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connections to our community.

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Wildfire risk in the Applegate: An origin story

BY NATHAN GEHRES

Looking with dismay at the dead and dying conifer trees in the hills of the Applegate Valley, residents may be asking themselves, “How did we get here?” The current state of our forests is the consequence of over a century of fire exclusion, questionable management practices, and changing growing conditions. As the woodlands depart from their historic makeup, the quality of the habitat they provide degrades, and the risk of an uncharacteristically severe wildfire increases.

First, we need to recognize the factors that led to the situation that our forests and communities are now in. Wildfire shaped southwestern Oregon. The plant and animal species that call this area home evolved with fire and, in some cases, are dependent on it. Naturally occurring fires and Indigenous burning utilized by the first residents of the Applegate created a mosaic landscape that consisted of open meadows, oak savannahs, and mixed-age conifer stands. These landscapes provided a wide variety of habitats that supported healthy plant and animal communities. The onset of fire exclusion, introduced by Euro-American settlers, disrupted this delicately balanced regime. In the absence of regular, low-intensity wildfires, the forest composition changed. Douglas fir trees encroached into lower elevations and drier areas, and shrubby species grew rapidly, all of which

added to the fuels that feed increasingly intense wildfires.

As timber harvesting progressed in the 20th century, monocultural Douglas-fir stands replaced the original native forest that consisted of many species and age classes. Replanting efforts after timber harvest or wildfire have focused on Douglas fir because it is prized for lumber. The unforeseen consequences of those actions are now evident throughout the Applegate.



Current conditions on an Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council project site, before fuels reduction work begins. Photo: Nathan Gehres.

Applegate Valley: Past, present, future

BY MEGAN FEHRMAN

Vitality and resilience have become core principles for A Greater Applegate’s (AGA) community-building work. Vitality is the capacity for continuing a meaningful or purposeful existence—the power to live or grow. Resilience is the ability of people and their communities to anticipate and adapt amidst change. Vital and resilient communities enjoy a high quality of life, reliable systems, economic stability, and resources for present and future generations. These concepts have been at play here for generations.

Past

In pre-settler days, the Applegate, known as the S’bink (Beaver River), was home to the Dakubedete and other

nearby and traveling Indigenous groups, bands, or tribes. They took fish and game and gathered acorns, nuts, and berries. They camped along streams, building temporary pole-frame dwellings covered with brush matting or bushes and ferns (Fowler and Roberts, 1994). They stewarded the land with low-intensity fire to enhance the productivity of food-gathering areas shared by multiple groups. They also gathered and traded, thanks to the waterways that made travel possible from the coast to the inlands. Many of these groups were nomadic and only stayed in any specific area for short periods (Lewis, 2021).

See *APPLEGATE VALLEY*, page 13.

Celebrating 60 years of community achievement

BY LAURA B. AHEARN

In 1985, the future of McKee Bridge looked grim. After spending \$43,000 on partial repairs (the equivalent of \$126,000 today), Jackson County Commissioners decided they would no longer commit road funds for the bridge. Public Works Director Joseph Strahl explained that “the bridge isn’t significant to the transportation system anymore.” The bridge had been closed to vehicles in 1956 when the “modern” concrete bridge was built across the Applegate River a quarter mile upstream. Even after the stopgap repairs in 1985, engineers predicted that the bridge would be unsafe for pedestrians by 1990. Strahl told the commissioners that their choice then would be to invest another \$15,000 or let McKee Bridge crumble into the river “of its own weight in a strong breeze.”

But the community did not let a strong breeze take her down! They reached back to the 1965 model of community and nonprofit collaboration to replace the roof, which had collapsed under the heavy snows that triggered the Christmas Flood of 1964. Reporter Tam Moore, who served as County Commissioner during 1974-79, today reflects that “the bridge had friends in the county Roads Department

See *MCKEE BRIDGE*, page 22.

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HISTORY - HERITAGE

OBITUARY

Sloane Spencer Pennington
August 31, 1990 - October 27, 2024

After decades of struggles with acute enduring anorexia nervosa and numerous surgeries, Sloane Pennington’s burdens have been lifted.

Sloane was born in Colorado but spent most of her growing-up years in the Applegate Valley. She was a guiding force behind opening the bakery at Pennington Farms and all the growers’ markets that Pennington Farms participated in for decades.

She attended the Academy of Couture Art in Beverly Hills and worked for over a decade with the fashion designers Badgley Mischka in Beverly Hills, California, and New York City. After a good dose of city life, she returned to the valley and worked with the Pennington family farm, Red Lily Vineyards, and The Neumann Group, then



moved to Portland, where she worked with Banana Republic.

Besides Sloane’s love of her family and friends, her love for art remained her passion. Her works are in many galleries, and her love shines through those pieces. While she is safely tucked in Heaven, we know her light continues to shine all around us.

Sloane is survived by her parents, Sam and Cathy Pennington; her sisters, Jaclyn Staunton and Tatum Lipin; and her brothers, Sam and Max Pennington.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for April 16, 11 am, at Red Lily Vineyard. In lieu of flowers, donations to Options for Southern Oregon or to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) of Southern Oregon would be greatly appreciated.

Motorcycle Riders Association
hosts annual women’s event

BY KALYN BENAROYA

Imagine this: 200 women riding dirt bikes in the woods, learning new skills, making new friends, and conquering rugged trails. It sounds almost impossible, doesn’t it? Believe it or not, this happens each spring in southern Oregon, thanks to the Motorcycle Riders Association (MRA) hosting a one-of-a-kind event called the Main Event.

At the heart of the Main Event is a partnership between MRA and Dirtastic to create an unforgettable experience for women in dirt biking. MRA, a cornerstone of the local off-highway vehicle (OHV) community, provides the venue and vital support to bring this unique event to life, ensuring both safety and an incredible experience for participants. Dirtastic, led by 12 professional female coaches from across the western United States, brings expertise to the trails, offering coaching for riders of all skill levels, from beginners to expert riders. Together, these two organizations empower women to tackle everything from beginner-friendly paths to the demanding terrain of hard enduro, one of the toughest forms of dirt biking.

The Main Event has drawn participants aged 16 to 66 from 21 states and three Canadian provinces, turning John’s Peak near Jacksonville into a hub for learning, connection, and inspiration. The Main Event underscores MRA’s commitment to fostering inclusion and breaking



Motorcycle Riders Association Dirtastic lessons.
Photo: Chuck Steahly.

down barriers in the traditionally male-dominated world of motorsports, ensuring every woman leaves feeling confident, capable, and part of a growing community.

One thing is certain: The Main Event is more than just a gathering—it’s a movement, proving that when women come together on two wheels, the impossible becomes a reality. For more information about the Main Event or to get involved, visit the Dirtastic website at dirtastic.com or reach out to the MRA at hmcbride@motorcycleridersassociation.org.

MRA was created 54 years ago to promote the responsible enjoyment of off-road motorcycling and ATV riding in southwest Oregon. We are a nonprofit, family-oriented club welcoming riders of all ages and abilities, with about 750 members, mostly from the Rogue Valley. We work with the Bureau of Land Management, Rogue River National Forest, and the City of Jacksonville on

many recreation-related community service projects. Last year, the MRA was the top local National Forest volunteer organization, with about 1,400 hours donated to trail work. MRA also owns about 1,200 acres of land next to the Jacksonville Forest Park that we manage for forest health, and for both OHV and nonmotorized recreation.

Kalyn Benaroya
kalynbenaroya@gmail.com

Applegate Valley farmers
markets share visions of
connection and resilience

BY JAIMY WILKINSON

Creating a thriving weekly market in a small rural town truly takes a village. Such a market is the result of countless hours of collaboration between farmers, artisans, community members, and market managers who share a vision of connection and resilience. Each piece of the puzzle—from growers harvesting at sunrise to the artisans crafting their wares—plays a critical role in bringing this shared vision to life.

A key ingredient in this success is building consumer confidence—ensuring that shoppers know they can rely on fresh, high-quality products, fair prices, and genuine local connections. When the community trusts and values what the market offers, this shared space becomes more than just a place to shop—it grows into a cornerstone of local life, where neighbors gather, local goods shine, and the heart of the town beats stronger each week.

As the market manager of Applegate Evening Market, I have the privilege of witnessing these connections unfold. I see the joy on folks’ faces as they taste that first strawberry of the season, or the satisfaction on a farmer’s face as their carefully grown produce or beef is chosen by a regular customer. Artisans proudly share the stories behind their work, and the market becomes a space for community members to connect and celebrate the incredible diversity of talent and hard work in our town. The strong volunteer crew who runs the Williams Farmers Market is a testament to dedication and the power of community-driven efforts. Their efforts not only sustain the market but also foster a deeper sense of connection and mutual support among vendors and customers alike.

But the work doesn’t end with setting up booths or coordinating schedules. A thriving market demands ongoing effort to adapt and respond to the community’s evolving needs. For example, we’ve prioritized access and equity by exploring ways to accept food assistance programs such as SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks, and Farm Direct, ensuring that everyone in our town can enjoy the bounty of local farms. We’ve also worked to make our markets inviting spaces for all by hosting live music, chef demonstrations,



Heather, from Slagle Creek Farm, enjoys a refreshing mocktail crafted by fellow vendor, Ballhornin, at the Applegate Evening Market.

and kids’ activities that make every visit feel special.

A farmers market is not only a vital local economic hub, but also a place where stories are exchanged, traditions are preserved, and dreams weave their roots. We are a reflection of the values and aspirations of the community we serve. In a world that often feels disconnected, the market reminds us of the importance of slowing down, supporting one another, and celebrating the simple yet profound act of sharing food.

Our small but mighty markets are proof that rural communities can thrive when we work together. With every conversation, every sale, and every smile, we strengthen the bonds that make our town resilient, creative, and full of life. And that, to me, is the heart of the work we do.

Applegate Evening Market. May to October on Wednesday evenings from 5-8 pm at the Lindsay Lodge, 15100 Highway 238.

Williams Farmers Market. May to October on Monday evenings from 5-7:30 pm at the Sugarloaf Community Association, 206 Tetherow Road.

Jaimy Wilkinson • 619-787-0107
Applegate Valley Food and Farm
Network Coordinator
Applegate Evening Market Manager
jaimy@agreaterapplegate.org



Williams Farmers Market’s dedicated volunteers host a local salsa competition, bringing the community together to celebrate homegrown flavors.

43rd annual Quilt Show in Grants Pass in May

BY LIZA CROSSE

The Rogue Valley Piecemakers will hold their 43rd annual Quilt Show on Friday and Saturday, May 9 and 10, at the Josephine County Fairgrounds in Grants Pass. The pavilion will be full of beautiful quilts on display. We will have lots of surprises and special displays, as this year's theme is "A Whimsical Magic Life!"

The show will feature beautiful bed, lap, and children's quilts; innovative art quilts; other fabric-related items; and quilts made by guild members celebrating the theme. Knowledgeable guild members will be on hand both days to answer questions about quilts and quilting. Back by popular demand are demonstrations and "make and take" classes that will be held on both days at no additional cost. These include a fabric flower bouquet, a beaded wool bowl, fabric postcards, and a folded fabric butterfly, as well as more traditional Sashiko and Crazy Quilt stitching.

Board President Candy O'Brien chose the show theme for 2025 with the freedom and imagination of childhood in mind. "I thought about what were some of the most magical times in my life growing up. For me, what stood out is when we used our imagination at play, making up our own games. I wanted all of us to tap back into that imaginative mind of ours and use our childlike soul to remind ourselves that those little girls are still part of us." Candy challenges all quilters "to look inside yourselves and invent an imaginary world which none of us have seen." Whimsical President's Challenge quilts, based on the show's theme, will be on display.

The Piecemakers' "Heartworks Boutique" will sell gently used sewing supplies, quilts, and gifts handcrafted by guild members. Vendors from Oregon and California will sell fabrics, patterns, and the latest notions and machines.

Attendees could win door prizes (given away hourly on both days) or raffle items of themed baskets and prizes. They can also purchase tickets for a chance to win the Piecemaker's 2025 Opportunity Quilt, "Whimsical Woodland." Proceeds will benefit the Rogue Valley Humane Society and the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Josephine County. A silent auction will include quilts, wall hangings, and other items. Auction and Opportunity Quilt winners will be announced prior to the close of the show on Saturday afternoon.

Quilt Show hours are 10 am-4 pm both days at the Josephine County Fairgrounds, on Route 199 in Grants Pass. Admission is \$5 per day; children under 12 are admitted free. There is ample free parking.

The Rogue Valley Piecemakers includes members from all over the Rogue Valley, including several members from the Applegate Valley. The purpose of the Piecemakers is to contribute to the growth and knowledge of quilting through friendship, inspiration, education, and community outreach. Our meetings provide a time to enjoy fellowship, learn



You could win the Piecemaker's 2025 Opportunity Quilt, "Whimsical Woodland," by attending the quilt show.

more about quilting techniques, and share experiences about the art of making quilts. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in quilting. Our activities include Sit and Stitch, Show and Tell, demonstrations and workshops, classes taught by professional teachers, and a Comfort Quilt program.

Visitors are welcome! Join us on the first and third Mondays of the month from 9 am-noon at the Fruitdale Grange, 1440 Parkdale Drive, Grants Pass.

For more information, please stop by one of our meetings or write Rogue Valley Piecemakers, PO Box 5652, Grants Pass, OR 97527, or visit our website RVPiecemakers.com.

Liza Crosse • 415-279-4637
lizacrosse@comcast.net

2025 "Whimsical Woodland" Opportunity Quilt Raffle

Raffle tickets are \$1 each, 6/\$5, or 30/\$20

The drawing will be held on May 10 at the Rogue Valley Piecemakers' quilt show. Proceeds will benefit the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Josephine County and the Rogue Valley Humane Society. To purchase tickets, contact Liza Crosse at lizacrosse@comcast.net.

About the quilt

This quilt was inspired by the world-famous "Brimfield Awakening" design, which features an ancient quilting technique called "English Paper Piecing," or EPP. Many EPP quilters were charmed by the beautiful "Hibernation" fabrics by Scandinavian designer Tilda. A close look reveals intricate designs featuring little creatures and botanical motifs across the quilt. EPP group members Gayle Clark, Yvonne Cook, Brenda Ferrario, Sandie French, Kim Gillett, Kerry Keating, Trudy Kinsel, Janet Nies, Cathy Penland, Janet Sheldon, and three Applegate Valley residents, Debbie Wheeler, Liza Crosse, and Lauri Dobbs, all contributed to the EPP and applique work. Stellar quilting was provided by member Candy O'Brien. The dimensions of the queen-sized quilt are 93" x 93".

A successful open house at the Applegate Museum

BY JOAN PETERSON

On January 11, at 11 am, the doors to the Applegate Museum opened in downtown Applegate, and the fun began. There was a raffle for a beautiful bike, which will continue at the museum until we have sold 30 tickets. There was an endless supply of cookies, cakes, and treats to purchase for small donations. There was also hot chili and chicken soup for lunch, and a variety of hot drinks to warm ourselves from the chill of the day.

There was also a hat contest, with a supply of hats on hand in case you didn't have one of your own and plenty of decorations to make your own. The children's table had a coloring sheet of the pictured museum. Copies will be available for a donation when the museum is open.

But the highlight of the day was a circle of people for storytelling. Many "old-timers" were there, folks who have lived in the Applegate for over 50 years, and even some people who came for the open house from as far away as Trail. Larry Smith, from Jacksonville, talked about Robbie Collins, who saved the atmosphere of Jacksonville by purchasing many of the buildings and restoring them so that the town became a tourist attraction as well as an old-time mining town. Ken Chapman told the story of the Elmore family saving his trailer home from a fire before he even knew them. Other people told stories about incidents from the 1970s and '80s. All in all, it was a wonderful community event, and everyone went away hoping for more opportunities for storytelling.

The Applegate Valley Historical Society's (AVHS) open house ended at



Bicycle being raffled off to benefit the Applegate Valley Historical Museum. Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.

3 pm, but many people stayed around, eating the treats that were on hand to buy and just visiting and looking through the artifacts in the museum. In the future, AVHS will have an ongoing fundraiser at the museum with a few antiques and yesteryear's collectibles available for purchase.

We will soon have open hours on weekends and during the Applegate Farmers Market when it resumes in the spring. Presently, if individuals or a small group want to see the museum, tours are available by contacting Barbara Niedermeyer at 541-659-3984, Janis Mohr-Tipton at 541-846-7501, or Maryanna Reynolds at 541-941-0000.

There was some discussion about saving the museum from a lawsuit that could take away the property that the museum rests on. Look for notices about a court case in the near future. Try to come to the courthouse to give your support for our community's AVHS museum and land when a date is set for the hearing.

Joan Peterson
joanpete5317@gmail.com
541-846-6988

Two Applegater columnists retiring

You will probably notice that Sioux Rogers's quirky and immensely popular gardening column, "Dirty Fingernails and All," is missing in this issue. After untold decades of writing for the *Applegater*, Sioux has decided it is time to retire. Readers will miss her column, and, we're sure, will join us with shouts of appreciation for entertaining and educating us all these years.

The other retiring columnist is our book reviewer, Christin Lore Weber, who again and again, since the fall 2019 issue of the *Applegater*, has enticed us into reading books she herself enjoyed, giving us penetrating analyses and well-based enthusiasm in her reviews. Thanks to Christin for helping us choose books to read all these years.

One of the best things about the *Applegater* is that it truly is a community newsmagazine. Our columnists and other contributors are volunteer writers. They give the community their knowledge of things about which they are passionate—gardening, books, the beauties and uniqueness of the Applegate, and the organizations to which they have dedicated their time.

Would you like to be a regular contributor, too, and give the *Applegater*—and its readers—a column about your passion for a hobby or your work? Whether it is birds, wine, gardening (columns we have had in the past and would love to continue to share with readers) or some other topic, step forward and let us know. The *Applegater* is a wonderful way to spread your love of something Applegate-related to the rest of the community.

Email Annika Hodges, editor in chief, at annika@applegater.org, to discuss the possibility.



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POETRY CORNER

The Matchbox

By Barbara Yates • barbara.yates4@icloud.com

Festive temple courtyard
Filled with food stands and the new year talismans
There on the giveaway table, an ancient matchbox,
With the image of an angel sewing on her wings; perfect
I picked it up and sat under a nearby paulownia tree
wondering how
I could sew, no manual dexterity graces my fingers; pause for
a paradigm
When a cosmic tailor sat beside me and gave me a golden
needle, saying
“It’s not that hard, once you get over yourself.”
Suddenly, there was a pair of off-white wings with sturdy
pin feathers
“See, here is where you make a stitch,” guiding my attempt to
Attach some meaning to my good fortune,
To be here, sewing on my wings on such a fine New Year’s Day.
I love this gift, starting small, growing, expanding....
The sun was setting behind the west wall, when
The temple priest stopped by and said “It’s a nice souvenir, that
old matchbox.”
“Indeed,” I smiled as I stood, gave him a bow, and
Walked with wings into the new year.

Barbara Summerhawk (Yates) makes migratory flights from her home in Kiyose, Japan, where she writes poetry and stargazes, and from cabbage patches to her cabin on Humbug, where she strolls along the stream looking for answers.

Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either written by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to *Applegater* poetry editor Paul Tipton at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.

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APPLEGATE VALLEY HISTORY BOOK

Back in Time
Growing up in the Applegate



by
Evelyn Byrne Williams
with Janeen Sathre

Editors
Laura Ahearn, President, McKee Bridge Historical Society
Diana Coogle, Chair, *Applegater* Board of Directors

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A compilation of 50 “Back in Time” articles,
by Evelyn Byrne Williams with Janeen Sathre,
previously published in the *Applegater* newsmagazine.

Available at Rebel Heart Books, applegater.org, or contact Lisa Baldwin at leb.97527@gmail.com.
When shipped, add \$5. All proceeds benefit the *Applegater*.

BOOK REVIEW

Foster and other books and short stories by Claire Keegan

Grove Press
New York 2010, 2022

BY CHRISTIN LORE WEBER

Spring is a busy time, with preparing and planting gardens, weed whacking, washing windows, and all the rest. Can reading a book fit into the agenda?

“Short and easy,” I think, picking up *Foster* to reread as I settle into my overstuffed chair. 97 pages. A novella. Perfect.

I open it. Oh yes! For 97 pages of time, I get to be a child again. I will see everything in the story through the eyes and with the emotions of a ten-year-old whose name I won’t learn at all in the first chapter. When she is spoken to, she’s called “girl.”

This is a story of two families and a girl between them. Her father is about to drop her off at his sister-in-law’s. We are in Ireland. We know this from the dialect and how the house and land look from the girl’s eyes. She sees everything and says little. She ponders in silence all she sees but doesn’t say. For instance, she considers the difference between her father and her uncle, observing them from the old car: “It is something I am used to, this way men have of not talking: they like to kick a divot out of the grass with a boot heel, to slap the roof of a car before it takes off, to spit, to sit with their legs wide apart, as though they do not care” (page 7).

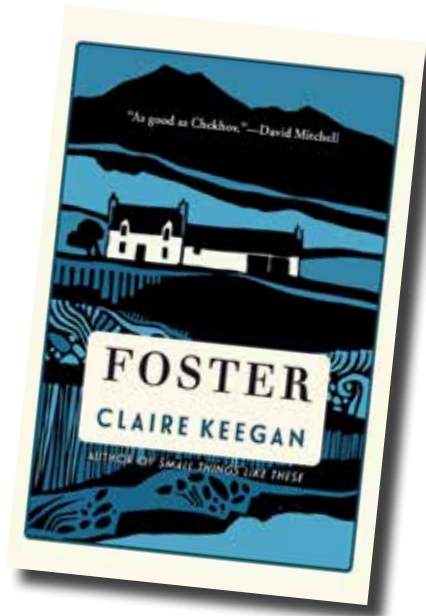
This is the experience of a girl who can’t be kept at home: they can’t feed her, what with another baby on the way. Early that same day, she heard her Mammy and Da talking about the arrangement. The dialogue is short and taut, without “he said; she said,” but we can keep up with it: “How long should they keep her?

Can’t they keep her as long as they like?

Is that what I’ll say? my father said.

Say what you like. Sure, isn’t it what you always do?” (page 8).

Now here she is, and her aunt has come to fetch her from the car. Her father is bragging to her uncle about the amount of hay he has. We hear her thinking, “I



wonder why my father lies about the hay. He is given to lying about things that would be nice, if they were true.... Part of me wants my father to leave me here while another part of me wants him to take me back, to what I know. I am in a spot where I can neither be what I always am nor turn into what I could be” (page 9).

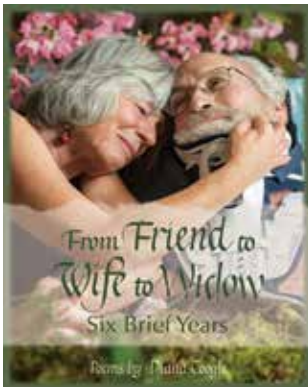
The nuance here is strong. I begin to read the story, already thinking it might break my heart. There I’ll be, inside this young girl who so far doesn’t seem to have a name, knowing very little about what will happen to her or how she will feel about it, but already aching over her future, already sorry for her pregnant mother and suspecting her father of things I don’t even want to think about. I’m hooked. I love the girl.

I read the entire story in one evening. I am in tears at the end—happy? Sad? I won’t tell.

As a writer of stories, Claire Keegan has this power, this magic, this talent, this skill. *Foster* is my favorite and is the one I’ll probably read many more times in my life, but Keegan has more books. I’ve read *Small Things Like These* and *Antarctica*, and I’m looking forward to *Walk the Blue Fields* and *So Late in the Day*. Her books are deceptively simple, with subtle twists that grab hold of your heart and mind, tangle your sense of what should be and should not be, and linger in memory along with that eternal question, “Why?”

Keegan’s books can be found in libraries and bookstores both local and online.

Christin Lore Weber
storyweaver1@gmail.com



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~ Midwest Book Review

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Our Mission

The goal of the Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., is to provide the Applegate watershed with a communication vehicle, the *Applegater*, that will provide educational information, increase community networking, and represent all the area's diverse communities. Through honest, constructive, relevant, and entertaining reports on a wide variety of subjects and viewpoints, including our natural resources, historical and current events, and community news, we can work together to enhance the quality of life we have in the Applegate, and continue to make a difference in our valley.

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Cover Photo Credit

Thanks to Linda Kappen for the photo of beautiful Pacific hound's tongue flowers blooming at Provolt Recreation Site.

...

Have a photo for the Summer 2025 *Applegater*? Email it in large format at 300 dpi to gater@applegater.org.

Corrections

The *Applegater* is committed to publishing accurate information in its news articles, correcting errors of fact, and clarifying misleading statements. Send suggested corrections to Editor in Chief Annika Hodges at annika@applegater.org.

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Editorial Calendar

ISSUE	DEADLINE
SUMMER (June - Aug)	May 1 <i>Fire - Water</i>
FALL (Sept - Nov)	August 1 <i>Earth - Air</i>
WINTER (Dec - Feb)....	November 1 <i>Holiday - Arts</i>
SPRING (March - May) ...	February 1 <i>History - Heritage</i>

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— Applegate Library —
Community connections!



BY CHRISTINE GRUBB

“Libraries are models of gift economies, providing free access not only to books but also to music, tools, seeds, and more. We don’t each have to own everything. The books at the library belong to everyone and are free to use. Take the books, enjoy them, and bring them back so someone else can enjoy them, with literary abundance for all. And all you need is a library card, which is a kind of agreement to respect and take care of the common good.” — Robin Wall Kimmerer

Featured Database: Access World News. Access World News, from NewsBank, offers electronic editions of thousands of news sources from around the globe, large and small, and in a variety of languages. It is a great resource for research, genealogy, lesson plans, and staying up to date on the latest news. Learn more at: jcls.org/2025/01/03/access-world-news.

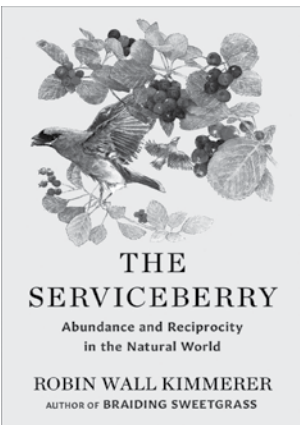
Upcoming Events

Nesting Season, 5+ years. Nesting season for birds is just around the corner. Are you ready to be a bird landlord? We will talk about avian architecture, how to choose an appropriate nesting box, the different stages of the nesting season, behaviors to watch for, and how to deal with potential predators and problems. 12:30-1:30 pm Saturday, March 8.

Learn about Bee Swarms with Your New Best Friends—The Bee Besties! 18+ years. The thought of a bee swarm can be scary—but in fact, it’s a very natural process! Learn more about this and other fun bee-related topics with the Bee Besties! 11 am-noon Tuesday, March 11.

Spring into Action: Make a Bug Hotel, 8+ years. Insects need safe spaces to shelter and hide from predators. Kids can help them by building a bug hotel to put in their garden or outside area! 1-2 pm Saturday, April 5.

Strange New Cowboys/An End to War, 18+ years. Readings by Paul Tipton from his recently published book, *Strange New Cowboys: Vietnam Stories and Poems*. His talk is interspersed with poems by



members of the Applegate Poets on the prompt, “An end to war.” The presentation may contain offensive language and violent scenarios, and is for an adult audience. Copies of *Strange New Cowboys* will be available for purchase. 2-4 pm Saturday, April 5.

Paint with Plants, 8+ years. Discover the beautiful world of natural colors right outside your door. We’ll explore how to make watercolor from garden-grown and foraged plants. Then we’ll experiment with changing each color by adding lemon juice (an acid) and baking soda (a base). Come make art with plant pigments! 2:30-3:30 pm Saturday, April 19.

Spring into Action: Make Your Own Magnetic Slime, 12+ years. What’s better than normal slime? Slime you can manipulate with a magnet! Spring into a cool re-action with this slightly messy but fun activity! 1-2 pm Saturday, May 3.

Podcasts: Talk Radio for the Digital Age. This class will introduce users to the basics of podcasts as a form of entertainment and how to access them. 10:30 am-noon Tuesday, May 6.

Reminders

A Digital Services representative will be here on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 am-12:30 pm on a first-come, first-served basis, or make an appointment by emailing digitalservices@jcls.org, or by phone at 541-734-3990.

The Applegate Library meeting room can be booked for your meeting, program, or event (even when the library is closed) by going to jcls.libcal.com/reserve/ap-meeting. Need a place to rehearse? You can do that here, whether for a meeting or music practice.

Wi-Fi is available 24-7 in our parking lot and inside during open hours.

Preschool Storytime is Fridays from 11-11:30 am.

Christine Grubb
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— Ruch Library —
Spring into action!

BY MEGAN PINDER

Join us at Ruch Library for a variety of entertaining and educational events.

Triumphs and Disasters in the Kitchen with Diana Coogle, all ages. Stories about food were some of the most popular of Diana Coogle’s JPR commentaries—baking in her house on the mountain without electricity, the Carberry Creek Dessert Bake-off, cultural traditions around food, and many others. In this program, she shares some of those stories, along with their recipes (and samples!). 1-2 pm Saturday, March 8.

Spring into Action: Make Your Own Magnetic Slime, 12+ years. What’s better than normal slime? Slime you can manipulate with a magnet! Spring into a cool reaction with this slightly messy but fun activity! 1-2 pm Saturday, March 15.

Seed to Sprout, all ages. Spring into gardening! At this hands-on event, aspiring gardeners of all ages will learn how to grow nutritious vegetables and fruits from seed. You’ll be able to choose seeds from our Seed Library, learn what seeds need to germinate (light, warmth, water, and soil), and plant the seeds in your own take-home pots. With good care, you’ll be able to enjoy a delicious harvest of your own homegrown food. Weather permitting, we will be outdoors for this program, so please dress appropriately. 1-2 pm Saturday, March 29.

Spring into Action: Make a Bug Hotel, 8+ years. Insects need safe spaces to shelter and hide from predators. Kids can help them by taking action and building a bug hotel to put in their garden or outside area! 1-2 pm Saturday, April 12.

Protecting the Applegate: Local Conservation Efforts and Organizations, all ages. This program will explore the conservation efforts of local organizations focused on protecting the environment in the Applegate, including Applegate Siskiyou Alliance, Siskiyou Crest Coalition, and Williams Community Forest Project. Learn about their programs, current threats to the Applegate, efforts to protect the wildlands of our region, and ways you can get involved! 1-2 pm Saturday, April 26.

Art from Hidden Treasures, 10+ years. Create a sculpture or art piece with “spare parts” gleaned from workshops, junk drawers, and any container marked “Very Misc.” Using appropriate tools (glue guns, hammers, pliers, etc.) under

supervision, participants can create a piece that might include a hinge, springs, lamp or clock parts, cardboard tubes, discarded small toys, or fabric scraps. Please bring any special treasures you would like to use or share with our collection. Children ages 5-9 are also welcome to participate with parent/guardian supervision. 1-2 pm Saturday, May 17.

How to Speak Flower, 4+ years. Oh, the joy of flowers! In this class, learn the different languages of flowers and the importance of connecting with flowers. This program is hands-on as it includes making pollinating seed bombs with local seeds and making flower crowns! 1-2 pm Saturday, May 31.

Preschool Storytime, 3-5 years. Bring your preschoolers to enjoy stories, rhymes, songs, and fun at the library. 10:30-11 am Tuesdays.

Computer and Tech Help, all ages. Meet with a Digital Services Specialist by appointment or drop in. 10 am-12:30 pm Tuesdays and 2-4:30 pm Thursdays.

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn (KPL), 0-5 years. Discover how children learn through play and daily activities: singing, telling stories, creating art, and having fun! KPL is open to everyone—young children and their families and caregivers. 10:30 am-noon Thursdays.

Bilingual Storytime for Spanish Learners, 3-10 years. Is your family interested in learning Spanish? Join us for a 30-minute bilingual storytime, followed by some informal practice with other families. All levels are welcome. 4-5 pm first and third Thursdays.

Community Yoga, 13+ years. Join us for an all-levels yoga class with Dr. Rachel Stricker. The Community Room will open at 8:45 and class will begin at 9:00. *Registration is required at jcls.org/events or by calling the Ruch Library at 541-899-7438.* Bring your own mat. 9-10 am, second and fourth Wednesdays.

Tween/Teen Movie Hangout, 10-14 years. Stop by the Ruch Library to enjoy a movie (and popcorn) with other tweens and teens! *Please note: this program does not occur during Medford School District vacations.* 3:30-6 pm, second and fourth Thursdays.

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Ruch Branch Library Manager
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7919 Highway 238

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— Williams Library — Spring into reading!

BY SARAH MEYER

Library events and programs are offered at no charge and are open to the public. Registration is not required, and a library card is not necessary to participate in library events and programs unless otherwise noted.

Unofficial Battle of the Books

Join Josephine Community Library for the Unofficial Battle of the Books (UBOB). Students can read books, earn digital badges, and have fun during the school year! UBOB is a voluntary reading motivation and comprehension program that uses the current book lists provided through the official statewide Oregon Battle of the Books. This program is open to all students in third through twelfth grades, with a special focus on homeschool students and those attending schools not participating in or forming a team for the official Oregon Battle of the Books. UBOB offers a relaxed, self-paced reading experience, perfect for students who want to enjoy the fun and benefits of reading without the pressure of competition. Battle questions are available for those who want an added challenge.

Register and learn more at josephinelibrary.org/unofficial-battle-of-the-books or at your preferred library branch and participate in the reading challenge through May 15, 2025.

Upcoming events

Williams Weekly Storytime. Themed storytime and craft session in a safe and fun environment. 11-11:30 am every Friday.

K9 Reading Buddies. Trained therapy dogs provide a nonintimidating environment for children to learn to read out loud. Young readers have the

opportunity to explore language and books during this special storytime. 3-4 pm Tuesdays.

Adult Williams Book Club. From gripping plot twists to heartwarming characters, participants can unravel the wonders of literature together. Explore what you love about the books you're reading or the ones you've recently finished. 12-1 pm the last Saturday of every month.

The history of libraries in Josephine County. Want to know more about the library's story? The Josephine Community Library we know today would not exist without the passion, commitment, and tireless contributions of thousands of volunteers, staff, and community members. Visit josephinelibrary.org to learn more and find "Our Story" under the "About" menu. josephinelibrary.org/about-the-library/our-story.

Local history research at the library. Heads up, history buffs! Take a look back in time in historic periodicals, browse books on Oregon's rich history, and find highlights on local historic sites with our online subject guide. Find the "Local History subject guide" under the "Education and research" menu at josephinelibrary.org.

Williams branch new hours. 1-6 pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday; 11 am-6 pm Friday.

Williams branch library is located at 158 Tetherow Road, Williams.

Sarah Meyer
Communication Coordinator
Josephine Community Library
smeyer@josephinelibrary.org
541-476-0571 x108

Learning adventures offered at Pacifica

BY PEG PRAG

Here are some upcoming programs offered to students at Pacifica.

PALS (Pacifica Alternative Learning School)

For 30 students on Mondays. Each week, half the day is dedicated to outdoor educational learning and fun for home-based learners. The other half is project-based creating with local craftspeople.

Call Vanessa at 541-621-6278 for more information.

Field trips

For any school. Field trips include an academic element, a learning game or hike, and a craft on themes ranging from birds, insects, water, and plants to sculpture.

Call Vanessa at the number above for more information.

Forest Fridays

For 25 students, an outdoor enrichment program focused on mindfulness, nature awareness, and experiential learning for kids ages 6-12. Forest Fridays is starting up again this March for an 11-week spring session!

Visit pacificagarden.org for more information.

Passports to the World

A new Wednesday program at Pacifica, for children ages 8 to 12. This project-based social studies intensive will run from March 6 through the end of April. Each week, students will explore a new region of the world through its art, food, traditions, and myths, and create projects related to these places.

Text Corbin at 541-659-9839 for more information.

Kindness Matters Youth Theater

For children ages 6 through 10. This group creates a safe space through theater games and sharing circles for children to explore their creativity, learn social



Pacifica: A Garden in the Siskiyou

skills, and deepen friendships. Currently in its third year, the program culminates with a child-created performance for the community.

Text Corbin at 541-659-9839 for more information.

Outdoor School

For fifth or sixth graders from schools in any district. Students come for two days and three nights of nature education, emotional development, and fun. This school involves over 500 students.

Visit pacificagarden.org for more information.

Student Leadership

This program cultivates leadership skills, ecological knowledge, and social intelligence to allow high school students to mentor fifth and sixth graders at Outdoor School, giving them increased confidence and a sense of purpose.

Call Clair at 541-787-5762 for more information.

A Rae of Light

Ongoing dance classes for all ages. Email araeoflightdance@gmail.com for more information.

Pacifica is located at 14615 Water Gap Road in Williams. Visit pacificagarden.org for more information.

Peg Prag
peg@pacificagarden.org

Essay The kindness instinct

BY GAY BRADSHAW

A few months ago, I read about a man who, one winter morning, was walking along a river embankment on his way to work. It was cold, even for a back-eastern-blasted January. Bent over and inward, trying to keep the wind from finding any uncovered cracks between skin and cloth, the man glanced at the water's gray scales, when suddenly he spotted a dog—a dog!—in the middle of the river, thrashing, his mouth wild with fear. Barely slowing his stride, the man pulled off his heavy waterproofed jacket and the dense woolen sweater his mother had made and threw himself into the flow. Wrapping himself around the dog's windmilling arms, he pulled them both to safety onshore. As he sat stunned and shivering, cloaked in a silver thermal blanket on the ambulance tailgate, the man was asked what made him do what he did. He answered, "I don't know—I guess it was instinct. I don't even like dogs."

The incident of the dog-saving man is one of countless examples of kindness between species, including nonhumans such as moose and their calves strolling unharmed through groups of wolves, macaque monkeys caring for motherless chickens, lionesses bringing orphaned oryxes into their fold, leopard seals coming to the aid of hapless humans, cats nursing



Although strangers, Coco Rabbit immediately saw Etienne in need and supported him with tender care. Photo: Gay Bradshaw.

wounded squirrels, leafing trees sending nutrients to stumps, and Icelandic orcas adopting newborn pilot whales. Each of these acts sheds a different light on the nature of instinct. When we look more carefully behind Tennyson's myth of mindless tooth and claw, we discover that it is kindness and compassion that rule nature's ways, not violence. The setting sun, the ocean's vast expanse, a forest's comforting quiet—all reflect the primal urge for collective peace.

Kindness and compassion do not need planting. They already lie within. Listen again to the man in the river: "I don't even like dogs." Kindness is not about what we think. Kindness is about doing the right thing. "Seeds of loving kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity," writes Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, "are inside. Through the practice of mindfulness, the seeds of suffering will shrink, and positive seeds of kindness will grow." Every drop of kindness we give waters seeds of kindness in another, and those seeds will seed yet more kindness in someone else, and on and on until we all return to the gentleness of lionesses, orcas, wolves, leafing trees, and savers of dogs.

Gay Bradshaw • bradshaw@kerulos.org

Diana Coogle to address the Unitarian Universalists of Grants Pass

BY RACHEL WINTERS

Join us on Sunday, April 13, when author and 50-year Applegate resident Diana Coogle will be giving the "Message of the Morning" at the service of the Unitarian Universalists (UUs) of Grants Pass.

Diana will be following our theme of "This I Believe," talking about her strong faith in nature as healer, companion, and spiritual center, with readings from her published books, including earlier JPR commentaries, recent poems, and poems about her late husband.

Diana Coogle has been a speaker at UU gatherings several times in years past, and we look forward to having her address us again with her entertaining and meaningful

talks and readings. Her words—often wise, always entertaining—are good reminders of why we, as Unitarian Universalists, gather: "To find meaning and live more deeply. We create connections within, among, and beyond us, calling us to our better selves, calling us to live with wisdom and compassion."

The service starts at 10:30 am at 129 NW E Street in Grants Pass. All services are also live-streamed on Zoom. You can find the link for the Zoom service and other information about the Grants Pass Unitarian Universalists at uugp.org.

Rachel Winters
rachel.winters25@gmail.com



www.applegatepartnership.org/upcoming-events

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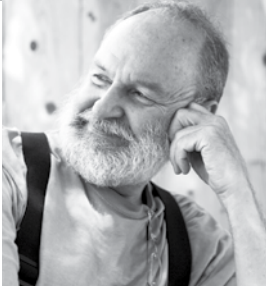
"promoting ecological, economic and community well-being in the Applegate watershed through on-the-ground projects and strategic collaborations."

HAPPY CINCO DE MAYO

THE STARRY SIDE

The dances around the North Star

BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

A belated happy new year to you—and happy springtime.

Last season, that great man, Orion, rose from lying down in the southeast to stand straight up in the southwest. Now he's leaning the other way as he sinks below the horizon. Sirius is trailing along with him, in perfect alignment with Orion's three belt stars. The Milky Way is stretched along the horizon, southwest to northwest. In summer, it will rise along the eastern horizon as it does every year.

In the southeast, Hercules rises, a large square shape with stars off each corner. Above and farther north rises a very bright star, Arcturus, in the constellation Boötes. If you follow the long handle of the Big Dipper about double its length—voilà! Arcturus!

It's all the dances around the North Star. The Big Dipper is now directly above the North Star, and Cassiopeia (my "W" for Wells) is below. The last star of the Little Dipper's handle, which is swinging to the east, is the North Star. Gemini (the Twins, bright Castor and Pollux) is high in the west above the setting Orion, with

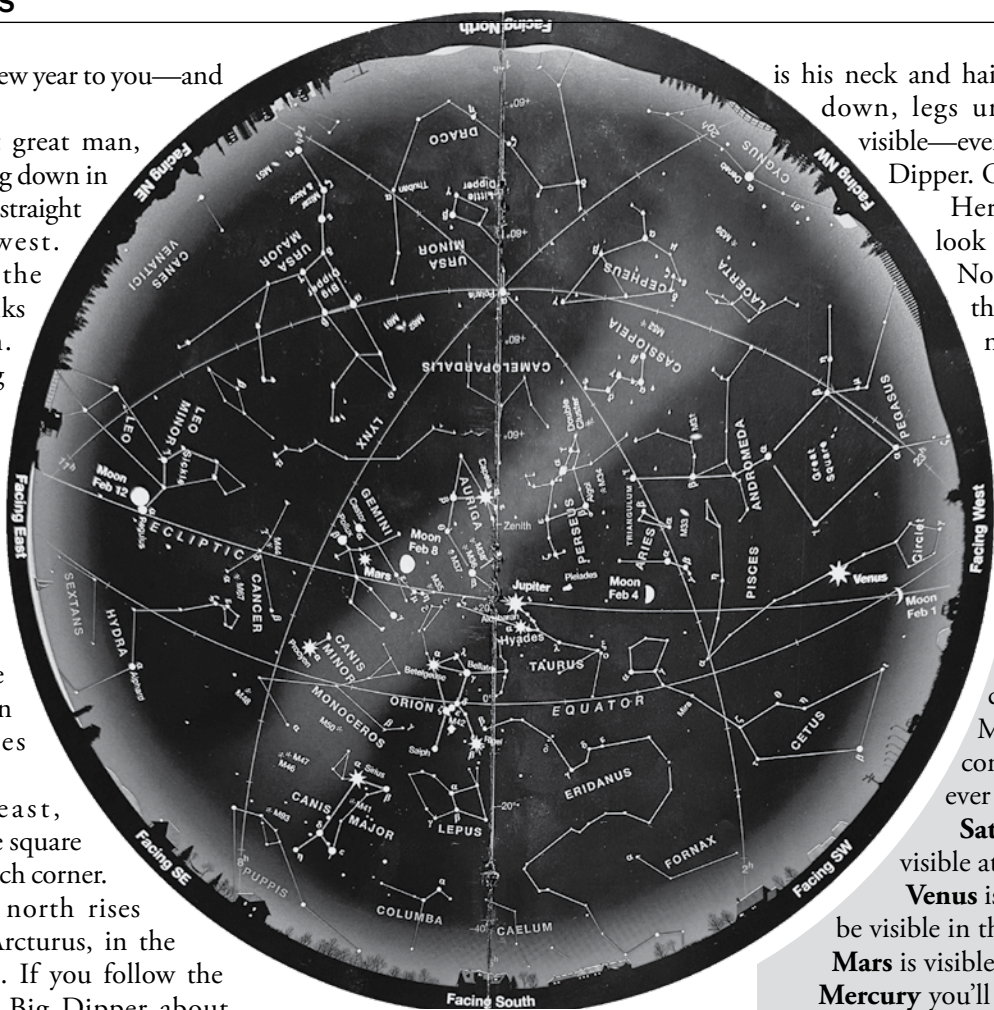


Image: Sky & Telescope (skyandtelescope.org).

bodies, arms, and legs standing upright, and heads about midway between the horizon and the sky overhead. Leo, the Lion, stretches from east to west high in the sky.

Leo is parallel with the Big Dipper overhead. The backwards question mark

is his neck and hair. He's clearly lying down, legs under him and tail visible—even bigger than the Big Dipper. One of my favorites.

Here's another way to look at these dances. The North Star (Polaris) is the only star that does not change position at all! It just rotates. All the rest revolve around it, some close, some farther away, depending

on the season. The North Star is important because it's easy to find and doesn't change position. When you're looking for constellations, it's a good idea to start with the North Star and work from there. The constellations close to the North Star are always visible, so they will help you find your other favorites. The North Star teaches us where north is. For me, the North Star always appears among some trees beyond my deck. That's north!

Greeley Wells
greeley@greeley.me

— OF NOTE —
The Planets

Jupiter—the biggest planet besides Earth—is in the center of the sky at dusk in March, then at dawn in April and May. It's really bright these nights, moving west to set with the constellations around it. After being as close and bright to us as it ever gets, it's now slowly moving away and getting dimmer.

Saturn is visible at dusk in February, not at all in March, and is visible at dawn in April and in the morning in May.

Venus is visible in February and March at dusk; in April and May, it'll be visible in the early morning.

Mars is visible in the evening until May, when we see it at dusk.

Mercury you'll see at dusk in February and March. In April and May, you'll see it near dawn.

Of Special Note

April Lyrid Meteors. It's possible to see these April 15-29 when the sky is dark before the moon comes up—perhaps 10-15 per hour. (Rates of 100 per hour have been recorded!) The radiant (the center they all seem to come from) is close to Vega in **Lyra**, but these meteors can be anywhere in the sky.

May Eta Aquarids. The best morning to watch is May 5 before dawn. Expect 10-20 meteors per hour. Look towards the southern horizon. Their center is in Aquarius.

Farewell, ACC—Hello, Apple Outlaw

BY JAMES "BUCK" REINDERS

Another deal is under way in the Applegate. This one will complete the trifecta of business acquisitions that are transforming the town into a more refined version of its former self. First came changes from the Lindsay Lodge (formerly Applegate River Lodge), then the Station (formerly the Applegate Store), and now the Apple Outlaw Official Taproom. The local cider company will be renovating the building that has served as the Applegate Country Club (ACC).

This is bittersweet news for those of us who remember fondly the club's best years, when the pears were a fallin', when we spent the evening in the garden enjoying a pizza after a tantalizingly long wait time. ACC was a revolving door of food, employees, and good stories. Remember when a car drove through the fence? Those were the times. But now, the close is official. The website is already down. It's too late for one last look through the restaurant's selection of stock photos, too late to say good-bye to the strangers holding pizzas. They looked so happy....

Perhaps the most nostalgic among us about the former Country Club will be from the town's rodent population. After all these remodels and renovations, even the clubhouse will no longer be safe for them. The rats are sounding the first cries denouncing gentrification. So, it may be time to ask ourselves, "Are we one step closer to an *actual* country club in town? And is there *still* a collared shirt somewhere in the closet?" Let's see what the new taproom has planned.

There will be a full menu of food and drinks, including, of course, the colorful lineup of Apple Outlaw ciders on tap and, very likely, pizzas from the oven. The building will be overhauled. Pests will be evicted and security measures implemented. The raccoon bandit featured on the cider's label will have to keep his heists limited to the apple orchard up Thompson Creek Road.



Raccoon bandit on Apple Outlaw's cider label.

Yes, there will be big changes—plans for a whole new outdoor area are under way—but the Outlaw brand is far from a ritzy country club or sparkingly bright tasting room. They've got a dark and lawless edge in their favor, which might lead one to think that with a secret handshake or turn of phrase, there could be a speakeasy somewhere in the tap house with a glass of brandy and a cigar waiting.

Their ambition is to stay open year-round and hold as many events, concerts, and community gatherings as possible. But as their predecessor can attest, it's no easy feat to keep a restaurant open and a crew of staff happy.

The restaurant biz is tough, but the owner of Apple Outlaw, Jonathan Amorim, is resourceful. Even while traveling, he was able to quickly respond to the questions that were sent for this article. I believe his abilities were augmented with the latest

AI technology. When I asked if there was a way to contact a certain person, he managed to respond with a single word: "Yes." How economical!

For a personal touch, I asked if he'd share any observations he's made about doing business in a small town, and this part of his response struck me: "2. Multitasking is a way of life. In small towns, it's common to see the same person wearing multiple hats—your supplier might also be your mechanic and your customers might also be your friends (or competition)."

I find this somewhat inaccurate because one of my jobs used to be selling Apple Outlaw cider at the market, and I wore the same newsboy cap then as I do now, while I'm doing this journalism thing. But it's okay; large language models make the occasional mistake. The point is that we can expect a fresh approach to business on the corner of Highway 238 and North Applegate Road.

A quick thanks to Jonathan and his virtual assistant for answering my questions, to the ACC for the good memories, and to all those who value good food and are willing to invest in the public locales in our valley.

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It takes a village Reflecting on the success of Pilot Joe at 10 years

BY AMELIA LIBERATORE

The Applegate Valley boasts a growing list of successes in wildfire preparation and active forest management, in part due to the nature of Applegaters themselves. The first Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in the nation was drafted by Applegate residents in 2002. Locals can again contribute their forward-thinking ideas and concerns by participating in the update of that plan, a collaborative effort led by the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council.

It is no surprise that the rearview mirror and the windshield are so closely positioned. As Applegate residents prepare to update their CWPP, they can take inspiration from a successful active forest management project nearby that was initiated in 2010 and monitored for over ten years.

The Medford District Secretarial Pilot project—or in more friendly terms, Pilot Joe—is one of three unique projects that Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar designated in 2010. Secretary Salazar called on Drs. Norman Johnson (University of Oregon) and Jerry Franklin (University of Washington) to work with local Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managers to apply ecological forest restoration principles to dry forests in southern Oregon. Their mission was to improve forest resilience, increase biodiversity, protect habitat and old trees from wildfire risk, support the local wood-

processing economy, and earn public support for this type of work.

Conventional principles at the time called for homogenous thinning—stands of trees with equal distances between them. Ecological forest restoration principles call for heterogenous thinning, which creates skips (clustered stands) and gaps (openings). With 890 acres of BLM land, Pilot Joe seeks to demonstrate that heterogenous thinning will foster forest resilience and fulfill the project goals mentioned earlier. BLM and its partners prepared for the project by collecting baseline data on tree species and size, density of stands, and other information.

All this is to say that Pilot Joe is a unique and complex project. The BLM and its partners needed rigorous, ongoing monitoring in order to understand whether the ecological forest restoration principles were effective.

Enter Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC, pronounced “SO-fric”). SOFRC is a small but mighty nonprofit based in Jacksonville that convenes partners on many forest restoration projects. SOFRC hosted over a dozen Pilot Joe public meetings and field tours. Residents expressed numerous concerns at these events and interest in working with government agency staff and partners more closely. Their feedback



View of a Pilot Joe project plot prior to treatment.



View of the same Pilot Joe project plot five years after treatment.

directly influenced the direction of Pilot Joe monitoring.

SOFRC convened a multiparty monitoring team, including representatives from BLM, Oregon State University Extension Service, the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council, Klamath Bird Observatory, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, Southern Oregon University, The Nature Conservancy, and Applegate residents. The team established a long-term monitoring framework and continues to review data and draw conclusions about the efficacy of Pilot Joe. Data includes pre-treatment

data and data from one, five, and ten years post-treatment. Monitoring also includes interviews with key stakeholders, agency staff, and community members to gauge perception of the project’s success.

“Public participation was critical to the success of the project,” says Terry Fairbanks, executive director of SOFRC. Over 550 acres were treated with mechanical thinning and commercial removal, followed by prescribed fire. The remaining 37 percent was left as old-growth stands to support northern spotted owls.

At five years post-treatment (2017), the multiparty monitoring team noticed clear signs of increased forest resilience: reduced fuels meant reduced wildfire risk. Biodiversity increased and habitat conservation was on track. Job opportunities, forest products, and public support also increased in this time period.

We are now analyzing data ten years post-treatment. Overall, treatments have benefitted heterogenous spacing, reduced wildfire risk, and increased diversity of understory species. Large canopy trees are growing faster because they have greater access to the nutrients, water, and light they need to thrive. As time passes, new vegetation continues to grow in thickly, requiring additional prescribed fire to maintain the work that was done over ten years ago. We are developing a final report of the ten-year data and project conclusions, which we will publish later this year.

For more information about Pilot Joe, visit sofrc.org. We will publish the ten-year monitoring report on this web page when it is complete.

Amelia Liberatore
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Project completion news

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

Last fall, the Cantrall Buckley Park Enhancement Committee, now housed within the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council's (APWC) nonprofit organization, finalized the planning and design of a long overdue, privately funded project in the Cantrall Buckley campground. The donors specifically requested improvements for the campground area. The campground now has a Hiker-Biker shelter site in space 16. This space will be available for campers hiking and bicycling in our beautiful area who need a cozy, covered space with a counter and simple seating. The shelter structure is complete and will be ready for use during the 2025 campground season. We have some minor details to take care of, but we look forward to hearing from our visitors about what they think of the new Hiker-Biker shelter. The committee extends a big thank-you to the donors for their patience.

This project completes the fundraising campaign that Tom Carstens initiated through the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation, now recognized as A Greater Applegate. The fundraising campaign paid for improvements throughout the park, including the playground, the bathroom mural, the solar project, numerous benches, interpretive signs, and the Hiker-Biker shelter.

We would like to recognize the contractor and the lumber used to build the new Hiker-Biker shelter. We are excited that both were local. The shelter was built with timber harvested from standing dead trees in the park. Tom Maddox, a multigenerational community member, designed the shelter and milled the timber into merchantable, dimensional lumber

at his local mill, 4-M Timber. Applegate Valley resident Cody Goodnough constructed and roofed the shelter.

"We strive to initiate and complete projects using 'local' in every aspect of a project, and this project is a great example of that," said Janelle Dunlevy, APWC executive director and park committee member. "We are lucky to have a variety of skills available in the Applegate." Tom can work with dead standing timber that larger mills cannot handle, and still produce lumber usable for structures.

Opportunities for volunteering

It's time to think about volunteering in Cantrall Buckley. We'll need help cleaning up windfall debris, weeding, removing invasive species, and restoring native species with new plantings. Fall brought much-needed moisture, making the soil workable, and now that the cold and freezing days are receding, we will be able to get out and continue creating a warm and inviting space for the community. Watch for announcements at applegatepartnership.org/events.

As Park Enhancement Committee chair, I am making an appeal for community members interested in joining our committee. In collaboration with Jackson County Parks, we plan various types of projects to benefit the park and its users. We also lead and help at various types of work parties. If you are interested, contact me (Janis) directly at 541-846-7501.

Save the date

Applegate Valley community members are invited to come to Cantrall Buckley Park from noon-4 pm Saturday, April 12 to celebrate our volunteers and learn more about our local service groups throughout the valley.



Details of the Hiker-Biker shelter will be finished when the campground opens.
Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.

Bring a picnic lunch and spend the afternoon among community friends and new acquaintances. Light refreshments and beverages will be provided. On this occasion, we will be recognizing and thanking our volunteers and supporters and all the other service groups from the Applegate Valley. Please come and learn from our community volunteers—you might even find that you were meant to help serve in an organization of your choice. Volunteers are a vital part of

making our communities in the Applegate Valley so successful. Details will follow through several media outlets.

Many thanks to all the folks and organizations that work hard to keep this rural area so alive and thriving. Together, we make this happen!

Janis Mohr-Tipton
APWC Board Member
Park Enhancement Committee Chair
janis.agapark@gmail.com
541-846-7501



Tom Maddox (left) and Cody Goodnough working on the Hiker-Biker Shelter, which was constructed by local contractors using dead trees harvested from Cantrall Buckley and milled locally by 4M Timber. Photo: APWC.

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THEY LIVE AMONG US

A childhood in Europe, a farm in Ruch, Search and Rescue in Josephine County—Karen Giese is one of the fascinating Applegaters who live among us

BY DIANA COOGLE

Karen Giese tells stories about working with the Search and Rescue (SAR) K9 team in Josephine County, but what she talks about best is the work of her SAR dog Morgan, a flat-coated retriever.

“SAR isn’t for just any dog,” Karen says. “Some breeds aren’t good at it. You can’t train a five-year-old dog. A little city dog won’t like this work.”

But Morgan has several advantages: retrievers were bred to bring something back, he is the son of a SAR dog, and he was a small puppy when Karen started hiding things for him to find.

Only dogs certified by the Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association can go on a search. Morgan is certified in two categories: air scent (off leash) and human remains. He helps find lost kids and hikers; mushroom hunters, who, their eyes on the ground, lost track of where they were going; people with dementia who wandered off; and missing bodies. After a find, Karen rewards Morgan with his favorite ball.

SAR gets one or two calls a month, Karen says, although with GPS on cell phones these days, the number of such calls has diminished.

Karen has also helped the SAR team by writing grants for GPS units, crates for transporting dogs, powerful head lamps, and other needed equipment.

SAR also needs materials to train dogs on—donated bodies, placentas that are cut up and put in jars, the soil beneath a dead body. “We have to make sure the remains

are ‘honest,’” Karen says—uncontaminated. For training, remains are hidden, in thickets or under logs, or even thrown into trees so the dogs learn to look up. “I put human teeth in a saltshaker and throw it into the bushes,” she says. “There are no footprints, and the dog can’t trail me to the source.” A good SAR dog, like Morgan, must also be able to ride in helicopters and rappel cliffs.

A dog who has made a find returns to the team to “tell us what’s going on,” Karen says, by using a trained final response, such as barking, jumping, sitting, or lying down, according to training. The dog then leads the team to the find.

Karen was born in Austria to parents who went to Europe during World War II—her father in the US Army, her mother in the Red Cross—and stayed for 20 years. As a child and teenager, Karen attended international schools in places like Paris, Barcelona, and Seville—Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France, and Italy. At 17, she came to the US to attend the University of Oregon.



Karen Giese and her search-and-rescue dog, Morgan, at the McKenzie Fire in 2020.

After earning a master’s degree in psychology and counseling, Karen worked with at-risk kids at Community Works in Medford. While still with that job, she got married and moved with her husband to a 68-acre ranch in Ruch, from which she commuted 24 miles four or five times a week, coming home, often after dark, to feed the animals and take care of the horses. She loved the ranch, but after 20

years, the responsibilities were taking a toll. Then, divorced, she moved to Jacksonville ten years ago.

While still living on the ranch, she joined Women Helping Other Women (WHOW), a group of Applegate Valley women who take turns helping each other with tasks at their respective homes. “WHOW saved me with that piece of property,” Karen says.

Now, besides her work with SAR (and WHOW) and activities like traveling, hiking, yoga, and swim classes, Karen is a geriatrics care manager. A client might be an adult living in California whose elderly parent, who lives here, now needs different living arrangements. “I arrange the closure of the house for the necessary move,” Karen explains, “or I organize in-home care if that’s what’s needed.”

This important and helpful work fits right in with other aspects of Karen’s life. The close bond she has with her brothers has been a big influence on her. Growing up in Europe gave her broad perspectives that became the underpinning of a life spent helping people and animals—kids in trouble; horses, ducks, and dogs on the farm; children and others who are lost; people who find closure for grief when the body of a loved one is found. In this way, Karen finds fulfillment in a useful life. And Morgan gets to play with his favorite ball.

Diana Coogle
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Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

BY ISABEL JALAMOV

On January 20, 2025, more than 30 volunteers gathered at the Provolt Recreation Site for a hands-on habitat restoration event in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Organized by United Community Action Network (UCAN) AmeriCorps members in collaboration with the Friends of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC), Project Beaver, and Pollinator Project Rogue Valley, the event focused on improving riparian habitat to support beavers around the Applegate River Valley and beyond. Volunteers worked in specialized teams to enhance ecosystem resilience by planting native vegetation, removing invasive species, and forging a new trail for more people to recreate in the area.

The willow-planting team, led by Caleb Galloway with APWC and Jakob Shockey with Project Beaver, worked along the riparian corridor, installing over 350 willow and 180 cottonwood stakes, which will provide food and building material for beavers in the future. These willows will also help stabilize the riverbank, reduce erosion, and create essential habitat for a variety of species, including beavers.

The invasive-removal teams tackled encroaching Himalayan blackberry and other nonnative plants that crowd out native vegetation. Volunteers cleared

one-third of an acre of overgrowth, opening space for native plants to thrive and improving access to the waterway for wildlife.

The trail-forging team cleared 96 yards of overgrown trail to improve accessibility. Volunteers removed debris, trimmed vegetation, and reinforced the pathway to ensure more access for visitors, including those participating in future restoration efforts and educational programs.

The event concluded with a debrief focused on the impact of the day’s efforts and how participants can stay engaged in community service. Volunteers shared their experiences, discussed the long-term benefits of their service, and explored ways to continue supporting conservation initiatives. Stacie Strombom, a UCAN AmeriCorps member serving as the estuary explorers educator at the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, said, “It was amazing to see just how dedicated all the volunteers were. So much blackberry was pulled up in just two hours that it felt like it had magically disappeared. It felt encouraging to see the recreation site cleared of invasives, with small cottonwood and willow stakes shooting out of the ground. I feel better connected to the land there after helping to steward it.”

Amy Kendall from the Provolt Volunteer Team encouraged participants



In an attempt to restore beaver habitat, a group of volunteers remove invasive blackberries from the banks of the Applegate River at Provolt Recreation Site. Photo: Isabel Jalamov.

to stay involved by joining the crew for ongoing habitat restoration efforts at Provolt Recreation Site. For more information on how to get involved in the community, visit the Bureau of Land Management’s website at blm.gov/visit/provolt-recreation-site or connect with local groups like the Friends of the

Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument for upcoming restoration events and stewardship opportunities.

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Handpick bouquets at Mama Bees Flower Farm

BY MAX UNGER

Nestled in the heart of the Applegate Valley, Mama Bees Flower Farm is excited to bring their new flower farm to the community! They are all about celebrating the beauty of the seasons and connecting with neighbors. Imagine strolling through vibrant fields, handpicking your own bouquets of fresh, seasonal flowers. It's a truly magical experience that they can't wait to share with you.

But flowers aren't the only charm here. As you wander the farm, you'll meet their friendly animal companions who are as much a part of the experience as the blooms. Their playful goats are always eager for attention, and their chickens, with their curious clucks, add a delightful soundtrack to your visit. Don't be surprised if their geese or ducks waddle by to say hello! They're all part of the vibrant life that makes this farm special.

For those who love to learn and create, they offer hands-on workshops where you can craft with flowers and explore your creativity. If you're looking to bring consistent beauty into your home, their bouquet subscription service offers six weeks of stunning, locally grown blooms throughout spring and summer. They also host many professional

photographers to capture beautiful, lasting memories.

On-site farm store and stand

Their on-site farm store and stand are filled with treasures for everyone. From farm-fresh eggs to locally made goods, you'll find something special to take home. And this year, they're planting a lavender field that will add even more charm to your visits and provide a serene, fragrant escape.

If you're driving down North Applegate Road, you can't miss the vibrant beauty of Mama Bees Flower Farm. And if you're one of their neighbors or passing by and see them out and about, feel free to stop by and say hi! They'd love to meet you and share the joy of the farm with you.

Mama Bees, at 10561 North Applegate Road, Grants Pass, is open seasonally. The best way to stay up-to-date on upcoming events and open hours is by following them on Instagram @mamabeesflowerfarm or visiting their website at mamabeesfarm.com.

Their mission is simple: to support the community and create a beautiful, welcoming space for everyone to enjoy. Come visit and see how they're growing something special for the Applegate Valley.

Max Unger
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Stop by Mama Bees Flower Farm in Grants Pass, pick your own bouquet of flowers, and enjoy the relaxing atmosphere.



Native garden in bloom after some rain.

Native plant gardening for pollinator-friendly gardens

BY MAYA BRIGGS

National Native Plant Month is coming up next month, and in honor of April—the new best month of the year—let's talk about the native plants that support the bees, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps, beetles, and hummingbirds of the southern Oregon bioregion. Native plant gardens are becoming increasingly important because they give our remaining native pollinators a place to live, grow, and thrive.

The home gardener can be an active force for ecological restoration from any location, context, or skill level. As the saying goes, “With great power comes great responsibility.” But I prefer to think of it the other way around instead: “With great responsibility comes great power.” In the past, water-intensive, monocultural, and unproductive grass lawns were the norm, but by adapting our mentalities and harnessing the positive influence we can have on our surroundings, we can give native pollinator-friendly gardens the spotlight. Native plants are bursting with the potential to impress you with their resilience, complexity, and beauty if you give them a chance to show you what they have in store. The key to planting native pollinator-friendly gardens is to start small, experiment, and remember to be patient! Good things come with time!

Tips to get you started

1. Choose where you want your garden plot. Start small with a three-by-six-foot area that gets six or more hours of sunlight. Of course, a bigger garden will allow you to include more native plants!

2. If you need to remove or smother the existing lawn and/or invasive vegetation present in your chosen area, one easy way is to sheet mulch: place cardboard on the surface of the grass, soak it with water, and then apply four to six inches of arborist wood chips on top. Let this sit for six months, preferably through the summer. You could also try solarizing with a plastic tarp for 12 months.

3. Start to plan your garden! Include “layers,” from trees to grasses, plants that bloom from spring through late fall, and different shapes and sizes of flowers that all help to serve a diversity of pollinators. Be intentional about clumping the same plant species together. It's also important to choose host plants for caterpillars to feed on, ensuring the growth of beautiful moths and butterflies.

4. Buy native plants from your local nursery or greenhouses. Keep an eye out for Pollinator Project Rogue Valley's bi-annual native plant sale, which always has at least four native plant growers



Native bee on Idaho gumweed.

(including Klamath-Siskiyou Native Seeds) and offers the largest selection of plants native to the southern Oregon bioregion. The next sale is Sunday, April 27, 2025, from 10 am-2 pm.

5. Fall through early spring is the best time to plant natives so they are watered by rain as much as possible. Arrange your plants with consideration of sun and shade and be sure to leave enough room for the mature plant. Also, select plants with different seasonal blooms. To plant, dig holes twice as large as the pot the plant came in, remove the plant from its pot, loosen its roots, place it in the ground, fill in the sides, tamp the soil, and water. Water well through the first two summers.

6. Weed as needed (being mindful that some weeds benefit pollinators), and avoid using insecticides, herbicides, or fungicides, as they can seriously impact pollinator populations.

7. Each species of pollinator will interact with your garden differently, fulfilling its unique role in your own little ecosystem. Because 70 percent of native bee species nest in the ground, keep some areas unmulched, but expect many others to make shallow burrows under leaves or native grass.

8. Add your pollinator garden to the interactive Rogue Buzzway map (see our website at pollinatorprojectroguvalley.org) and help illustrate the power of collective action for our southern Oregon pollinators.

Additional resources

More resources are available from the Siskiyou Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon at npsoregon.org/wp/si. And take a look at the Resources section for links, videos, and photos to inspire your pollinator garden: pollinatorprojectroguvalley.org/protect-pollinators.

Best of luck to you!

Maya Briggs
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THROUGH THE LEPIDOPTERAN LENS

The two greenies

BY LINDA KAPPEN

Sheridan's Green Hairstreak

The Sheridan's Green Hairstreak, *Callophrys sheridanii*, of the Lycaenidae Family, is a small, dark-green butterfly with black scaling on the ventral hindwings. The ventral forewings are green and partially brown. It has no tails as seen in other species of hairstreaks. The Sheridan's hairstreak has a variable white line with black edging. When the butterfly isn't as fresh, the white lines may appear broken. The outer edges of the wings are fringed in white. It is one inch or less in size.

Adults perch on the ground near host plants—buckwheats of the *Eriogonum* species. Adults nectar on native wildflowers, lay eggs singly on the host plant leaves, and produce one generation. The larvae will eat the leaves. The pupae then overwinter.

Sheridan's Green Hairstreaks can be seen in flight from early March through early August. Peak flight time is usually April to May, depending on elevation.

Many diverse habitats, such as rocky places of the subalpine and canyons, serve as habitat for the Sheridan's, which range from British Columbia to the Sierra Nevadas of California.

Observations over time will help distinguish this species from our other

green hairstreak, the Bramble Green Hairstreak. Identifying host plants will help with identification of both species. The photo of the Sheridan's pictured here was taken on the Siskiyou Crest, where the road was blocked by snow at a higher

elevation. A very striking butterfly, it will mesmerize you as you follow it from perch to perch on the ground.

Bramble Green Hairstreak

The Bramble Green Hairstreak, *Callophrys dumetorum*, of the Lycaenidae

Family, is a small, bright-green butterfly reaching up to one and one-quarter inch in size. It has curved, broken white lines (sometimes with no lines) on the ventral view of the hind wing. The ventral forewing is one-third green, and the rest of the wing is brown. The butterfly has no tails, and a grayish brown fringe lines the edge of the wings.

The male will perch on the host plant awaiting a female. Eggs are laid under leaves or on the flowers of the host plant. In southern Oregon, the larval host plant of the Bramble Green is *Hosackia crassifolia* of the Lotus family, commonly known as big deervetch. These butterflies produce one generation, and the pupae overwinter in debris near the host plant. Adults will nectar on the host plant and other spring-blooming natives. The Bramble Green can be seen in flight from late March through July.

The habitats for the Bramble Green are open roads, edges of mountain roads, or clearings in the forest. In the Pacific Northwest, Bramble Greens range from Washington to Baja, the coast ranges, the Warners, southern Cascades, and Siskiyou.

In June, we are likely to see a few Bramble Greens during the butterfly course at the Siskiyou Field Institute in Selma, Oregon. The Bramble Green pictured here was seen in the area of the TJ Howell Drive of Eight Dollar Mountain during our class field day. The bright green of this butterfly is very vibrant, and it is always a fun subject as it poses for many photos.

Linda Kappen
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Linda Kappen



Top photo: Sheridan's Green Hairstreak.
Bottom photo: Bramble Green Hairstreak.
Photos: Linda Kappen.



Ventral view of mating pair of Bramble Green Hairstreaks. Photo: Linda Kappen.

■ APPLEGATE VALLEY

Continued from page 1

By 1859, the Applegate Valley was settled with farmers and ranchers striving to feed a booming population of miners with cattle, hogs, dairy, grains, vegetables, and fruits. Horses powered mining, ranching, and logging operations and provided transportation. Until the 1950s, mining was a source of income for many settlers, and farmers continued to sustain the region (Johnson, 1979).

By the end of the 1970s, much of the Applegate was broken up into smaller acreages. Residents worked in local logging or lumber mills, or they commuted to Grants Pass or Medford. Retirees moved into the valley, along with a few tourist businesses, real estate agents, and construction workers.

Some things remain the same while others are changing.

Recently, AGA and the Wellington Wildlands Council partnered with the University of Oregon in a research project aimed toward understanding the current economic drivers of the Applegate.

By count of total jobs in 2021, the top industries in the Applegate Valley were:

1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting
2. Educational services
3. Construction
4. Manufacturing (including beverages like wine and cider)
5. Accommodation and food services

These data sets and more were presented at the State of the Applegate Community Summit in February, where AGA and community leaders presented a comprehensive picture of the Applegate in 2024. We shared demographic and job data, the results of the local business survey, and information gathered in-house that includes Wander Applegate website traffic, occupancy rates on vacation rentals, and fun facts like: How many pickle lemonades did Code 3 Coffee and Snacks sell this year? What were the most popular library books of 2024? How many hamburgers did the Lindsay Lodge sell this year?

Be alert for more on these insightful reports. We will continue to work with the community on digesting the data and planning the next steps to support the industries that are driving this economy via the Applegate Valley Business Network, the Wander Applegate program, our



Food and Farm Network, and our Arts Working Group. You can find the new and improved local business directory at ApplegateConnect.org.

As for resilience, the All Things Fire Fair! returns to the Applegate Valley Fire District #9 in Ruch from 10 am-4 pm Saturday, March 8. This second annual, family-friendly event helps us move toward a fire-adapted Applegate with informational tables, presentations, and live demonstrations focusing on wildfire and community preparedness and the

role of individuals in protecting homes and properties.

Abundance is only cultivated through diligence and consistency, which is how A Greater Applegate has been serving this community for nearly 30 years. We do not change course in reaction to short-term political or cultural phenomena but remain committed to making an impact where we have influence and leverage—which is right here in the Applegate Valley. We are not reinventing the wheel; we are standing on the shoulders and ideas of the many Applegaters who have been building this community for decades.

Thank you for joining us as we move towards vitality and resilience. We look forward to hearing from you and working together in 2025.

Megan Fehrman
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BIRD EXPLORER



Spotted Towhee. Photo: Anne Goff.

The cheerful Spotted Towhee

BY HEATHER PALADINI

A common backyard bird in our region is the Spotted Towhee, *Pipilo maculatus*. Spotted Towhees are cheerful and beautiful birds.

A member of the sparrow or Passerellidae family, Spotted Towhees are widespread and abundant and may frequent or even live in your backyard. Spotted Towhees are more likely to be found scratching the ground and leaf litter beneath a bird feeder than at the bird feeder itself, and you'll have more luck if your feeder is in or near shrubby vegetation under which they can seek cover.

They tend to scratch and hop backward with both feet, which is fun to observe. They can also be seen in lower branches of shrubs searching for insects and berries. Spotted Towhees are omnivorous. In the winter, they eat more plant foods, including berries, seeds, and acorns. In spring and summer, they also eat invertebrates, particularly arthropods.

The Spotted Towhee is larger than a sparrow and smaller than a robin, on

average seven and three-fourths inches long with an 11-inch wingspan. The upper parts and throat of the males are jet-black, while in females they are grayish brown. They have striking red eyes, warm rufous flanks that blend in with leaf litter, and a white belly. Their wings and backs have white spots, and their rounded tail feathers have white corners.

Spotted Towhees can fly long distances but can more often be seen running along the ground between sources of shade and cover. During the breeding season, males can spend 70 to 90 percent of their mornings singing to attract a mate. Once they find a mate, they resort to singing only five percent of the time.

If you'd like to attract more Spotted Towhees to your feeders, fill the feeders with a seed mix combining suet, cracked corn, millet, sunflower seeds, peanuts, and mealworms. Be sure to place feeders near or in vegetated areas; then sit back and wait for these chipper birds to peek out from under cover.

Heather Paladini
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WILDFIRE RISK

Continued from page 1

in the drought stress experienced by local trees that were already on the hot and dry end of their range. Drought and heat decrease their ability to fight off pests, such as the flatheaded fir borer. These beetles are native to our valley and historically would attack only dead and dying trees, but now that most of the forest is under stress, the beetles are feeding on what appears to be otherwise healthy Douglas firs, leading to mortality on a scale not seen before.

The altered state of our forests poses a wide variety of hazards, not the least of which is the threat faced by firefighters tasked with our safety. Decades of fire exclusion have allowed fuels to accumulate on the landscape, setting the stage for escalating wildfire intensity. In 2022, two wildland firefighters were killed by falling trees in southwestern Oregon. Consequently, the way wildland fires are fought in the Applegate may need to rely more on aerial attacks and backfires rather than on more dangerous direct attacks.

These changes will likely result in increased costs for fire suppression as well as many more acres burned. This was demonstrated by the Upper Applegate fire in June 2024. According to the Oregon Department of Forestry, the total cost to fight that 1,040-acre fire was \$10.5 million. Such a significant expense for such a relatively small fire is not sustainable, and we were lucky to have the resources needed to fight this fire. In my opinion, the only long-term ecologically and economically viable method to reduce wildfire risk is through controlled burning, and mechanical fuels reduction is the first step required to set the stage for the application of prescribed fire. My next article will delve into how local organizations and state and federal agencies are working to get our forests to that point, and what residents can do to help in that effort.

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Upper Applegate Fire, as viewed from the hills above Sterling Creek Road.
Photo: Nathan Gehres.



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JAMS BERRIES PIES

New preschool music program brings joy to kids and builds community for parents

BY SARAH GRECO

Friendship is important for people of all ages and can be a lifeline for new parents with young children. When I was a new parent, I would sometimes feel isolated within the day-to-day routine with little ones. Beyond learning how to care for tiny, new humans, I was learning to become the next version of myself, and there were growing pains. I knew it was time to get out of my comfort zone and make new friends. My baby and I became regulars at the neighborhood park and attended storytime at the library. We signed up for baby swim lessons and toddler music classes. It wasn't long before chance encounters turned into planned playdates and birthday parties. Before I knew it, I had a village, an inner circle to lean on and find support with, and my children made their first friendships.

This is why we are so excited to offer a new Music and Movement class for preschoolers at the Jacksonville Community Center. This class, every Wednesday from 11 am-noon, is designed for children two (or approaching) to five years old and their caregivers. The instructor, Ms. Laurie, a certified Music Together teacher, has been teaching in the Rogue Valley for over 15 years. Her class combines singing, rhythm, movement, sign language, and play, and supports children's development in language, coordination, confidence, cooperation, and other areas.



Ukulele is a beginner-friendly instrument for all ages. Join us for a jam session!
Photo: Unsplash.

Early childhood programs are not just beneficial for young children. They also provide a supportive environment for parents, with opportunities to connect with other parents, share experiences, and build a sense of community. We hope classes like these will help spark and strengthen new friendships and supportive villages.

Our programs for school-aged children also continue to grow. Valentine's Day is a great time to celebrate the love we share for our friends and family. In February, participants learned how to make colorful friendship bracelets with embroidery floss. And the Ukulele Jam class learned to play "Love Story" by Taylor Swift using four simple chords. All ages were welcome, and parents who accompanied their kids were free. It was another fun way to make music and learn something new!

And for those who love to learn, Bugs-R-Us presented a natural history talk

What impact can 124 people have in today's world?

The renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Our region and the Jacksonville Community Center (JCC) are both lucky to have such a group of thoughtful individuals! In fact, through the generosity of just 84 local donors and the dedication of our 30 regular volunteers, thousands of neighbors have been able to enjoy music performances, arts and crafts classes, history lectures, author talks, dance performances, children's programs, special events, cooking classes, CPR trainings, woodland trail hikes, and weekly wellness classes of many varieties.

You may ask, "What motivates folks to give and volunteer at JCC—many times without even being direct beneficiaries of JCC programs?"

I think it is a fairly simple answer: nonprofits like JCC engage us all in caring for and belonging to a place that we love. Our supporters experience an uplifted heart and spirit by ensuring that everyone around us is flourishing, learning, laughing, celebrating, recovering, growing, and contributing.

JCC would not exist without the generosity of the 124 people who contributed in the past year—each of whom, through their gifts of time, talents, or finances—helped cover the gaps in operating costs that can't be covered by the minimal, accessible fees JCC charges for classes and programs. Since JCC is not funded by the city or county budget, we have a community center thanks to these 124 people, their predecessors who helped build it through gifts, and a few local organizations and foundations that provide limited support.

Our donors and volunteers see the important impact of supporting a place for community to gather, to learn, to create, to dialogue, to pass along our history and shared values, and to raise and socialize our up-and-coming generations. They understand that the fabric of a healthy community requires some selfless investment, where the "return-on-investment" is generated in the heart and soul, instead of the pocketbook.

In this year ahead, please join JCC in finding ways to create a better community through gifts of your time, talent, or treasure. If JCC doesn't call to your heart, consider joining A Greater Applegate or the folks working on the Food & Friends meal delivery program, or maybe attend a local Rotary meeting. Every gift to these nonprofits makes us all a little richer.

On behalf of our entire community who share in the wonderful programs, classes, and events at JCC, I give thanks to those whose generosity enables all of us to flourish. Jacksonville wouldn't be the same without you!

Julie Raefield, Executive Director, JCC • jraefield@jacksonvillecommunitycenter.org

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The return of clear-cut logging on BLM lands in the Applegate Valley

BY LUKE RUEDIGER

For the first time in many years, the Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has begun implementing large-scale clear-cut logging operations on public lands in the Applegate Valley. Claiming to be logging only “dead and dying” trees, the agency is mowing down whole stands of mature, living forest above Eastside Road in the Upper Applegate Valley and above Buncom in the Little Applegate Valley, and, unfortunately, this may only be the beginning.

As I write this article, stands of mature or late successional forest are being logged to only 3.3 trees per acre, leaving slopes largely devoid of vegetation and choked with logging slash that, in many cases, will not be removed. Do not be fooled—this is not a “salvage” logging project, and the BLM is not targeting trees that died in recent flatheaded fir borer outbreaks—they are clear-cut logging in the green, living stands that survived the outbreaks. Additionally, in stands that did sustain significant beetle mortality, many of the living trees will be logged.

Recently, Certified Professional Forester Kenneth Baldwin, a forester with 52 years of experience in dry mixed-conifer forest habitats, conducted a review of the Boaz Salvage Timber Sale. He reported: “From my field survey of the 13 units in the Boaz Mortality Salvage Sale, I conclude that *most* of the live Douglas firs are not ‘severely damaged’ nor ‘likely to die within a few years,’ and therefore do not meet the definition of dying trees. These trees are incorrectly designated for cutting in the units.” He also found that 11 of the 13 units proposed for logging are located on northwest- to east-facing aspects, and some were located in seasonal drainages or draws, where resilience to both beetles and climate change is expected to be significantly higher.

The BLM approved the Boaz Salvage Timber Sale with no public involvement, virtually no scientific review, and almost no meaningful analysis, claiming that removing these supposedly “dead and dying” trees would have no significant impact. Yet, in all honesty, the Boaz Salvage Timber Sale is the most damaging

timber sale I have seen either implemented or proposed on BLM lands in the past 20-plus years, and the project represents a return to clear-cut logging on federal lands in the Applegate Valley.

With only four of the 13 units logged as of January, our monitoring of the timber sale found hundreds of trees over 30 inches in diameter already removed, including trees over 200 years old. We also found extensive soil damage due to ground-based yarding operations and rutting over three feet deep in some locations. In total, approximately 130 trees were logged along Ned’s Gulch, including trees within three feet of the seasonal stream channel, and trees were dragged across the stream in yarding operations. We also found over 600 feet of a small, seasonal stream completely filled in with soil and debris. This stream and riparian reserve were converted into a skid trail and log landing, completely altering the hydrology and creating excessive sedimentation during heavy rain events.

The BLM has also proposed the SOS Project, a massive so-called “salvage” logging proposal that would allow BLM to log up to 15,000 acres and build up to 20 miles of new road every five years under very similar prescriptions as the Boaz Salvage Timber Sale. The agency has also proposed the first timber sale under the larger SOS Project, and it proposes 3,000 acres of logging throughout the Applegate Valley, including Thompson Creek, China Gulch, above Cantrall Buckley Park, on Woodrat Mountain, in Wellington Wildlands, on Sterling Creek, and along the East Applegate Ridge Trail.

If implemented, the BLM’s SOS project would clear-cut whole stands of living, green forests, targeting stands with as little as 10 percent mortality and leaving only a handful of trees per acre. The results would be to riddle our valley in clear-cuts, dramatically increase fire risks, reduce climate and beetle resilience, degrade wildlands, impact water quality, and damage both the viewshed and recreational experience on our beloved East Applegate Ridge Trail, at the paragliding sites at Woodrat Mountain, in the Wellington



This was a seasonal stream, but BLM logging operations completely filled in the stream channel and converted this small seasonal stream into a skid trail. The clear-cut slope above is unit 27-3. Photo: Luke Ruediger.



A view across the clear-cut known as unit 27-4 in the Boaz Salvage Timber Sale. Just days before this photo was taken, this was a mature, living forest rising above Eastside Road and Upper Applegate. Photo: Luke Ruediger.

Wildlands, and from our homes and communities. at the Boaz Salvage Timber Sale, I wonder if they have just begun.

Some say the “Timber Wars” are over, but when you look up at Cinnabar Ridge

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OPINIONS

SOS: A program to reduce wildfire hazard—the other side of the story

BY MARK HAMLIN

Wildfire hazards are increasing in the Applegate Valley. Driven by climate change, conifers—especially Douglas fir—are dying. Dead conifers create an enormous fire hazard that lasts decades. Moreover, burning snags when they fall can be lethal to firefighters and residents trying to evacuate. The Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) proposed Strategic Operations for Safety (SOS) project addresses the problem.

The risk of a megafire catastrophe in the Applegate Valley is real and increasing. Residents should take note of the big fires that have occurred nearby. For example, on September 8, 2020, the Almeda Fire raced eight miles to destroy 2,357 structures and to kill three people. The Slater Fire, started near Happy Camp, California, roared 31 miles, and killed 14 people. We are surrounded by “high fire hazard” forests, per the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The hotter and drier climate trend will continue until almost all Douglas firs are dead, up to about 3,500 feet. I expect that we’ll see very widespread conifer death within ten years. With the backdrop of climate change, the definitive science by Bennett et al (2022), states that most lower elevation sites (under 3,500 feet) in interior southwest Oregon will be inhospitable for Douglas fir by 2055. This also means that we are just beginning to deal with this problem.

Applegate residents should consider what’s really in the SOS proposal. BLM’s SOS program will reduce wildfire hazards and create defendable corridors along

roads by commercial and noncommercial logging. A year or two after logging, residual fuel treatments like prescribed burning are planned. Moreover, “all healthy trees that show no signs of insect infestation or decline will be retained” (SOS EA page 26). So, it’s not as clear-cut as characterized by some.

BLM has no budget for this level of fuels reduction without selling merchantable timber to pay for fuels-reduction work. We need to log our way out of a problem. No other means is practical. Unfortunately, if history is a prelude, SOS will be thwarted by environmental lawsuit(s).

Medford BLM has a problem in that they exist in between laws and regulations, and decades of budget cuts. Moreover, much of what Medford BLM proposes is simply a legal or regulatory requirement. First and foremost among the laws is the 1937 O&C (Oregon and California) Act. O&C mandates timber production, both harvesting and growing. BLM has no choice but to work within the laws and regulations. All of this becomes our problem too.

The SOS Environmental Analysis is over 200 pages long. Due to the limited space available, I am unable to provide an in-depth analysis of the issues; however, I have written a paper about the SOS and more. If you email me at the address below, I’ll send you a pdf copy of my report.

Mark Hamlin
MarkFireSafeCouncil@gmail.com
Mark Hamlin has an MS in Wildland Resource Science from the University of California-Berkeley, 1977.

Electric vehicle charging in the Applegate Valley

BY SAM DENNIS

As more people drive electric vehicles (EVs), it is increasingly common to see them in the Applegate Valley. A frequent question is, “Is there anywhere in the Applegate to charge an EV?”

Any location with electricity can accommodate an EV charger, so Applegate residents do most of their EV charging at home. However, the Applegate offers few options to visitors.

Currently, there are only three dedicated EV chargers in the valley, located at Troon, Wooldridge Creek, and Quady North wineries. These are Level 2 chargers that can deliver six kilowatts of power, which will add about 20 miles of range per hour. All three chargers are free while you do your wine tasting. This scarcity of EV chargers offers a great business opportunity for owners of stores, restaurants, and lodging. EV drivers are always thinking about their next charging stop, and having a charger can help a business get discovered.

Over my eight years of driving an EV, I have found many out-of-the-way

shops and restaurants only because they were located close to a charging station. When looking for lodging, I routinely search to see which ones have EV charging.

If your business is considering installing EV charging, it is essential that the speed of the charger is compatible with the amount of time people typically spend at your location. For example, a location where people might spend 20-30 minutes, such as a coffee shop or bakery, really needs a high-speed direct current fast charger that can deliver 100-plus miles of range in that amount of time. That same fast charger would be overkill for a hotel, where people will be parked overnight, and a lower-cost Level 2 charger would be adequate.

Currently, federal and state governments, as well as Pacific Power, offer financial incentives for EV charger installation, so now is a great time to amp up your business.

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Amendment of the Northwest Forest Plan

BY CHERYL BRUNER

The amendments of the US Forest Service’s (USFS) Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP), as seen on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), are not all good.

The NWFP was enacted in 1994 after concerned Northwest citizens raised the alarm about the decimation of old-growth forests and ecosystems and the consequent loss of habitat for endangered species from decades of industrial old-growth logging on federal lands.

Under orders by President Clinton, the NWFP was created to conserve forests with trees at least 80 years old. This 30-year-old comprehensive document for wildlife and habitat conservation has helped save our coho salmon, provide clean drinking water, and mitigate climate change.

Now, in light of added concerns about biodiversity and increased effects of climate change, it is important to strengthen the NWFP’s protections for old-growth forests.

Some of the amendments suggested by the USFS look good, such as collaboration with the tribes, but some are misguided: changes that will increase logging in our mature and old-growth forests and decrease protection for imperiled species.

You may submit comments on the DEIS until March 17, 2025 by visiting fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsbdev2_026990. There, you can sign up for informational webinars, submit a comment, and view the entire DEIS. The following are some points to strengthen your argument about the need for protecting our remaining old-growth and mature forests.

- USFS should assess all forests. To combat climate change, safeguard biodiversity, reduce floods and erosion, protect drinking water, and decrease fire risk, all forests with trees 80 years old or more should be preserved. Water usage illustrates the importance of prioritizing the continued existence of mature forests that will develop into old growth. Approximately 80 percent

of Oregonians obtain their drinking water from forested areas. Studies have shown that streamflow is reduced by 50 percent in 40-year-old plantations versus 110-year-old forests and that this reduced streamflow persists throughout the year. Old forests also provide the purest water. Prohibiting the harvest of mature and old-growth stands will preserve streamflow and summer flows.

- Ask USFS to deemphasize wood extraction and to focus instead on biodiversity, climate mitigation, recreation, the economic benefits of clean water, and quality of life.
- Point out that USFS has the funds to restore forests and watersheds by decommissioning roads, repairing existing roads, and reducing road construction. Protecting wildland-urban interface communities from fire is more effective than logging and thinning forests. USFS funds used for these latter purposes could be redirected to educate communities about fire issues and to create defensible space 60-100 feet in the home ignition zone. Thinning forests destroys the understory vegetative layer, damages the soil, increases problems with wind damage and erosion, releases carbon, and destroys wildlife habit. Logging, thinning, and using fire suppression to prevent and treat fire outside of communities are not scientifically supported as the most effective tools in fire-prone areas.
- Tribes should be included in decision-making.
- Ecosystem management must be based on scientific research *in the specific localities*.
- USFS should conduct a landscape analysis of water quality and quantity, air quality, climate, recreation, presence of rare and sensitive species, habitat connectivity, and cultural use prior to implementing proposed forest changes.

Cheryl Bruner
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OPINION

Ideological diversity in the Applegate Valley

BY JIM REILAND

Shortly after Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election, I heard a radio interview with a New York liberal who couldn't believe that Trump had won because she "didn't know a single person who voted for him." After Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election, a Georgia conservative claimed during another radio interview that the election "must have been stolen" because he "didn't know a single person who voted for Biden."

Both voters expressed the disbelief and disappointment that roughly half of the country feels every four years. After recovering from the shock of losing, I hope they realized that their sample size—the people they know—was perhaps too small and lacking ideological diversity. They're not alone—we all tend to spend time with people who think like us because it's more comfortable, even as it contributes to our living in a bubble. So how did our neighbors vote?

If the 2020 and 2024 presidential elections indicate how voters lean (left or right), then the Jackson and Josephine county portions of the Applegate Valley lean right. As a whole, Applegate precincts are slightly more conservative than their respective counties.

Voting records from the County Clerks' offices show:

- In 2020, Jackson County voted 50.23 percent for Trump, 46.77 percent for Biden, and 3 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2024, Jackson County voted 51.64 percent for Trump, 45.22 percent for Harris, and 3.15 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2020, Josephine County voted 61.48 percent for Trump, 35.73 percent for Biden, and 2.79 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2024, Josephine County voted 62.72 percent for Trump, 34.11 percent for Harris, and 3.16 percent for a third-party candidate.

Since some Applegate Valley precincts include areas near Medford, Jacksonville, and Grants Pass that lie outside the Applegate Valley, it's impossible to determine with complete accuracy how the Applegate votes. However, it's likely that Applegate voters are proportionally similar to their respective counties.

- In 2020, Jackson County Applegate precincts voted 52.7 percent for Trump, 44.43 percent for Biden, and 3 percent for a third-party candidate.
- In 2024, they voted 56 percent for Trump, 40 percent for Harris, and 4 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2020, Josephine County Applegate precincts voted 64.9 percent for Trump, 33.1 percent for Biden, and 2 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2024, they voted 65.9 percent for Trump, 31.1 percent for Harris, and 3 percent for third-party candidates.

To avoid being blindsided by election results, we might ask, "Does our circle of friends and acquaintances reflect the ideological diversity of our community?" Being able to talk about our differences also illuminates how much we have in common. Similarly, organizations with a nonpolitical mission to serve our community (which probably accounts for most of the organizations in the Applegate Valley) might ask, "Do the people who staff, support, and volunteer for us reflect the ideological diversity evident in the voting record?"

If not, why not? It's a question worth trying to answer because we benefit from better knowing the many interesting and delightful people who are our neighbors—regardless of how they vote. And if we're trying to grow our organizations' reach and effectiveness, people all along the political spectrum could also share their insights, talent, passion, love of the Applegate, and financial support.

Choosing to stay in a bubble is our loss.

Jim Reiland • 541-200-9546
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Serony Bodywork. Massage therapist Haley Petersen has a new location in Jacksonville—660 G Street, upstairs in Suite D—and a new business name, Serony Bodywork. Serony (her neologism) describes the body after a massage—quiet, centered, calm—"the serene experience of harmony within the body, which can also be felt," she says, "after a sauna, a peaceful night's rest, a great workout, or when lying in tall grass, sunshine bathing your face, a warm breeze waving the grass around you." Haley offers deep tissue massage, myofascial release, relaxation, ashatsu (massage with the practitioner's feet), and Thai massage. \$130 for 75 minutes; \$150 for 90 minutes; \$210 for two hours. To book a session, call or text 541-324-8638, or email hmaylmt@gmail.com.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The wild turkeys

The article decrying the so-called lethal impacts of wild turkeys in the Winter 2024 edition of the *Applegater* is unfounded scientifically and violates common sense. First, precipitous wildlife declines and land degradation are the result of human activity—directly through hunting and habitat loss and, indirectly, through climate change. It is nonnative humans—not turkeys—who are "gobbling up" the land. Indeed, this land belongs to turkeys more than to humans because turkeys do not do unto us as we do to them.

Second, as the writer pointed out, turkeys are here because humans put them here. The turkeys had no say. Turkeys are sentient beings as deserving of respect and care as fellow community members. We are lucky to live with such beautiful neighbors. Gay Bradshaw, Jacksonville, OR

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Opinion pieces. Limited to 500 words; no images. Opinion pieces submitted by the same person will not be run consecutively. Responses to previously published opinion pieces will not be published. Must include publishable contact information (phone number and/or email address).

Letters. Limited to 200 words; must be signed, with a full street address or PO Box and phone number. Only the writer's name and hometown will be published.

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Email opinion pieces and letters to gater@applegater.org or mail to *Applegater*, Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

Navigating grief: A time for healing in our small community

BY HAYRIYA HEIDI HANSEN

As the holidays faded into the rearview mirror and the hustle and bustle wound down, many of us were left with quiet moments of reflection. For some, the holidays brought joy, connection, and cherished memories, but for others, the time stirred up feelings of loss, loneliness, and grief.

Grief has a unique way of showing up, often when least expected, and the year following the death of a loved one can be difficult. If you find yourself struggling, you are not alone. Grief is a natural response to loss, and it doesn't have a set timeline. In fact, it can often intensify after significant milestones, like birthdays, anniversaries, or the holidays. But acknowledging and embracing your emotions, however difficult, is an essential step toward healing.

Remember, grief is not linear. It doesn't follow a clear path or have a predictable timeline. For some, the initial shock and numbness of losing someone may give way to sadness, anger, or even guilt. For others, it may manifest as a deep sense of emptiness or a longing for a person who is no longer there. Every person's journey is different; there's no right or wrong way to grieve.

One of the most common feelings after a loss is a sense of being disconnected from the world around the grieving person. The holiday cheer and the promise of a new year can seem out of place, especially when weighed against the grief still heavy in one's heart. If you are finding it hard to get back to "normal" after the holidays, it's important to recognize that there's no rush. Grief takes time. It's okay to take it one day at a time.

In our small community, where many know one another, the emotional landscape is often intertwined. While that closeness can be a source of support, it can also be difficult if you're struggling to find the space to grieve privately. It's easy to feel as though you need to be strong for others or maintain a level of composure. However, it's important to remember that vulnerability is not weakness. Expressing your feelings, whether to friends, family, or in moments of solitude, is a powerful act of healing.

Though it may not seem possible in the early days of grief, you can take small steps to care for yourself as you move forward. Here are a few strategies that may help as you navigate grief:

- 1. Give yourself permission to grieve.** Acknowledge the pain and give yourself permission to feel what you feel. It's okay to miss your loved one and to grieve in your own way.
- 2. Find comfort in routine.** The beginning of a new year can feel overwhelming, especially if it marks the start of a year without someone who was once at your side. A return to routine—even small daily tasks like making a cup of tea or taking a walk—can provide a sense of structure and normalcy.
- 3. Reach out for support.** While grief can often feel isolating, it's essential to seek support. If you're struggling, reach out to friends, family members, or a support group. If needed, speak with a therapist who specializes in grief. Having someone to talk to can make a significant difference.
- 4. Honor their memory.** This can be especially healing when done through a ritual, a letter, or creating a memory book. This act of remembrance can provide comfort and allow you to feel connected to your loved one, even in their absence.
- 5. Take care of your physical health.** Grief is often not just an emotional experience, but a physical one as well. Ensure you're getting enough sleep, eating healthy, and moving your body, as all have an impact on your mental state.
- 6. Be patient with yourself.** Healing doesn't happen overnight. It's a process, not a destination.

In times of grief, community can be an invaluable resource. Whether it's a simple gesture of kindness—a phone call, a hug, or a shared meal—these acts can help.

Remember, though the pain of loss may never fully disappear, the love and memories of those who have died continue to shape us and can provide us with the strength to face each new day. The new year may seem daunting, but it also holds the possibility of healing and hope.

If you or someone you love is grieving, please contact the Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance at the number below for more information.

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

More thank-yous and a reluctant good-bye

BY DIANA COOGLE

First, a *huge* thank-you to all our wonderful supporters who made our NewsMatch campaign successful again this year. Thanks to this program by the Institute for Nonprofit News, and such generous response from our readers, the *Applegater* is on firm financial footing for the coming year.

And then, with regret, I must report the resignation of board member Margaret Patterson.

Margaret not only served as distribution manager; she was also that all-important person on a board who fills in when something needs to be done. Margaret was especially good at doing those kinds of things for our public events. In addition, she and her husband, Tom, who own Cascadia Vineyards and Winery, were always generous donors for those events.

We will miss Margaret's quirky humor and cheerful demeanor on the board. We wish her well as she and Tom move into their next ventures.

The obvious next statement is that we now have a position open for a new board member. Might that be you, dear reader? We are looking for people who are enthusiastic about the *Applegater* and can dedicate two hours a month to board meetings, plus time to fulfill the job that that person takes on, such as grant manager, archivist, events chair, and other positions.

If you are interested in joining the board and helping keep the *Applegater* vital in our community, let me know. You can email me at diana@applegater.org or call me at 541-846-7447.

I hope to hear from you! Thanks for caring about our community newsmagazine.

Diana Coogle
Chair, *Applegater* Board of Directors
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Got News?

The *Applegater* welcomes submissions!

We're your newspaper and want to share your news with readers throughout the Applegate Valley watershed's many neighborhoods.

What's going on around you? Let us know! Send your write-up and photos to gater@applegater.org.

Thanks! See you in the *Applegater*....

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Continued from page 5

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Let's Chat About Pump Houses!

from Tami Quinn Hollenbeck

When it comes to pump houses, the variety is delightful! Some resemble cozy doghouses, others take on the charm of quaint barns, and a few might even remind you of a nostalgic backyard retreat.

While aesthetics are important, don't forget that your well needs regular attention. A thoughtfully designed pump house can save you both time and money in the long run!

Before you finalize your well setup, consider how your pump house complements your property's overall vibe. Why not make it a statement piece instead of an eyesore? Plus, ensure it's easily accessible for you and any technicians who may need to service your equipment.

Whether you prefer a sleek modern design or a touch of rustic charm, your pump house can truly reflect your personality. So, what's your vision? Let's transform that 'box of chocolates' concept into a stunning reality!

The most practical design we recommend? A straightforward box with a removable or hinged roof over the well, complemented by a larger attached area for your pressure tank, storage, tools, and pump. Remember, easy access is key!

As you enjoy that refreshing glass of water, keep in mind: Water is a geological cocktail, so make sure to drink up!



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Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association spring events

BY AARON KRIKAVA

Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association (RVPBA) is offering a variety of fun and educational training events this spring.

Preparing for a landscape-scale event like a wildfire requires landscape-scale community collaboration. Rural communities like ours have always worked together for the health and well-being of the diverse environment we all enjoy and the communities we all care about. Developing a landscape that is resilient to natural events like wildfire requires maintenance and is a multistep and ongoing process. We are fortunate in our area to have many groups like the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC), the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). They can help with grant funding to implement the initial step of mechanical fuel reduction that the majority of our landscapes require after decades of fire exclusion.

The critical second step is prescribed burning. This is the best method to

maintain healthy and fire-resilient forests and woodlands around us. This is where community effort really makes a difference. Working together with our neighbors as part of the RVPBA, we can implement safe, effective, and inexpensive controlled burns in our area. In times of greater national turmoil and uncertainty, supporting and strengthening local relationships is even more important for the safety of our community. As we move into the spring-controlled burn season, the RVPBA is offering a variety of training events for folks to learn and practice their prescribed burning skills, so we'll be ready to go when the weather is right. If you'd like to be a part of this valuable work, join us at one of these events and sign up for our email list at roguevalleypba.com.

1. March 7—Property Evaluation Workshop and Field Tour

Location: Pacifica, 14615 Water Gap Road, Williams, 10 am-2 pm

Cost: Free

At this free workshop and field tour at Pacifica: A Garden in the Siskiyou,

we will explain the factors that go into evaluating a property for a prescribed burn and the considerations for laying out a burn unit. The tour will explore the property and see examples of areas that are ideal for burning and other areas that need more work before fire can be applied safely. These evaluations are the first step toward implementing a controlled burn. The



Applegaters increasing forest health and community wildfire resilience, working together to implement a controlled burn. Photo: Aaron Krikava.

more site evaluations we can accomplish, the more ecologically and socially beneficial burns we can conduct.

Register at form.jotform.com/242876871258168 or email clair@pacificagarden.org.

2. April 4, 5, and 6—IGNITE Prescribed Fire Skills training

Location: Siskiyou Field Institute, 1241 Illinois River Road, Selma, 9 am-5 pm

Cost: \$25

We are excited to have our second annual IGNITE Prescribed Fire Skills training at Siskiyou Field Institute. This training is for anyone who wants to learn about the intentional use of fire for healthy landscapes and safer communities. Experienced instructors will teach hands-on skills including weather monitoring, equipment use, ignition techniques, and basic burn planning. Additional talks will cover fire science, Indigenous cultural burning, and more. This event is offered in partnership with the OSU Extension's Fire Program and ODF. You can register at blogs.oregonstate.edu/ignite.

3. April 12—\$130/\$190 Field Day Exercise and Pack Test

Location: ODF Headquarters, 5286 Table Rock Road, Central Point, 8 am-3 pm

Cost: Free

This workshop is for anyone interested in learning the basic tools and skills of wildland firefighting (many of which are also useful for prescribed burning) and/or being certified for employment as a wildland firefighter. Training stations will include hand tools, their use and maintenance, ignition devices, fire engines, hose packs, and radio communication. In conjunction with free online coursework, this class will allow participants to complete the requirements to be qualified as a National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Fire Fighter Type 2 (FFT2/basic firefighter). For individuals seeking FFT2 certification, the necessary fire shelter deployment and arduous pack test will also be offered. For questions or to register, email RogueValleyPBA@gmail.com.

Aaron Krikava

RogueValleyPBA@gmail.com



Applegaters preparing tools for a community-led controlled burn. Photo: Chris Adlam.

Applegate Valley prescribed burn efforts

BY CLAIR HIGHFIELD

In the Applegate Valley, we have become familiar with fire and smoke over the past decade, and now community members are collaborating to reduce the risk of wildfires with prescribed burns. One of the most beneficial remedies to reduce wildfire risk is intentional, prescribed, controlled, or Indigenous-style fire. Wildfires, while dangerous, are also a natural part of many ecosystems, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, generations of fire suppression have led to the accumulation of excess vegetation and a higher risk of large-scale, destructive fires.

People in the Applegate Valley are coming together to conduct more community pile burns, prescribed burns, and educational opportunities through the Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association (RVPBA). The prescribed burn movement is community members working together to reduce fuels, restore ecosystems, and

improve our relationship with fire. The RVPBA helps residents work together to reduce fuel loads and enhance wildfire resilience in their neighborhoods. Prescribed burning requires significant community cooperation. Unlike traditional firefighting, which is often reactive, prescribed burning is proactive and relies on shared responsibility among landowners, agencies, and local groups. This is why the RVPBA began.

The RVPBA approach is rooted in collaboration. By organizing groups of landowners and providing the necessary tools and knowledge, the RVPBA fosters a collective effort that not only reduces wildfire risks but also strengthens community ties. The success of the Prescribed Burn Association has been evident through expanding partnerships and a proven track record of conducting safe, effective burns.



For residents of the Applegate Valley interested in joining the effort, the RVPBA offers a variety of ways to get involved. Whether through attending workshops, volunteering, participating in prescribed burn operations, or helping to feed volunteers on burns, there are opportunities for everyone to contribute to a safer, healthier landscape. To learn

more about the RVPBA's work in the Applegate and to sign up to volunteer or have your land tended, visit their website at roguevalleypba.com.

Recently, the RVPBA, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Services Fire Program, Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative, and Pacifica: A Garden in the Siskiyou have begun to collaborate to create more educational opportunities for community members, including students and families. Our next event, Intro to Planning a Prescribed Burn Workshop, is scheduled from 10 am-2 pm Friday, March 7, at Pacifica: A Garden in the Siskiyou, 14615 Water Gap Road, Williams. This workshop will explore the different factors involved in evaluating a site for a controlled burn, as well as layout and design of burn units. The workshop will be led by Chris Adlam, the OSU Extension Services fire specialist for southwest Oregon, and Aaron Krikava, the organizer of RVPBA. Register for the workshop using the QR code above. We hope to see you in the field soon!

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Dear Applegate children

BY THALIA TRUESDELL

Scientists have discovered what parents have always known, that children need to play outside every day, where they can see far away, which helps exercise their eyes. Check out the variety of science, discovery, and outdoor activities books we have on the Ruch Branch Library campus, including the A-Frame Bookstore and the Book Barn, and then head outside and *look!*

Take a book about the weather outside with you. On a warm day with some clouds, lie on your back and watch the wind blow the clouds into different shapes, and note how some of those shapes look like animals. You might see a running goose gradually turn into fish! And that fish might change into a T. rex! You never know. Notice the many different types of clouds in the book. Which ones can you see today?

Look carefully at the trees around you. Some have interesting branches that might be just perfect for supporting a floor for a little tree house. Find a book about tree houses with lots of pictures and some good building ideas, and then go on a tree hunt for the perfect tree to hold up your tree

house. Take a grown-up with you. What will you need to do this job? Make a list, draw a plan, find some helpers, and make a cool place to play.

If you wake up early in the morning, you will hear the birds singing in the spring. If you go outside and look into the trees, you will see them. Some like to hop on the ground. Get a bird book with pictures and names and see which birds are at your house. Look for nests in the trees. You could make your own bird book with drawings of birds you have seen.

In the spring, notice the catkins hanging from the alder trees along the river in Cantrall Buckley Park. There are millions of these hanging clusters of flowers. Do you see catkins or cones on other kinds of trees? Can you see any cones high up in the pine and fir trees in the park? You can collect different cones and fallen leaves and do some very fun art projects.

Did you know that for thousands of years salmon have come up the Applegate



Young children about to walk into a deep, dark forest.
Photo: Rachelle Thiel.

sunning themselves on logs in the spring, distant mountains, people boating, birds, and maybe a beaver or fish. We have books about local hiking trails and maps of the area.

The Cantrall Buckley Environmental Coloring Book was created by the children in Ruch Outdoor Community School in 2023. Some sixth graders researched the flora and fauna of the park, and then kindergarteners through fifth graders drew all the plants and animals, and the sixth graders arranged them onto the alphabetical pages. In the back are photographs of each of the entries, for reference. The books are available at the A-Frame Bookstore and the office of A Greater Applegate in Sunshine Plaza in Ruch. Take this valuable and timeless gem to the park with you as a field guide. How many of the animals can you see? Can you find the public art throughout the park? (See “A.”) You could press some of the wildflowers, with an adult’s help, and many books will show you art projects you can do with the dried flowers. Keep a copy of the coloring book/field guide in your car. See if other parks and places you visit have the same animals and plants.

Thalia Truesdell
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■ MCKEE BRIDGE

Continued from page 1

who helped the citizens do their thing and assure that the span remained sound”—friends like Strahl, McKee Bridge Historical Society (MBHS) Treasurer Dale Petracek, John Ifft with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and MBHS Secretary Barb Mumblo, with the US Forest Service (USFS).

In 1987, USFS ranger Dick Marlega hosted a meeting of 44 people at Star Ranger Station to form the Save McKee Bridge Committee, marshal money and resources, and perform the next round of extensive repairs. In just two years, a flurry of fundraisers—from bingo and chili feeds to the exquisite McKee Bridge Museum Quilt—raised \$68,830, qualifying for state lottery funds for the next round of repairs. Volunteers then gave time and labor on-site to make Port Orford roofing shakes the traditional way and to complete the interior after exterior siding was stripped and replaced.

The committee incorporated as the nonprofit McKee Bridge Historical Society in 1999. An inspection in 2011 revealed “serious structural deficiencies,” and the bridge was immediately closed. Again, the community rallied. MBHS raised over \$60,000 in matching funds for a Federal Highway Administration

grant. \$610,000 in rehabilitation work was conducted in 2014-15.

Maintaining our treasured bridge is an ongoing commitment. Last year, MBHS paid for the timbers and the Roads Department provided labor to replace deteriorated boards in the approach walkway. The next mandatory inspection (to be paid for by MBHS) will be performed in 2027; the last inspection cost \$12,000.

Of course, MBHS does much more than bridge work! We share stories and photos daily on Facebook and Instagram, constantly expand the Virtual Museum at mckeebridge.org, and host fun events like Christmas on a Covered Bridge.

Scholarship program

To date, our scholarship program has supported six Applegate scholars—and we are thrilled to announce these recipients for the 2025-26 school year:

- Evan Strickland, a senior at Logos Charter School, will study



New siding on McKee Bridge in 1995.

engineering and history at George Fox University.

- Ocean Demmin-Ferneau will continue at the University of Oregon, studying psychology and history.
- Timothy Root will enter his third year at Pensacola Christian College, majoring in mechanical engineering.
- Zeyna DiBiasi will continue as a business major, with emphasis on nonprofits, at Oregon State University.

Congratulations to these scholars, and congratulations to our community for keeping Oregon’s most beautiful

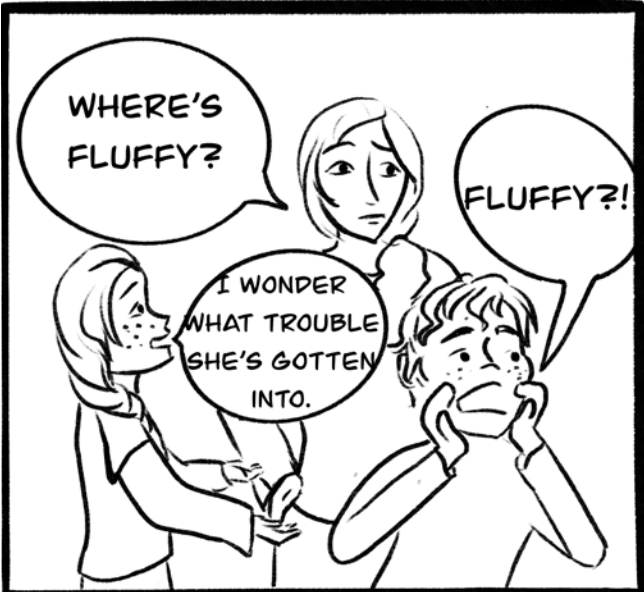


McKee Bridge under renovation.

covered bridge standing in every sort of breeze.

Laura B. Ahearn
Mckeebridge1917@gmail.com
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Ridiculous Rose by Salila Oldham



Salila Oldham, age 14, attends Hidden Valley High School, where she participates in soccer and track. Her favorite outdoor activities are skiing and rock-climbing. She lives with her family on their farm in the Applegate Valley.

NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

A season of learning at Applegate School

BY RENEE GOURLEY

Spring sets things abuzz at Applegate School. We are halfway through the school year. The kids are busy little bees. The kindergarteners and first-grade students are counting the days till the 100th-day-of-school celebration. The end of the second quarter is a great time to reflect on the first half of the year and celebrate the growth students have made.

Around Thanksgiving, the kindergarteners and first graders reflected on their gratitude for family, friends, food, and school. The holiday season was full of crafts, the whole-school Christmas program, and other activities. This year, the Christmas program was extra special because it was a short play written by a group of our middle-school students. This heartwarming story about family incorporated popular Christmas songs sung by each classroom. Families and other guests sang together at the end of the program and enjoyed a holiday lunch with the children afterward.

Around Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in January, second- and third-grade students learned about Dr. King's life and talked about their own dreams and goals.

It is amazing to watch the students expand their knowledge through hands-on learning! Second- and third-grade students learned about different types of weather and made clouds in a bottle during garden club. They learned how airplanes fly and made their own paper airplanes, using the scientific method to design and test them, and making changes to see if they could make them fly better. Seventh-grade students wrote creative name poems, researching their names, interviewing family members about them, and taking a look at their own characteristics. Each student then crafted a creative poem about their name, what it means to them, and how it has shaped who they are. At the end of the project, the students made stained-glass paper nameplates to display their poems.

The school continues to enjoy a partnership with White Oak Farm. The farm volunteers have led the students in activities like making corn tortillas and parsley pesto and using microscopes to learn about soil structure. Students always look forward to the garden club!

A group of older students are doing art with Linda Kappen, who has graciously volunteered to lead this after-school group during her retirement.



Cougars

We are the blue and white
We will use all our might
If we lose, at least we tried
We will still have our Cougar pride

By Marquee Hersha

The SMART (Start Making a Reader Today) program has returned this year. A group of wonderful volunteers come every week to read with students. Each is paired with a child to share books with them, modeling the joy of reading while supporting the child's efforts to read independently. The student then gets to keep the book.

Meanwhile, many older students have been preparing for the Oregon Battle of the Books. They have been reading the books on the list. In the competition, students answer questions to earn points for their team. This year, an amazing parent volunteer, Jeneane Morrison, has been coming weekly to help the fifth-grade team prepare.

With literacy being a focus at the school, we were excited for the annual Family Literacy Night at the end of February, hoping to meet or exceed last year's attendance of around 100 people and last year's giveaway of nearly 75 books to participants of all ages, toddler through adult. At this annual event, families participate in activities like experiencing an escape room and making bookmarks. This year, the theme was literary genres, with a focus on Greek mythology.

Applegate School has an after-school sports program for any fifth- through eighth-grade student who wants to join. Team coaches Diana West and I teach the basic skills of basketball and enjoy watching the players grow in their abilities throughout the seasons. The students are encouraged and cheered on by staff, students, families, and friends at the games, and the team loves seeing the Applegate Cougar Pride!

This is just one thing that makes Applegate School so special.

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ROCS students being interviewed by local news stations. Photo: Ryan King.

ROCS students raise funds for people impacted by California wildfires

BY RYAN KING

Inspired by a writing prompt on New Year's goals, fourth-grade students at Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS) exercised compassion for California communities impacted by wildfires. They organized a fundraiser for World Central Kitchen, a charity organization providing meals for people in crisis. Fire hats sat in each class as preschool through eighth grade students raised cash donations for wildfire victims in southern California. The fundraising mastermind was fourth-grader Carl Ehlig.

"Our community is impacted by wildfires, too, so this is something our school can do to help other communities," Carl said. He says that the students learned that fundraising can be hard, but teaches them hospitality. The goal was \$902.72, the zip code for the Palisades. After two weeks, the students surpassed their goal with a total amount of \$1,225. One of the fundraising frontrunners was kindergartener, Emma Herud, who raised \$270.

"[I want to] help them get some more food and, over the future, help them get houses again." Her mom was inspired to see Emma's generous response after seeing the impact of the Alameda Fire. "I think it's absolutely incredible, especially since all of us still have memories of a few years ago, and watching fires affect our community," said Jeanna Herud.

Thank you to the local businesses that also supported this project:

- Applegate Valley Fire District
- Black Barn Farm
- Ruch Country Store
- Ruch Hardware Store
- Sweets N Eats

Ryan King
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Medford School District
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Ruch Outdoor Community School Fundraiser
Funds for the Families and Firefighters

PUT COINS OR CASH IN THE FIRE HELMETS IN EACH CLASS

ALL DONATIONS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN, A CHARITY ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES MEALS FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS. THEY ARE HELPING THOSE AFFECTED BY THE FIRES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. WEBSITE: [HTTPS://WCK.ORG/](https://wck.org/)

Tuesday, January 28 - Friday, January 31

The class with the most donations wins a pizza party!

World Central Kitchen

Ruch School fundraiser flyer.

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Photos, clockwise from top left:

- Kaitlin and Jacob Hills, with kids, Abigail and Sam**, kept themselves entertained with the Applegater while at Disneyland, in Anaheim, California.
- Brie Emerson and Sang Montage** treat the Gater to an evening of fine dining at Taylor Shellfish Oyster Bar in Seattle, Washington.
- Erik Weiser** brought along the Applegater as his guide and translator while sightseeing at the ruins of Olympus, near the town of Cirali in southwestern Turkey.
- Diana Coogle's son, Ela Lamblin**, hurries over to see what she's so excited about in the latest edition of the Gater on their ski trip to Methow, Washington.
- Josephine and Ozzie Grice** get their "kicks on Route 66" with the Gater in Oatman, Arizona.

Thank you!
The Applegater enjoyed traveling with you!



Keep those articles, letters, opinions, and "Reading the Gater" photos coming in. You are the Gater!



Meat Bonanza May 9 & 10

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