

Another tribute to Sandy Shaffer

Sandy Shaffer is a gem. We both arrived in this wonderful place in the early '90s and have made our lives and our joys here, in our different ways, of course, but we overlapped in several. The Applegate Partnership was an early connection. When the Gater was born, also in the early '90s, we both jumped on board and have been a part of it ever since. Her wonderful relationship with our local fire department has been amazing and important. Her commitment and attention have been an inspiration all these years. It's time for Sandy to back off a bit, but, hopefully, she'll still be writing her important fire-related articles. She's a true citizen of our valley and will be missed at the *Applegater*, especially on the deck of the editorial committee. —Greeley Wells, editorial committee member, Starry Side author

Sandy Shaffer retired from the Applegater editorial committee. See more tributes in the Extra Edition published in October.

BIRD EXPLORER

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

BY PETER J. THIEMANN

Chickadees are small Woodland Songbirds that are often seen in small flocks in winter and come readily to bird feeders. The various species of Chickadees present somewhat of a challenge to identify, and most novice birders and backyard bird watchers just call them all Chickadees.

By far the most numerous in our area are the Blackcaps, with their black cap and bib with white cheeks. Then there are the Mountain Chickadees, with white eyebrows. As their name suggests, they are mountain dwellers coming down to lower elevations in autumn and winter. They are far fewer in numbers down here in our Applegate valleys, so they are a special treat to observe. Mountain Chickadees are coming down to my bird feeders but are a



Chestnut-backed Chickadees arrived at the author's bird feeders just last year.

bit shyer than the Blackcaps and Chestnuts.

The third species here in the Applegate are the Chestnut-backed. For the first 20 years that I birded here, I either did not see them or was not able to photograph them. That all changed last year when they started to come to my bird feeders, allowing very close observation and photography. Distinctive chestnut-colored backs and rumps identify this species with its closest relative of the Chickadee family, the Boreal Chickadee of the far north in Canada and Alaska.

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Peter J. Thiemann

Photo by Peter J. Thiemann.

Yurts to go in at Cantrall Buckley Park

BY EVA KING

Who doesn't love a memorable overnight stay in a unique, unforgettable place? Imagine waking up inside a yurt in the beautiful Applegate Valley after a great night's sleep, and then stepping outside to be immediately immersed in nature. For many Applegate residents, this is comparable to everyday life. And it is exactly what the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC) wants for its Applegate Outdoor School (AOS) participants.

APWC is partnering with Jackson County Parks to install three yurts in the campground at Cantrall Buckley Park that will serve a variety of users. The main priority is two 30-foot yurts in the group campsite that can host students overnight during the outdoor school season (October and April-May) and an additional 20-foot yurt to provide sleeping arrangements for AOS staff. During the months when AOS is not in session, the yurts will be available to the public on a reservation basis. Jackson County Parks manages yurts at its Willow Lake Campground and is looking forward to bringing the yurt experience to Cantrall Buckley Park.

Two 30-foot yurts provide comfortable sleeping arrangements for 15-21 students per yurt, depending on bed type. With separate yurt designations for male and female students and parent chaperones, this setup would allow AOS

to accommodate a total of 30-42 students per night. One 20-foot yurt placed at Site 16 is far enough away from the student yurts, but still allows AOS staff to be aware of any issues during the night that may occur while students travel to and from the bathrooms.

APWC and Jackson County Parks plan to order the yurts from Pacific Yurts, the world's leading manufacturer of contemporary yurts, in Cottage Grove, Oregon. The 30-foot yurts cost \$27,080 each, while the 20-foot yurt costs \$18,440. These prices do not include the cost of the required platform or construction. Crating and shipping costs for all three are estimated at \$3,400. Additional amenities will need to be considered for the safety and comfort of all guests, such as ADA accessibility, covered front patios, electrical wiring, heating units, smoke detectors, and more.

APWC is actively working to secure funding for this project through grants, foundational support, and donations. In an ideal world, the cost of the yurts would be approved in Jackson County's next fiscal year, which begins July 2024. That would allow for installation during the 2024-2025 school year. However, APWC would like to ensure the yurts and amenities are funded for the 2024-2025 school year and need community support to reach their goal.

If you would like to support this project, donations of any amount are welcomed and appreciated. APWC accepts donations on its website at applegatepartnership.org/donate. If you would like more information about the project or have a larger donation to make, please reach out to APWC at outreach@apwc.info or 541-660-3585.

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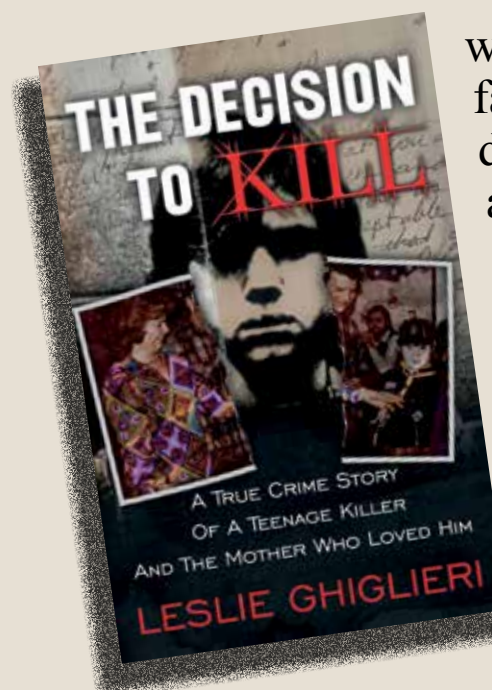
The *Applegater* is the only newsmagazine covering the entire Applegate Valley. With a circulation of 13,000 and a readership of more than 20,000, the *Applegater* covers Jacksonville, Ruch, Applegate, Williams, Murphy, Wilderville, Wonder, Jerome Prairie, and areas of Medford and Grants Pass.

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A new 16-foot Pacific Yurt installed at the Valley of the Rogue State Park. These yurts are available for the public to rent year-round on a reservation basis.