

They hooked a 40-foot trailer to a tractor; decorated it with lights, a canopy, and reindeer...

■ HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

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and eat food,” she says. There are presents and stockings that are filled with “candy and stuff.”

Nine-year-old Christopher Jordan of Murphy says his family of four (he and his brother, sister, and dad) decorate a tree and have dinner at home—he mentions cookies and cupcakes. “We make a scene with houses and snow and stuff,” he says. What he likes best about the holidays is “all of it.”

What Jason O’Day, who lives in Williams in a family of three, likes best is the “internal coziness at that time of year.” His family begins the holiday on Winter Solstice by decorating a Solstice tree. The darkest day of the year, they tell their seven-year-old son, is a good day for contemplating what you’ll do in the new year. Their celebration continues, with chocolates and gifts—“every day a little something”—until New Year’s Day.

Jojo Mickey of Ruch also prefers a Solstice to a Christmas celebration. “Solstice happens for everyone,” she says. “It’s of the earth. There are no expectations.” From three to twenty family members gather at her house or her sister’s. They have an altar with

candles and greenery “to represent what we bring to the evening: mood energy, sun, light.” They make bird feeders and have a solstice cake, which looks like the sun. After dinner, the children open presents (“minimal presents”); sometimes there is a bonfire. Ancestors are honored.

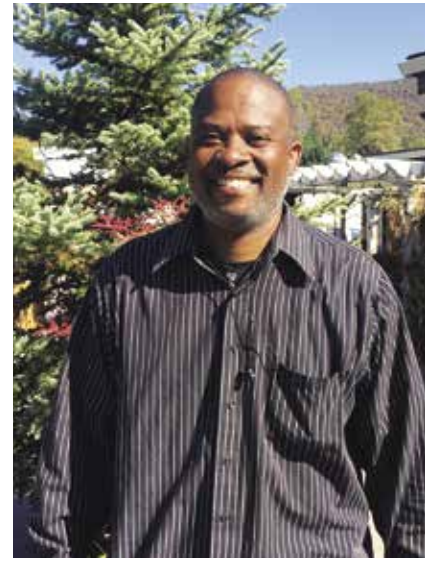
A tradition for Mel Canal, a former Applegater with a place on Humbug Creek, was to build a sukkah, “a free-standing structure like a grape arbor,” he explained, “a way to celebrate harvest.” Traditionally, the sukkah was used during the Jewish festival of Sukkoth.

Dave Bower of Applegate is in a new relationship, with his partner, Lee Anne. Gathering with her family and watching *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles* is a new tradition for him. “We sit around and laugh,” Dave says, beaming at the thought.

When Michele Roach and her family moved to Thompson Creek Road in 2006, they heard about an old Thompson Creek Road tradition of a Christmas float. In December 2015, they decided to revive it, so they hooked a 40-foot trailer to a tractor; decorated it with lights, a canopy, and reindeer; and equipped it with a sound system, speakers, stand-up heaters, benches, and a large vat of hot



At Sylva Koppitz’s “Murphy Christmas,” even her dog Radar gets a stocking.



Dennis Franklin enjoys a big family Christmas.

chocolate. Then 25 to 30 people—the Roach family and neighbors—climbed aboard and took off down Thompson Creek Road, at five miles an hour, singing carols, headed for the Applegate Store.

Now they are in the third year of their Christmas float tradition. “It’s tremendously popular,” Michele says. “There’s such a camaraderie of neighbors and friends who take part in this wonderfully fun event.”

This year they will leave the Roach home, 2.7 miles up Thompson Creek Road, on Saturday, December 22, at dark. Keep the date in mind. You might want to add the singing trailer to your holiday traditions in the Applegate.

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Juliet Dunn looks forward to stockings filled with goodies.

All individual photos by Diana Coogle. Nativity scene was provided by Susie Beckham; the Christmas float photo was provided by Michele Roach.

Susie Beckham, right, and one of her 50-plus nativity scenes (below).



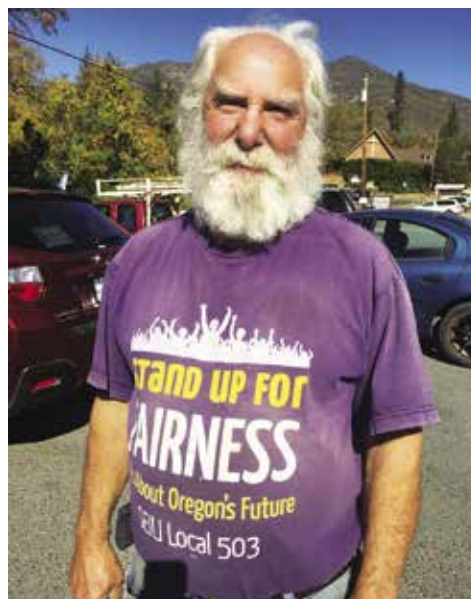
Christopher Jordan likes everything about Christmas.



Dave Bower is enjoying new holiday traditions.



Jason O’Day has a multi-day Christmas in his family.



For Mel Canal, the holidays include a sukkah to celebrate harvest.



Singing Christmas float created by the Roach Family and their neighbors.



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