

# Applegater



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Celebrating  
~26~  
Years



Working for A Greater Applegate are, at back from left, Rich Halsted, board member; Cathy Rodgers, board chairperson; Brooke Nuckles Gentekos, development consultant; Paul Tipton, board vice-chair; and Sonya Prislac, treasurer. In front from left are Rhianna Simes, project coordinator; Megan Fehrman, neighborhood connections coordinator; Seth Kaplan, executive director; Ryan Pernell, outreach coordinator; and Janis Mohr-Tipton, board member. Photo: Alison Hensley Sexauer, board secretary.

## Nonprofit AGA is here for you—and also wants to hear from you

BY DIANA COOGLE

If the thought of a Dollar General in the Sunshine Plaza in Ruch makes your toes curl, better listen to Seth Kaplan, executive director of the nonprofit A Greater Applegate (AGA), who says it could happen if, say, a locally owned store folds.

Better buy local, Seth says, to make that less likely.

But maybe you don't mind if a Dollar General moves in.

Whatever you want to see in the Applegate, A Greater Applegate wants to know.

"I believe AGA is the only organization in the Applegate Valley looking at issues and concerns of the entire valley," Seth says. "We want to be the organization that convenes community values, visions, and voices and turns them into community action."

"Our goal is to be working in this place, of this place, and trusted by this place," adds Megan Fehrman, neighborhood connections coordinator for AGA. "It's a long-term commitment to the Applegate community that will bring resources here to support a living economy, a strong community, a resilient environment, and a self-determining social system."

Nice. Big ideals.  
How?

To learn what people in the Applegate care about on a very local level, AGA is looking at the Applegate from the perspective of its 11 neighborhoods (as AGA sees them): Little Applegate/Yale

Creek, Upper Applegate/McKee Bridge, Humbug Creek, Thompson Creek, North Applegate, Ruch, Provolt, Williams, Griffin Lane/Sterling Creek/Cady Road, Wilderville/Wonder/Murphy, and Elliott Creek/Applegate Lake/Carberry Creek.

Don't see your residence there? Tell Seth! They want *everyone's* input.

To that end, Megan is coordinating neighborhood meetings, at a time and in a place convenient to each neighborhood, inviting opinions from all residents. There'll be wine and food, and butcher paper for writing down ideas. And lots of listening.

AGA has already held two successful meetings, with 50 people at one and 35 at the other, where issues like traffic, a community center, trails, environmental concerns, art, and social events came up.

Once AGA has an idea of the vision of the neighborhoods (and the Applegate as a whole), they want to help make those things happen. For instance, they can provide financial assistance in the form of Momentum Grants.

How do they think they're going to get people to meetings?

"We'll put up signs," Seth says enthusiastically. "We'll invite people. We'll put notices on Jo's List and Applegate Valley Connect and AGA websites. We'll let people know through the *Applegater*."

But what if a person just doesn't go to meetings? What if someone lives too far up the road or thinks his or her

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## Plenty to see at the Star Ranger Station

BY PAM CARR

Don't hesitate—we want you to drop by and visit the Star Ranger Station. It has a visitors' office with stuffed "wild animals," books, maps, toys—and even an ambassador mountain lion on duty just inside the front door.

Our friends, neighbors, and visitors are a constant source of wonder. One minute we are talking to someone who worked for "the outfit" in the 1960s, and the next we meet someone who has moved to the Applegate from Alabama who wants to know what kind of fish are in the river or where the best possum hunting is.

Then a neighbor drops in to let us know about three goats running loose on the



A stuffed cougar greets visitors at the Star Ranger Station. Photo: Pam Carr.

highway. Questions arise about everything from mushrooms to Bigfoot, historic fire lookouts, wildflowers, or the spooky noise some animal was making outside the tent last night. All are welcome opportunities for us to help you enjoy *your* forest.

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## Revisiting 'The wonderful person behind Jo's List'

BY JEANETTE LETOURNEUX

In spring 2012, the *Applegater* published an article about Jo Larsen, the wonderful person who started Jo's List, the now indispensable electronic community bulletin board. We wanted to get the perspective of this special person and resource for our Applegate Valley on what had changed in her service, for her personally, and in her community in eight years.

The value of the free service and the generosity of spirit that Jo exhibits to keep it going strong certainly haven't changed. It's still connecting people on a diverse range of issues—from job seekers and help wanted, recommendations on businesses and services, and upcoming community events to alerts about safety and fires and helpful advice relating to rural living. What remains the most rewarding to Jo is reuniting pets and animals with their owners and helping to find homes for animals.

This quote from the 2012 article continues to hold true: "One aspect I particularly like is that [Jo's List] unites a broad spectrum of the community. It's a bit like standing and chatting over the back fence." That community has expanded tremendously—from 50 subscribers when



Jo Larsen. Photo: Barbara Holiday.

Jo started the service in the mid 2000s, to 750 in 2012, to close to 3,000 currently. Creating such a vital network is quite an achievement for one person!

Jo credits Outreach Internet's assistance with being able to take the list this far and continue it for so long. Her process has stayed the same. She updates additions and changes to subscribers' email addresses, then checks all the incoming postings. She screens each and every message for derogatory language or political messaging

See JO'S LIST, page 18

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