

Argosy Odyssey found a home in the Applegate

BY MICHAEL SCHNEIDER

As everyone knows, the past 18 months have seen a major disruption in the lives of people and businesses everywhere. Families and individuals have struggled to return to a “normal” life, and businesses have faced closures and significant losses.

Among the handful of exceptions to these difficulties is the RV (recreational vehicle) market and lifestyle. Indeed, RV dealers and manufacturers report record-smashing sales and shipment numbers over the past several months, and RV owners have hit the road in such incredible numbers that finding a simple site to camp in an RV park has become a challenge.

One perfect example of those enjoying the RV lifestyle and creating a “normal” life is close to home: Chad and Cate Battles, Applegate residents who have become a “wandering troupe” known as Argosy Odyssey. Cate is an artist and writer who operates her studio in downtown Grants Pass, while Chad is a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees union and works at Schmidt Family Vineyards. Together with their goat, Frankie, the couple lives full-time and

travels occasionally in a 1976 Airstream Argosy trailer that Chad has renovated inside, and that Cate, on the outside, has painted with a beautiful, distinct mural inspired by Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land.”

Their story began in Asheville, North Carolina, a few years ago, when the pair became empty nesters and decided to uproot their lifestyle, sell their riverside bar, and take a cross-country trek through 25 states looking for a place to settle down. That trip eventually brought them to Grants Pass and the Applegate Valley, where they fell in love with the area and decided to park and live full-time in their Airstream at a farm on North Applegate Road.

“We decided to settle here because we found the people very friendly,” Cate said, mentioning specifically the “wonderful farming community and, of course, the wineries. We also like its close proximity to everything we enjoy,” she added. “Within an hour or two we can be exploring the coast and the redwoods, skiing down a mountain, or enjoying the beauty of the Rogue Wilderness.”

The three of them (including Frankie, of course) still take their RV on many overnight trips, traveling about two and a half months per year—even during the pandemic. “We’re very fortunate in the fact that we take our home with us,” Cate said. “We don’t stay at campgrounds and only camp in dispersed areas on public lands, so we’re able to avoid people much better than if we stayed in town.”

While traveling, they also take beautiful photos and videos—often with a drone—of the many wonderful places they visit. “In southern Oregon, some of our favorite



Cate and Chad Battles with their goat, Frankie, and custom-painted Airstream trailer on the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. Tales of the travels of the Applegate-based “Argosy Odyssey” crew are followed by more than 19,000 users on Instagram and more than 24,000 members of Facebook. Photo: © @ArgosyOdyssey.

spots are Crater Lake and the greater Prospect area, as well as the Ashland Meadows, Table Rocks, and Cathedral Hills for the wildflower displays,” Cate said. “Closer to the Applegate we love Squaw Lakes, Sterling Ditch, and the scenic Ashland Loop Road.” They have put together a variety of the spectacular photos they take and created calendars of the area, some of which have Applegate backgrounds. They sell the calendars (the 2022 edition of “Frankie’s Airstream Adventures” is available now), along with other merchandise, and original paintings, prints and note cards featuring Cate’s artwork.

They do all this adventuring with their fur baby, Frankie, who joins them for hikes, camping, and exploring wherever their roaming takes them. “She is a seven-year-old pygmy-Nigerian-dwarf cross, who we trained when she was a kid, so she is an outdoor-indoor goat and a great traveler,” Cate said.



Frankie and the Argosy Odyssey trailer at their Applegate home base. Photo: © @ArgosyOdyssey.

When asked what their family members think of their adventurous journeys and lifestyles, Cate simply replied, “They think we’re a hoot!”


You can follow Cate, Chad, and Frankie’s adventures, within the Applegate Valley and to other wonderful locations, through their website: argosyodyssey.com/about and through their Facebook page: facebook.com/argosyodyssey.

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Frankie and the Airstream underneath an Applegate sunset. Photo: © @ArgosyOdyssey.



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