

Becky Bass uses her understanding of animals to rehabilitate sick and injured wildlife so they can return to the wild when possible. Jax, a gray fox, lives with Becky because he is missing leg.



Keeping the Wild **WILD**

Animal rehabilitator lives to see critters returned to the woods

By Craig Reed

Becky Bass' story of how she became a member of Umpqua Wildlife Rescue begins with orphan ducklings.

She saw the baby birds while taking a walk in the Roseburg area in 1997. Becky, a medical and wildlife biology teacher at the time, knew it was best to leave the young ones alone with the understanding the mother would eventually return to her brood. But Becky looked around the area and could not see a mother duck.

So she gathered up the ducklings, took them home and called the Umpqua Wildlife Rescue. A

UWR representative and rehabilitator came to the Bass house and took the ducklings. The representative encouraged Becky to give wildlife rehabbing a try.

That was 20 years and about 1,200 animals ago. That is how many wild inhabitants have passed through the care of Becky, who became a licensed rehabilitator in 1998. Most of those animals, whether they were injured, sick or orphaned, were successfully rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

Two, however, live with Becky and her husband Bob. They are a hoary bat, Galaxy, who cannot fly, and a gray fox named Jax, who lost a leg because of an encounter with a badger.



This hoary bat named Galaxy is another patient that cannot be released to the wild because it cannot fly.

The bat and fox are used in educational presentations, and have made numerous visits with Becky to schools and to community events.

“I’ve always been fascinated with wildlife,” Becky says. “As a kid, I hiked a lot. My dad (Robert Rueckert) was into nature. I took a lot of wildlife-oriented classes in college.”

Becky earned her bachelor’s degree in biology and her master’s in secondary science education. She taught at Roseburg High School while she got hands-on experience at home by rehabbing rescued wildlife.

“It just clicked for me, it fit,” she says of being a rehabilitator. “I feel like this is what I was born to do. I love it. It’s the best hobby you can have.”

Becky now teaches the weekend class she took to become a wildlife rehabilitator. In addition to the class, a person must pass a free test, and an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist must inspect a person’s rehab facility before a wildlife rehabilitation license is granted.

Someone interested in becoming a licensed wildlife rehabilitator is first an apprentice, working with a more experienced rehabilitator for a year and usually working with baby wildlife before taking on older animals.

“You start with easy animals, then work your way up,” Becky says.

Umpqua Wildlife Rescue and its members work under the guidance of the Roseburg office of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. UWR presently has seven licensed rehabbers and six apprentices.

“We get up to 500 animals a year,” Becky says. “We are very understaffed.”

Tod Lum, the ODFW biologist who provides UWR with guidance, says the rehabilitators provide an important function.

“Umpqua Wildlife Rescue fills a need, a gap,” Tod says. “The rehabbers serve the public and the department by taking care of those individual animals and birds that we just don’t have the time for. The department is most concerned about the overall care and health of a population, while the concern of a person who calls is over an individual animal. We just don’t have the time or manpower to take care of individuals, and the rehabbers fill that need.”

The mission of the Umpqua Wildlife Rescue is to release the successfully rehabbed animals back into their wild habitat. They are released within 5 miles of where they were found.

“To take in an animal that’s in a fragile state and then to see it released back into the wild is my biggest thrill as a rehabilitator,” Becky says. “To turn it loose in the wild, to see it run away, there’s no better feeling.”

Through the years, Becky has gradually specialized in rehabbing mammals.

“I think I can read them better, especially foxes and bobcats,” she says. “Their behavior personalities fascinate me a lot.”

“The intelligence of foxes is amazing. Their instincts tell them to not show any weakness at all. It’s a challenge to figure out whether they are sick or hurt.”

Becky and Tod say many animals come to UWR rehabbers from people who have found babies and then try to turn them into pets.

“That never ends well,” Becky says. “They are still wildlife.”

Biologists and rehabilitators advise leaving the babies alone. The mother is usually close by. But if a day or so passes and the babies haven’t moved and are crying, it is time to call for help.

Without a rehabilitator license or permit, people who try to turn wild babies into pets cannot get veterinary care when the animal has health issues.

“From my experience, people wanting to care for these babies don’t know how to keep them wild,” Becky says. “They see cute little animals they want to cuddle. But it is a very tricky process to feed wild animals, especially if they are starving. You have to be able to read the animals. Are they crashing? You might have to be up all night caring for them. You have to know how, or it is so easy to kill them.”

Becky and the other rehabbers are rewarded when their time and effort saves an animal from that possibility, and they see it run or fly off into the wild. ■

Umpqua Wildlife Rescue

Founded in 1988, Umpqua Wildlife Rescue’s goal is to return animals to the wild. Its volunteers are active in wildlife education, fundraising and providing awareness of animal needs to the community. It also presents educational programs on native wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation.

UWR represents a small group of licensed wildlife rehabilitators with specialized facilities to maintain the animals in a natural, wild state.

Call (541) 440-6895 for advice about a wild animal or if you have a bird or mammal in need of rescue.



Volunteer Paul Tovey drives 27 miles to volunteer with the food pantry.

Goldson Food Pantry Takes a Bite Out of Hunger

1,778 people in the Cheshire area received food support in 2017

By Pam Spettel

On the second Thursday of each month at the Goldson Grange, someone call outs, “Two on Sonja’s cart,” or “Six on James’ cart.”

That signals volunteers to load their carts with food boxes apportioned to serve various family sizes. The boxes include canned goods, rice, beans, frozen vegetables and meats, bakery items, fresh produce and a few snacks to last each family three to five days.

“I got a call yesterday,” says Goldson Food Pantry Manager Becky Cornforth. “A young man lost his job and he needed resources to feed his kids. You think you’ve good employment, but then you lose your job and don’t know how you’re going to feed your children.”

Goldson Food Pantry provided an average of 40 boxes a month in 2017. Despite many improving economic indicators, slightly more people needed assistance in 2017 than in 2016.

“A lot of our people are 55 and older,” says Becky. “We see a combination of Social Security not keeping up and health issues creating a need. And, people

of our older generation often have only one pension or Social Security. In those days, he went to work and she stayed home with the family. That’s catching up with some of our neighbors. We also help a fair amount of people with children, and more multiple families living on one property with only one or two people in the whole group with a paid position.”

The Goldson Grange has been a base for distributing food to people in need in the Cheshire area for more than 30 years. Through the years, the food pantry became its own 501(c)(3) that still operates out of the grange. Fifteen volunteers, including a five-person board of directors, keep it going.

Cathy Cascade, a pantry volunteer for six years, has been involved in food distribution her whole adult life. She ran a food co-op out of her barn in the ’70s, was in a food buying club, and helped at other food pantries throughout her years.

“People need food,” says Cathy. “It’s very fundamental, energizing and joyful, whatever the setting is. A lot of our clients are wonderfully memorable people. It stands out to me how many clients are helping others themselves. They’re sharing and



Left, volunteer Sonja loads monthly boxes with canned goods.

Above, the results of the teams work is now ready to be picked up.

helping others they know in the face of their own circumstances.”

The Goldson Food Pantry is a partner agency of Food for Lane County, whose mission is to alleviate hunger by creating access to food. That makes it a part of the greater Oregon Food Bank statewide network that collects food from farmers, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, individuals and government sources. The food is distributed through a network of 21 regional food banks and approximately 970 other partner agencies.

The boxes are given out once a month, and volunteers work to have them ready a week ahead of time. Boxes can be packed to accommodate various dietary needs such as gluten free, vegetarian, and nut, MSG and dairy allergies. An emergency phone number is available to community members if there is a food emergency mid-month.

“We’re here to help people in temporary distress,” says Sonja, a volunteer for several years. “We set out a table of recipes that use the foods in the boxes. The table also has information about veterans’ organizations, community service information and other resources.

“I got food boxes when I went to college. It’s a choice sometimes between being warm and eating.

We are people helping people here.”

Volunteer Paul Tovey keeps coming even though he has moved out of the area.

“I enjoy the camaraderie that goes with it,” says Paul. “I’m helping someone at the same time. I don’t mind the 27-mile drive. The people we help are in need in some way, or they wouldn’t be here.”

The newest volunteer in the group, Mary Beckman, was recruited when she retired last October.

“It’s heartwarming seeing families with small children get excited about things in their boxes they wouldn’t be able to buy at the grocery store,” she says. “I’ve been a volunteer all my life. I get fulfillment giving back to the community. It’s nice to be able to help.”

Volunteer James Seale is back at it after a 12-year hiatus. He was the to oversee the pantry when it started 30 years ago.

“I’m now retired, and I like helping people,” says James. “They all touch my heart—every one of them. “I like seeing people have what they need and enjoy what they have. The hardest part is not being able to help with their other needs.” ■

Tax-deductible donations to the Goldson Food Pantry can be made at PO Box 130, Cheshire, Oregon, 97419.



Jay Mathisen, assistant superintendent of the Bend-La Pine School District, far right, talks to Rwandan teachers after a group of Oregon educators shared feedback about classroom visits at their school.

Photos courtesy of Robi Phinney

Teachers Teaching Teachers

Central Oregon educators find unique learning experience, in a small country seeking to improve students' lives

By Craig Reed

Wanting a different experience in education, Robi Phinney signed up for a trip to Rwanda.

She and four other educators from the Bend-La Pine School District made the long flight to the country in the middle of Africa last June. The purpose of the two-week trip was for the five Oregon visitors to teach and share their own teaching experiences with teachers in Rwanda.

The trip was organized by Jay Mathisen, assistant superintendent of the Bend-La Pine School District. He has made several summertime trips to the African country with Bend-La Pine teachers.

The students were Rwandan teachers ranging in age from the early 20s to late 30s. They understood and spoke English, so communication wasn't an issue.

Robi, who is in her third year as principal at La Pine Middle School, says English is taught to Rwandan children beginning in grade school.

"I didn't know what to expect, but what surprised me the most was their absolute willingness to take in all the things we were teaching, their willingness to learn anything," Robi says. "They were very dedicated to improving themselves and to improving their practice. They asked a lot of questions and even pushed back on some of our ideas, asking, 'How would that work for us?'"

A study done in 2015 suggests that while enrollment in Rwandan primary schools is high, completion rates are low. The country's literacy rate—defined as those aged 15 or older who can read and write—was 71 percent in 2009, up from 38 percent in 1978 and 58 percent in 1991.

The hope is that with some professional development, the

Additional African Adventures

In addition to being in the classroom during their visit, the Oregon teachers had time to tour around Rwanda—one of the smallest countries in Africa. At 10,169 square miles, Rwanda is a little larger than Maryland, which is 9,774 square miles.

The teachers spent a day at Akagera National Park, where they saw giraffes, zebras, elephants, baboons, water buffalo, hippopotamus and numerous other animals. They also visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial and Museum, Lake Kivu, the Kimironko Market and Heaven restaurant.

The Kigali Genocide Memorial is home to the remains of more than 250,000 victims of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994. It also honors the more than 1 million Rwandans who were killed during that time.

Lake Kivu is a freshwater lake known to experience volcanic activity. Scientists suggest that significant volcanic interaction with the lake's bottom water could release methane and carbon dioxide, resulting in a devastating impact on those who live in the lake's basin.

The Kimironko Market in Kigali City features local foods, fabrics, clothing, baskets, crafts and souvenirs.

Heaven restaurant is a working training facility for those who want to learn culinary and hospitality skills. ■

Rwandan teachers can improve both the learning experience and the literacy rate for their students.

Robi says she saw the value in having several days of professional development rather than just single days. She says the extended time provided for not only learning, but practicing before returning to the classroom.

Back at La Pine Middle School, Robi says she started the school year with some focused professional development.

"I think I got a clear view of how professional development can work—different coaching models—and I've tried to use them," the principal says.

Robi was the first from her school to make such a trip. She says she would recommend it to others.

Robi, 37, is a 1997 Newport High School graduate who earned her bachelor's degree from Western Oregon University in 2002 and her master's in education from Eastern Oregon University in 2004. She taught at Pine Ridge Elementary School in Bend from 2004 to 2014. She then moved to La Pine Middle School, where she taught for one year before becoming principal. At the same time, she earned her doctorate in education from the University of Oregon.

Robi says making the trip to Rwanda opened up her world perspective.

"It makes you rethink some of our systems as well," she says.



Primary students work on handwriting in a rural Rwanda school.



La Pine Middle School Principal Robi Phinney says a visit to Rwanda has changed the way she looks at professional development.

Photo courtesy of Bend-La Pine Schools

Robi says the Rwandan children were interested in the white skin of the visiting teachers.

"Most of them haven't seen something like that," she says, adding the children were "very, very polite and welcoming. They would say 'Hello' and 'Thank you.' They were excited to have us there, to show us their school and to practice their English with us."

Robi says her first trip to Rwanda left her interested in returning, possibly this summer. She says she benefitted from the experience.

"When you help people, it can help you more than it helps those who you are helping," she says. "The benefit you can get from helping others can be well worth the time and effort." ■

Schooled in Music

Playing banjo, ukulele, accordion and washboard, Aaron and Nicole Keim make back-porch music as The Quiet American

By **Stu Watson**

Aaron Keim is joking a bit when he says he and his wife, Nicole, have 90 jobs. Spend a little time with the couple, however, and it's apparent they have more than a few irons in the fire.

The couple make and perform folk music, by themselves as The Quiet American, as well as teamed up with jug-band buddies. They also teach people to sing and play banjo and ukulele.

Aaron makes and sells the musical instruments they play: banjos, ukuleles and "banjo-ukes," a hybrid with qualities of each instrument.

The Keims record and sell their music, produce YouTube videos to help people learn technique and songs, and maintain three web channels. To support all that, they produce a line of instructional books, all hand-lettered and illustrated by Nicole.

Nicole also produces a variety of embroidered products, from hair clips to wall hangings, which she sells online through her Marmalade Creations store at Etsy.

From their home-based headquarters along the Middle Fork of the Hood River near Tucker Bridge, the couple say they are somewhat amazed and amused by the whirlwind of activity that is their life. It gives them a sense of self-sufficiency greater than the precarious single-job career paths followed by people of their parents' generation—the Baby Boomers.

Aaron is the son of a veterinarian



Aaron and Nicole Keim in Aaron's workshop at the couple's home along the Hood River.

and a farm extension agent. Nicole's father ran a service department at an auto dealership, and her mother was a beautician.

If any of their parents had lost their jobs, it would have been a shock. It's a different scenario for Aaron and Nicole.

"We're ready for whatever happens," Aaron says. "If one thing changes, the other things we do are ready."

"I could go back to teaching," says Nicole, who taught elementary school after securing two degrees in music education and migrating to Colorado from the upper Midwest.

"If I couldn't build ukes, I could repair," says Aaron.

"Most people think this is neat," Nicole says of their life.

"We're doing old-timey things but using technology to connect with people," Aaron says.

Also a child of small-town Wisconsin, Aaron studied music education before pursuing a master's in musicology in Boulder, Colorado.

Nicole, who sang with the Ars Nova Singers in Boulder, joined Aaron and other musicians in the Boulder Acoustic Society.



Left, a collection of instruments awaits a talented hand. Right, as much as Aaron likes making musical instruments, it all derives from his love of playing what he calls “old-timey” American folk music.

While performing at a festival in Boulder, Aaron and Nicole met Gordon and Char Mayer, tech “retirees” who were making dulcimers and guitars in White Salmon, Washington, and later branched into making ukuleles under the Mya-Moe label.

A passionate ukulele player since 2004, Aaron had taught himself—with the advice of more experienced craftsmen—to build his own ukes. That’s where he developed the banjo-uke, and started the Beansprout brand in 2007 with Heidi and Rob Litke.

After he and Nicole decided to move seven years ago to the Gorge—and Aaron went to work with the Mayers—he folded his Beansprout models into the Mya-Moe catalog.

“We moved here because of Gordon and Char,” Aaron says. “We had three goals: build more instruments, play music and start a family.”

They have done all three. Their son, Henry, is 3½ years old.

Aaron says his time with Mya-Moe has also boosted his craftsmanship.

“Going to work for Gordon and Char

really upped my woodworking game,” he says.

Now, as the Mayers prepare to retire again next year, Aaron is preparing to absorb some of their business at his shop. But it isn’t the start of an expansive business model. He wants no employees. He wants only quality control.

“I’d like to work slower, make fewer but better, and charge more because I can,” Aaron says. “My goal is to make banjos and ukuleles under the Beansprout brand.”

Limiting his commitments will leave time for his other passions: making more music and spending time with Henry.

He and Nicole say the heart of their income stream is instruction.

“What pays the bills is adult learners,” Nicole says.

As demand grows for onsite instruction, books and videos, the couple relishes what they can impart to people of their parents’ generation.

“With every camp or festival, you make connections, expand your network of students, makers and performers,”

Nicole says.

She tells a story about teaching singing at a camp two years ago. An 80-year-old woman came up to her after the class, in tears.

“She said, ‘I’ve never heard my voice before. Thank you for providing this.’”

Aaron says many of the people who attend their instructional sessions are retired—or about to—after years in which they shelved their creative sides. Now those people are diving back in, many of them to a latent interest in the ukulele.

“The uke happened to us,” Aaron says. “We didn’t pick it. A lot of adults pick it up because it seems easy. Yes, anyone can do it, but it takes a lifetime to master it.”

The Keims see themselves as tour guides to the past for these people in their 50s and beyond.

“We’ve become ambassadors to the uke world,” Aaron says. ■

For more information, go to the Quiet American website, <http://quietamericanmusic.com>; the Beansprout website, www.thebeansprout.com; or the Marmalade Creations website, www.etsy.com/shop/marmaladecreations.



From left: Erik Vandagriff, Bert Farfan, Jason Tow, Rob Azevedo, Fred Somerville, Mitch Carr, Paul Erwin, Steven Dolloff, Jon Pilatti, Chaz Riggs and Klint Williams.

A New Era in Line Construction

By Donna Mills

Whoops and hollers erupted up a ravine and over a bluff. Cheers of linemen were echoed by a voice a half-mile from the service trucks coming over the co-op's radio, "Fifty-one minutes!"

That is how long it took eight linemen, a small ground crew and a helicopter pilot to set 10 new distribution poles for the E-line across rugged terrain last October.

Line construction over hills and mountains is nothing new to a lineman, but times are changing and, so too, are concerns and challenges for project managers.

PSREC's distribution

E-line, off Wingfield Road in Janesville, provides backup power through PSREC's cogeneration plant at High Sierra State Prison when the power goes down. The condition of the existing line limited PSREC's ability to parallel substations and stabilize system load from the Leavitt Substation during inclement weather.

Upgrading the E-line has been part of PSREC's construction work plan since 2007, with sections of the line completed in stages during the past 10 years. The decision to use the aid of a helicopter service to replace the poles came about in part due to environmental concerns.

"I knew this section was going to be the most challenging due to location, terrain, accessibility and land owner concerns," says Scott Welch, PSREC's north district manager. "We met with the land owners and the Department of Fish and Game, but were unable to secure approval on a new line location."

The project sat idle until 2017 due to other projects taking precedence. During that time, Scott was informed a portion of the subject property now had a wildlife conservancy easement through the same location PSREC was proposing to build its line.

"This knocked the wind out of me, and I thought there

is no way we are going to be able to continue now," says Scott.

Scott met with land owners and the conservancy group to look at the proposed route. He explained PSREC's methods of construction to minimize disturbance to vegetation and soil, and how the co-op would create a fire access road. To his surprise, the parties were receptive to the proposal and gave permission to proceed.

PSREC re-staked the new line location and began adding up project costs. Complying with best building practices to minimize disturbance, rebuilding washed out and overgrown access roads and restoring site to pre-proj-



A helicopter hovers with a weighted spool above Rob Azevedo while he ties a primary distribution line off at the last pole.

ect conditions upon completion would soon make the E-line project cost prohibitive.

“PSREC could have accomplished the project using conventional methods and ground equipment, but it would have taken much longer, cost the cooperative considerably more in capital and caused significant land and habitat disturbance which would then take years to recover. When Jason Tow, PSREC line foreman, and I discussed costs and looked for options, he suggested the crew hand dig holes and fly the poles in. When we totaled up these costs, I thought, ‘This might work.’ With all the environmental concerns, it just made sense.”

Scott contacted land owners and the conservancy group again to inform them PSREC would now use hand tools powered off a portable generator, and fly in the poles. They were pleased with the decision and gave permission to proceed.

“I told Jason if the crew was willing to pack in the tools and equipment necessary to complete the hand digging, then we would go for it,” Scott says.

Jason took things from there, setting up the schedule with the helicopter crew and making the arrangements with Nagel Ranch for the fly-yard staging.”

Setting the poles in record time allowed the crews to

plumb, stabilize and backfill all 10 poles, as well as re-string the spans the same day.

The helicopter lifted off around 10 a.m. to set new poles. After sinking each pole in its new location above the old line, the chopper picked up a retired pole and delivered it to a collection site before picking up the next new pole.

Fifty-one minutes later, Erik Vandagriff, chief pilot and director of operations of A&P Helicopters, landed his bird while the linecrew finished stabilizing and backfilling poles.

The crew broke for lunch around noon and discussed afternoon plans with Erik.

“Working with Jason over the phone was smooth” says Erik, gesturing a thumbs-up to PSREC’s crew. “You guys really did things right.

“When I showed up on the day of the lift, it just went off without a glitch. I think the big thing is Jason cared to do the very best and it showed.”

Erik flew four runs, pulling electrical cable off trailer-mounted reels below and draping them over crossarms and into the hands of linemen perched atop new 50-foot poles.

At the end of the day, Paul Erwin and Fred Somerville—both PSREC troublemen—listened to Erik on the radio as the helicopter pulled the last of the wire from the reel back at the truck, causing the spool’s inner boards to hurl in all directions.

“One more span to go... twenty feet...ten.... We are there.” ■



A line crew guides pole six from the helicopter into its receiving hole, where it is plumbed and stabilized before backfilling.

30 Years of Dedicated Service



Former County Sheriff Dan Watts heads toward new challenges

By Christina Sawyer

Born in Boulder City, Nevada, Dan Watts moved to Ely in 1987 when he was hired as a deputy for the White Pine County Sheriff's department. That was 30 years ago, and as his career changes paths, he reflects on his career.

Dan knew right away that Ely would become his home. He met and married a local girl in 1989, and they settled down to raise a family. He enjoyed being an active member of his community, volunteering as a middle school wrestling and football coach, and coaching high school football.

Just two years after he began his law enforcement career, Dan was promoted to sergeant/coroner. During that time, he was adamant about having a K9 unit in the department. Without funding for the program, he raised donations and applied for grants to cover the expenses on his own.

During his career, Dan worked with two K9 deputies; one was a donated military dog. Both of his K9 officers are credited for multiple arrests and drug seizures. Jerry and Buster are now retired from service, but the K9 program continued through Dan's tenure.

Dan says a career in law enforcement takes its toll. He recalls a domestic violence case that has haunted him. A man accused of pistol-whipping his wife while the couple was traveling through town was arrested. The woman was admitted to the local hospital. Prosecution restraints prevented the accused man from being convicted of the alleged crime, so he was released. His pistol was returned and the couple continued their travels.

Two weeks later, Dan learned the man had used the same weapon to kill his wife in a neighboring county. Dan says tragedies like that one pushed him to work toward stronger prosecution and better working relationships with prosecutors.

Sheriff Bernie Romero founded the task force that Dan continues as a grant administrator and executor. The task force is credited for the discovery of a drug lab in the Osceola area, which was linked to three additional labs in Texas, California and Nevada. Working with the Drug Enforcement Administration, all were raided simultaneously.

Also among the success stories of the task force are the marijuana fields discovered on Ward Mountain. This raid resulted in \$100,000 worth of drugs seized.

Dan says Bernie and Sheriff Buddy Sampson were as great role models.

"They always had the community's best interest at heart," says Dan.

In 2007, anxious to take the next step in his career, Dan ran for sheriff and was elected. He went on to serve three consecutive terms, always keeping his mentors' service mission in the forefront of his mind.

During his years on the force, Dan says he has seen great progress. He established a budget that has allowed for better training and safety equipment for the deputies. His tenacity toward the construction of a new jail and courthouse facility is near fruition; he has been devoted to the project since his first term in 2007. He has served as the president of the Nevada Sheriffs and Chief's Association from 2014 to 2015. Since 2013, he has served as a Peace Officer Standards and Training commissioner of Nevada, a role appointed by the governor.

The announcement of his leaving the sheriff's department in November came as a surprise since he still had a year left in his term.

"I won't apologize for taking a great opportunity when it arose," says Dan, who is now the Shoshone Tribe chief of police.

This next step in his career allows him to remain in the community he loves and continue working with great people.

"I still love getting up every day to go to work," says Dan. "The biggest difference this new path presents is I'll be going from knowing everything to knowing nothing."

Dan is optimistic he will help foster a great working relationship between the two departments.

Dan says his family is ready for the change and is excited about this new adventure.

The family's legacy in law enforcement continues. Dan's son, Brandon Neagle, serves the community of Reno, Nevada, as a law officer, and his daughter Danielle works for Las Vegas Metro PD as an administrator. His nephews, David Watts and Kolton Sampson, are also pursuing law enforcement careers.

Dan has high hopes for the department he leaves behind. He anticipates it will continue to work diligently through fair and aggressive enforcement of the laws, and continue to support the valuable task force and drug enforcement program in place.

Dan says he is confident he left the department in capable hands and is grateful to his staff, deputies, jailers and dispatchers. He is especially appreciative of Capt. Scott Henriod and Lt. Ray Sawyer, with whom he has shared a distinguished career. He says their continued support through the years is a constant reminder of the outstanding integrity of the White Pine County Sheriff's Department. ■



The 10,000-square-foot warehouse features four Dodge Vipers.

Photos by Jeff Scheid

Made for Speed, Built on Love

'Garage Mahal' a shrine to Pahrump couple's passion

By John M. Glionna

Virginia Von Quilich tours her personal automobile showroom, a vast 10,000-square-foot car cathedral and warehouse of wild wheels in north Pahrump, a place that's so polished and state-of-the-art it's been called the "Garage Mahal."

Then she stops at The Vehicle.

"The lines are just so sleek and modern," she says. "She looks fast just sitting there. She's truly a beautiful car."

She's talking about a 2006 Dodge Viper, a pricey

blue-and-white coupe nicknamed "True Blue" with the numeral 19 painted on the front hood. The sports car, known as a "Snake" in the parlance of Viper fanatics, is the first speedster Virginia and her late husband Michael purchased together.

The car launched the couple's love affair with shiny manmade machines and the fast lane of the oval race track. They eventually added four other Vipers to a collection of 15 vintage cars that defines their synchronicity as a husband and wife team: Michael raced the many of the vehicles

and Virginia played a major role in the pit crew.

Today, less than two years since Michael's death from a heart attack, Virginia carries on the couple's legacy for speed – driving and maintaining the cars, even constructing new ones.

She does it for herself and in honor of the man who, as a passenger, she always inherently trusted as he perched behind the wheel, hurtling down some blurring straight-away at 180 miles an hour.

It's funny, but the couple's whose passion lay in fast cars had a first date far from

terra-firma: they went fishing. She'd met Michael at the San Diego Rod and Reel Club and immediately liked what she saw.

He told her he'd once raced cars but that he'd given up the pursuit in the early 1960s when he became the father of a young son. "He was a risk taker, but in those days, people died on the track without the safety equipment of today," she says. "Michael didn't want his son to grow up without a father, so he chose his son and a long life versus success on the track."

But Virginia helped refuel



Virginia Von Quilich's Garage Mahal is part showroom, part party room.

his passion. On the day they first saw "True Blue" at a San Diego car show, they'd actually been looking at a Ford Cobra GT. Growing up in Washington state, Michael had always been a Ford man – his father worked for 39 years at the company.

While Michael fell in love with the Viper's looks, Virginia liked the storage space. They wanted a car to drive, not display like Show Queens. "The GT didn't even have a place for me to put my purse, let alone an overnight bag," she recalls. (It also took Michael years to tell his father he'd defected from Ford.)

Today, the Garage Mahal remains equal parts auto showroom and party room, its walls decorated with checkered flags Michael won in events sponsored by the Sports Car Club of America and National Auto Sport Association, not to mention the Grateful Dead insignias Michael hung in honor of his

favorite band. There are also some of the finest-kept exotic cars in the state, including a 1932 Model A and orange Model T Speedster.

The construction of the warehouse is a typical Michael and Virginia story. They were looking for a place to store their newly purchased "True Blue," one with enough space to add to their collection.

Michael took Virginia to a dump in a largely-undeveloped part of Pahrump as she surveyed the property in disbelief. Then he pulled out a napkin and a pen and said, "Let me show you what we're going to have here. You're going to have the mountains in the background. It's going to be beautiful."

Virginia saw a dump. Michael saw the future.

There's something else that differentiated the couple – the need for speed. Michael was all Type A, he liked to drive fast; Virginia not such much. "His goal was to put your

eyeballs on the windshield," she recalls. "You know, drive fast, stop hard and break at the last possible minute."

Virginia prefers speeds of about 60 mph on the track. "I probably drive faster on the freeway," she says.

The couple started a company, www.apartments247.com, that builds websites for apartment complexes. They took it from a three-person venture (Michael handled marketing, Virginia as a CPA ran the numbers, and they had one computer programmer) to one that today has 60 employees.

They also shared race responsibilities: While Michael drove the cars, Virginia was the numbers person, recording trial times and other data. The lessons she learned were critical to building their off-track business. "Pay attention to the details," she says. "Even a 45-cent part can throw a car off the track."

There's another funny story



Quilich's late husband, Michael, built the structure to house their ever-growing collection of fast cars.

that demonstrates their love for cars – the one where they entered a raffle to win a new viper at a Detroit auto show. They got their entry in at the last minute, but Michael was sure they were going to win.

At the event, as officials spun the big wheel with all the entry forms, Michael nudged her and then took her hand, "Get ready to stand up," he said.

The man on stage pulled out the winning entry and began to read, "Michael von ..." But by then Michael and Virginia were already standing.

She smiles as she tells that story.

Michael went full speed right to the end, like a Viper on a wide-open road. The day before he suffered his heart attack, the couple had gone skiing.

And now he's gone. But the cars they collected remain, each one a symbol for one couples love of the fast lane.

Asked what she misses most about her partner, Virginia hesitates, and a tear appears. "Michael was my best friend," she says. "It's hard to capulate a 30-year relationship."

Then she pauses and, somehow, she does just that, adding, "What don't I miss?" ■



Angie Kirby works on the medical floor at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City, where she helps care for patients who stay overnight.

In Pursuit of a Dream

Two scholarships from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative helped former waitress Angie Kirby pursue a degree in nursing

By Lisa Jacoby

Although Angie Kirby enjoyed being a waitress, she wasn't really happy with her lot in life. So, at age 28, she decided to pursue a degree in nursing. But first, she had to earn a GED because she hadn't finished high school.

"That wasn't easy," she says.

With a goal of becoming a nurse firmly in mind, Angie set about acquiring all the prerequisite classes

needed before she could apply to nursing school.

Living in Baker City, she signed up for those classes through Blue Mountain Community College's Baker City campus.

This took a bit of juggling.

Angie quit her job at Jimmy Chan's restaurant and starting work at Country Cottage Cafe because she needed a morning shift. She worked from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Country Cottage, then headed directly to her classes at BMCC.

Angie was working full time, attending school full time and caring for her two daughters, who were in grade school.

"It wasn't easy," she says. "I was older and already had a lot of debt."

Fortunately, Angie received several local scholarships, including a \$2,000 award in 2009

and a \$3,000 award in 2011 from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, which gives out more than 30 scholarships every year.

“I had a lot of support from the community,” she says.

Once her prerequisite classes were finished, Angie applied to the Oregon Health and Sciences University nursing program at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. She was accepted the second time she applied.

Then she began her nursing education in earnest.

Angie says she chose nursing because it provides interaction with people, which was one of her favorite parts of being a waitress.

“I saw nursing as an extension of that,” she says. “It’s worked out really well.”

Although the nursing program is technically three years, Angie started part time at first. It took her seven years to earn her degree.

“That is super hard,” she says of the program. “Everyone feels like they want to quit.”

But she didn’t.

During her senior year clinicals, Angie worked at hospitals in Boise and Pendleton before finishing on the medical floor at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Baker City.

She graduated in 2011. The last clinical rotation led to the job she has now, working as a nurse on the medical floor at Saint Alphonsus. She works three 12-hour shifts each week.

“I’d already worked there for six months and was pretty comfortable,” Angie says.

Michelle Stairs coordinates student nurses at Saint Alphonsus-Baker City, which welcomes a number of students every year.

“The seasoned nurses are very receptive to students and mentoring for a better learning environment,” Michelle says.

On the medical floor, where Angie works, the nurses take care of patients who stay overnight.

“We take care of everybody,” Angie says. “I really love it, and I feel really lucky to have chosen a career that I like to go to work every day.”

Although balancing school with work and raising her daughters was tough, she says it helped give her the self-confidence and motivation to get out of an unhealthy relationship and improve her life.

“I knew I had to do something for me,” she says. “I had to change something to make my life better. I never thought I’d go to college. My family didn’t go

Scholarship Opportunities

Applications for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative scholarships are available now. They must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, January 25.

Scholarships are available for first-time college students, returning students, and those who would like to attend a trade school or pursue a career in an electrical line school.

OTEC will not accept any late or incomplete scholarship applications. Please carefully review the application criteria and the application itself, because the process has changed from previous years.

See the applicant criteria document on the OTEC website for details on submitting an application. Call (541) 524-2822 well in advance of the deadline with any questions.

OTEC will award 32 scholarships, each in the amount of \$5,000. Scholarships are funded through unclaimed capital credits and their earnings. They do not affect electric rates.

Scholarship winners will be selected by independent scholarship committees in each of OTEC’s four service territories.

This is a one-time scholarship. Individuals who wish to receive additional funding must reapply each year.

For more information, call (541) 524-2822 or go to <http://otecc.com/community/scholarships>.

to college, so I never considered it. It was really hard and pretty much my life for a long time, but I feel like it made me stronger.”

Looking back at the decision she made 13 years ago, Angie is glad she chose to become a nurse.

“Time passes no matter what we do with it,” she says.

Angie’s daughters, who watched her do homework every night after a long day at work, are in college themselves. Kimberly, 20, is taking classes at BMCC. Kayla, 22, is working on her prerequisites at Treasure Valley Community College and plans to apply to nursing school.

“Angie’s story is an outstanding example of the return an OTEC scholarship can deliver to our local communities,” says OTEC General Manager Les Penning. ■

A young golfer takes a swing on an icy fairway during the annual Ice Hole Golf Tournament at Spring Valley State Park.

Photos by Dawn Andone



The Cure for Wintertime Blues

Warm sense of humor keeps golfers comfy on icy Eagle Valley Reservoir

By Dianna Troyer

Ben Johnson's sense of humor kicks into overdrive when he brainstorms about January entertainment at Eagle Valley Reservoir 20 miles northeast of Pioche.

The ranger at Spring Valley State Park first planned a nine-hole golf course atop the park's icy reservoir. That was only the beginning. Next came a disc golf course, billiards on ice and horseshoe pitching.

The second weekend in January from about 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the frozen reservoir is a venue for Ben's idea of outdoor amusement, starting with the fourth annual Ice Hole Golf Tournament on January 13. After the golf course holes freeze overnight, Ben and his staff set up a dozen disc golf towers on January 14.

"We try to plan something different every year, so people can come and have fun," says Ben, who launched the weekend activities to promote winter

recreation. "We want to encourage people to visit their state parks year-round. Some people think winter is bitterly cold, but it isn't uncomfortable. On the reservoir, you just need to dress for it and wear boots and ice cleats."

The program raises money for the park's free fishing day the second Saturday in June.

"We charge \$10 to golf on Saturday, and the disc golfing is free on Sunday," Ben says. "We provide all the balls, clubs and discs, so all you have to do is show up."

Burgers, chili, hotdogs and hot chocolate are also provided under a tent.

Last year, about 60 people participated, some from as far away as Las Vegas.

"More people come every year," he says. "We've had a lot of people who come once and make it a tradition because they had so much fun. When we started, we were the only state park in Nevada with an ice golf course."

His brainstorm this year is a plywood board with a hole.

“You have to hit a hockey puck through it,” he says. “If you do, you get a prize.”

When players tee off at the golf course, Ben suggests they take a sense of humor with them along with green tennis balls and golf clubs.

He estimates it takes about 40 minutes to an hour to complete the course, depending how good someone is at hitting a tennis ball with a golf club.

“Sometimes golfers hit the ball in the wrong direction, then they overcorrect trying to get back on course,” Ben says. “Some people finish in 50 strokes, while others take more than 300.”

Ben and his staff use a snow blower to make the golf course fairways. To replicate a summer golf course, they stick trees in the ice and drill the 6-inch-deep holes.

To put a humorous spin on the course, obstacles are built at each hole, similar to a miniature golf course.

“At one, you have to make the ball go in a circle before it falls into the hole,” Ben says. “We have a ramp at another. We design a few new obstacles every year.”

The idea for the golf course and other festivities came to Ben several years ago while attending the Fire and Ice Festival at Cave Lake State Park near Ely, where celebrants create ice sculptures and blast off fireworks.

“They offered bowling and made balls from balloons filled with water that had frozen,” says Ben. “I thought, ‘Why not do golf on ice?’ I did some research on the internet and found it’s done quite a bit back East.”

For Ben, the reservoir is as enjoyable in winter as it is in summer for anglers fishing for rainbow, tiger, and brown trout along with largemouth bass and crappie.

“Crappie is my favorite fish any time of year,” he says. “Ice fishing is great here. You can set up your barbecue grill right beside you on the ice, sit back in your lounge chair and just enjoy the day.”

Typically, the reservoir begins to freeze in December and accumulates 10 to 20 inches of ice by mid-January before thawing again in March.

“We’re ready to go whenever the weather cooperates,” says Ben. ■

For more information about the weekend festivities, call the Panaca Region State Park Headquarters at (775) 728-4467.



Top, a father helps his young daughter hit the ball.

Above, a ramp makes a hole more challenging.

Left, an ecstatic golfer celebrates getting the ball in the hole.