegate Valley, but today our Food Pantry serves between 11-25 families each week, depending upon the season. There are over 300 heads-of-households currently served annually! Matt told me that over the years they have served clients living on every main road on the Jackson County side of the Applegate Valley, the Applegate Food Pantry's jurisdiction. Think about it: every road from Wagon Trail and Cady Road all the way out to Thompson Creek and North Applegate Road has someone who is eligible for and receiving state or federal assistance. Folks, these are *our* neighbors.

Donna told me that the Food Pantry struggled financially and organizationally



"We want to welcome the community to share in the white buffalo," says Dena Riley, guardian of the white buffalo since Miracle Moon was born to a brown buffalo on the ranch she owned with her late husband Jim. After Jim's death last year in Arizona, Dena decided to move to Oregon where she has family.

"At this time the buffalo are getting adjusted to a new area and some of the buffalo are expecting," Dena said, in explaining why this move was so low key. Intent on settling the buffalo first, Dena still has not finished moving her personal belongings, let alone had time to unpack.

Dena intends to make White Buffalo Sanctuary a center for education about the white buffaloes. She has already made some contacts with the local educational community to discuss possible programs.

Native American tribes have several legends about the white buffalo, but Dena

See BUFFALO, page 22



Donna Epstein distributes "essentials" to clients at the Applegate Food Pantry.

for several years. Early on, she and Matt hauled food from the Medford ACCESS to Ruch in their SUV. The Ruch School principal allowed them to distribute food to clients on the back dock of the school's cafeteria. She and Matt did everything from gathering the food, putting together boxes for each family, screening clients for eligibility, keeping the records, and raising donations for more food to meet their increasing clientele.

Today they are still working out of the back dock of the Ruch School's

See PANTRY, page 10