

The *Applegater* welcomes William Whitney and Rachel Arappagis

The current members of the *Applegater* Board of Directors—Barbara Holiday, Laura Duey, Margaret Patterson, and I—are pleased to welcome two new members. Whit Whitney, who joined in January of this year, and Rachel Arappagis, who joined in February, bringing wonderful energy and important skills with them.

William Whitney, who goes by Whit, brings many skills to the board: writing, editing, copy-editing, photography, art, and website design. He worked for 25 years as an art director at a large New York City ad agency, then served as the same company's executive creative director in Los Angeles. He and his wife, Cheryl, have lived in the Applegate since 2016. (See his first official article for the *Applegater* on page 26.)

Rachel Arappagis, who grew up in Medford and has lived in Williams for the past five years, has become our new ad manager. Hurrah! We *needed* someone to do this job, and we couldn't have found anyone more suitable. She describes herself as being "process-driven and good at solutions analysis."

Whit has had experience working with a number of nonprofits, among them the McKee Bridge Historical Society and a group called WAEV, which helps women in polygamous African countries who have been thrown out of their households (and tribes or communities) when their husbands take another wife. He and Cheryl also volunteer at Mercy's Gate, which works to fend off homelessness for people undergoing financial crisis. Now he is adding the *Applegater* to the list of organizations he volunteers for.

Rachel works in digital marketing at Rogue Credit Union, which invests and supports the communities it serves and encourages its employees to volunteer in their own communities. Now that she and her partner, Jared, have finished building her mother's dream house in Williams, she is ready to spend time helping her community. We are so lucky that she chose the *Applegater*!

Sincere thanks to both Whit and Rachel for giving their energy and expertise to the *Applegater*. I, personally, and also the rest of the board, look forward to working with them both.

Diana Coogle, Chair, *Applegater* Board of Directors
diana@applegater.org



William (Whit) Whitney



Rachel Arappagis

Upcoming events at Sugarloaf Community Association

BY WINDSONG MARTIN

The Sugarloaf Community Association (SCA) is a nonprofit organization established in 1997. The seven-acre park-like property, located at 206 Tetherow Road, Williams, was purchased via numerous generous donations and is available for use by the community from sunrise to sunset daily.

There are two playgrounds and a new Sport Court for basketball, pickleball, shuffleboard, roller skating, and other sports. There is also a band shell, a large soccer field, a community resource center, and a small classroom on the land.

SCA spring and summer events

- Tree-grafting Scion Exchange, noon-4 pm Saturday, March 10.
- Earth Day 2024 celebration, Sunday April 21. Music, environmental education, and games for the whole community. Stay tuned for more details on our website at sugarloafcommunityassociation.org.
- The 2024 Williams Farmers Market will open at 4-6:30 pm Monday, May 6, and continue on Mondays through October.
- We will continue to host free First Monday Concerts, sponsored by our Monday Pub through their sales of hot food and beverages at market each week.

The farmers market will remain a place to purchase fresh organic produce, bread, plants, various herbal products, and delightful handmade items from local artisans, as well as a hub for community connection.

We expect to again distribute over \$14,000 EBT/SNAP dollars and to offer Double Up Food Bucks to EBT customers to spend on quality food with our Applegate Valley farmers! Come join in the fun.

More wonderful offerings will be announced on our website.

SCA hosts community events

SCA is a volunteer-run collective space that hosts community events and groups like the Rogue Writers Guild, Klamath Siskiyou Herbal Alliance, and Rogue Harm Reduction. If you are interested in using the space for a workshop or a class, please email sugarloafcenter@gmail.com. We aim to make the space accessible!

For more details, visit sugarloafcommunityassociation.org. For general inquiries, email the SCA Board of Directors at info@sugarloafcommunityassociation.org.

For information about using the band shell and SCA grounds, which are available for concerts, classes, sports, and community events, please write to events@sugarloafcommunityassociation.org.

We encourage everyone who uses the grounds to help keep it beautiful! It is a precious community resource that we hope will last for many generations.

Windsong Martin
SCA Board Member
windsongmusic21@gmail.com

■ KARA OLMO

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Kara Olmo tastes a wine in the barrel room at Wooldridge Creek Winery.

Beyond her business endeavors, Kara made significant philanthropic contributions to the Applegate Valley community and throughout southern Oregon. She served on the Three Rivers School District Board and was chairperson for the last two years of her term. She successfully petitioned for a \$1.2-million grant to revitalize the classic Applegate School building. She served on the boards of GACDC (now A Greater Applegate), Oregon Live, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, and the Applegate Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area), and generously supported other environmental and artistic groups with her time and funding.

Kara was a dedicated mother to her four children. She loved books, music, travel, and hosting dinner parties that went late into the night. Known for her quick laughter, Kara was endlessly generous with advice and time for friends. She leaves a void that will be hard to fill.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Kara's name are encouraged for the *Applegater*, A Greater Applegate, the Britt Education Fund, or Barnstormers Theatre.

Tributes to Kara Olmo

Recently the Applegate Valley lost a beautiful soul and community member. Kara Olmo's three-year battle with cancer came to an end on December 14, 2023. Kara's impact on our community was wide and deep. I had the opportunity to work closely with Kara on just a few of her many passion projects and want to pay tribute to her work, her heart, and the amazing vision she had in every dream she imagined and brought to fruition.

Kara came into my life in 2010, when I was principal at Applegate School. A shared friend introduced us, saying, "You two have to meet. Kara will rock your world." And rock my world she did. In Kara I saw someone who was ready to make a difference, someone who saw a need and an opportunity in the Applegate School community to do some incredible work, someone who had a drive and a focus rarely seen in a true dreamer.

Through her steadfast vision, Kara secured a million-dollar grant to retrofit the Old Building at Applegate School so students could once again fill its rooms. She created The Friends of Applegate School, which provided a robust strings program for third- through eighth-grade students, an Artist-in-Residence program for all students at Applegate, and a wonderful after-school gardening program run by Linda Kappen, the infamous butterfly lady.

Kara committed countless hours and personal resources to Applegate School for many years. And if that wasn't enough, she also joined the Three Rivers School District Board of Directors, serving from July 2013-June 2017, including a stint as board chair. Those were challenging times on the board and for our school district, and Kara faced each challenge with a sharp focus on what was best for our students and how to add to and enrich their lives.

Applegate School, Three Rivers School District, and the Applegate community owe Kara and Wooldridge Creek Winery so much gratitude. Her grace, her huge heart, and her brilliant mind worked tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of so many. Thank you, Kara. So many of us gained so much by sharing in your life, in your generosity, and in your kind and feisty spirit. Thank you for showing up, doing the important work, and making a difference every single day. The Applegate is a better place because of you.

Stephanie Allen-Hart
Former Principal, Applegate School
stephanie.allen-hart@threerivers.k12.or.us

While Kara Olmo is probably best known for her part in creating a wonderful wine and cheese experience at Wooldridge Creek Winery, she was very involved and committed to her community. She made a great many contributions to southern Oregon and had a passion for the Applegate Valley in particular.

Kara was a member of the board of the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation (GACDC) for over six years. GACDC was originally created as a community organization to manage Cantrall Buckley Park when Jackson County did not have the resources to do so. The organization also served in other ways to improve the quality of life in the Applegate and eventually became the organization now known as A Greater Applegate.

Her fellow board members remember her as a strong and thoughtful voice on GACDC. She was key to many fundraising efforts, winemaker dinners at the park, and Applegate Valley Days. She helped bring focus to the all-volunteer group and was one of the first to promote the idea of having a farmers market in the Applegate as a way of furthering community connections. Kara helped

guide the all-volunteer organization, offering ideas, connecting with the businesses and wineries of the valley to help support Cantrall Buckley Park—and always bringing the wine.

Bonnie Rinaldi
Former Chair, GACDC
bonnie@rinaldinet.com

We first met Greg and Kara around 2003 when they had completed their studies in enology at Fresno State University. It took them three meetings to convince us to start a winery. From the beginning, Kara was the one with the big ideas who did not know the meaning of the word "no."

She started the Wooldridge Creek Wine Club by offering a one-night stay per year in the Carriage House apartment. When memberships exceeded 400, it dawned on her one day that "Oops, we might have a problem." We all had a good laugh over that.

From the beginning, she was interested in making cheese. Several years later, when we realized that we needed to offer food to our guests, she was instrumental in getting Crush Pad Creamery going.

Cheese was almost more of a passion for her than wine, and she spent many evenings in our small facility. When we needed a larger creamery, she was instrumental in the design and oversaw the construction of the Big White Barn.

She served on the Oregon Wine Board and spent many hours on the phone and in her car on 1-5 in pursuit of furthering the wine industry in southern Oregon. Her enthusiasm in support of Wooldridge Creek Winery and the southern Oregon wine industry was a large factor in the wine industry's success over the years. Thank you, Kara.

Ted and Mary Warrick
Owners, Wooldridge Creek Winery
wooldridgecreek@earthlink.net