



Frank and Garnett Bettencourt stand in front of one of the many display shelves in Frank's tidy shop. After many years of farming, Frank draws on his memory for the details of his handiwork.

## Wonderland of Woodcraft

*Frank Bettencourt's masterpieces preserve Condon's farming heritage*

By Jody Foss

It's 2 a.m., and Garnett Bettencourt wakes up to the sound of the screen door. She knows where her husband of 60 years is headed: out to his workshop.

"If I'm working on a project and I wake up at night, I've got to get up," Frank says. "I can't leave it alone once I start it."

Frank's tidy shop is full of unique wooden replicas. Old cars, pickups, cattle trucks and airplanes fill floor-to-ceiling display shelves. Tables with intricate wood inlay, Ferris wheels and a wide variety of birdhouses complete the ever-expanding collection.

Frank spends almost every day in his shop since he retired from wheat farming 25 years ago.

"I build anything having to do with farming," he says. "I make them from memory, or look at my antique equipment book and get ideas. I don't use any patterns or anything. I look for the color of the wood and the grain."

He points to a John Deere combine.

"It levels and everything," Frank says. "All the parts move just like a real machine."

He also has a 36 B pull machine with a Felburg side bulker.

"It cuts the wheat, and the wheat goes in there and then it thrashes it out," he explains. "It was for these guys who had big ranches, and it saved a lot of trucking. They could go all the way around the field with the side bulker. It will level, and everything turns on it."

Garnett's favorite is an International TD 14 Caterpillar. A particular cattle truck and trailer is special to Frank.

"The guy Garnett and I worked for when we first got married hauled fat cattle to Portland in a truck just like this," Frank says. "It will never be sold."

There are no screws or metal in Frank's creations. They are all fashioned from black walnut, juniper, pine, fir, apricot or mahogany.

"I will come out in the morning and there will be



**The old cattle truck shown here is a replica of one from Frank's early farming days. His boss used to haul cattle to Portland in such a rig.**



**Frank creates every piece in his collection to resemble the real machines as closely as possible.**

a piece of wood on my porch," Frank says. "If it has color or grain, I'll use it. Sometimes I go down to the river and find wood and pack it home."

Frank started working for wheat farmers at age 13. His father moved the family from Portland to Condon in 1948 to raise Frank and his brother in the country.

"I couldn't sleep nights," Frank says. "I wanted to be with the livestock. I got in trouble a lot because I was always somewhere I wasn't supposed to be."

"I feel really fortunate to have grown up when I did. I always say the best thing my folks ever did for me was nothin'. Anything I wanted, I had to figure out a way to earn it, and I appreciate that."

Condon was a closeknit community. Garnett's brother was Frank's best friend.

"Every Saturday night, there was a dance and we'd never miss it," Garnett says. "Even after we married and had kids, we still danced a lot."

"We traveled a lot of miles in those days to attend the dances," Frank adds.

The couple married in 1957. Garnett stayed behind when Frank was drafted and stationed in Korea. She was bookkeeper for the Fatland Tire Co. and clerk for the Olex School District, where their three boys attended elementary school. She retired from her position of deputy clerk for the Arlington School District in 1993.

Frank worked on the Van Rietman Ranch before the couple bought their first farm on Rock Creek.

They added more property through the years.

"We raised wheat and alfalfa hay," Frank says. "We had irrigated pasture and raised quarter horses, too. We had 200 cows at one time."

Garnett grew up with horses and was Gilliam County rodeo princess in 1955. Her stepfather, Walter Boyer, had the Rafter W Ranch. The Bettencourts took over his brand when Walter retired.

Garnett and Frank raised three boys. Blake is a regional manager for UPS. Gary is Gilliam County sheriff. Nick runs the hardware store, has a fabrication business on the side and is state vice president of the Elks Club.

Frank served Gilliam County for 63 years in elected positions for Columbia Basin Electric, Rock Creek Water Control District, Olex and Condon school boards and Education Service District. He also served as a Gilliam County court commissioner.

Frank has displayed his work at the Sage Center in Boardman and has won many blue ribbons at the Gilliam County Fair in Condon.

"Every time I build something, I find another way to use these tools," Frank says. "I just keep learning easier and quicker ways to do things."

On the bottom of each piece, Frank burns in his brand and the date it was completed.

"I build windmills, and they are real easy to sell," he says. "I always tell whoever buys them, 'Don't put this out in the wind!'" ■



## 25 Words, 25 Years

*A Ruralite Love Match Stands the Test of Time*



Thelma Wynne was a mental health therapist, living on a small acreage near Eugene. She was 48 and lonesome, having divorced a few years before.

Living in the country, driving 70 miles each way to Roseburg and back for work – Thelma was never going to meet anybody that way.

In May 1992, she placed a personal ad in Ruralite magazine. Why not, I have nothing to lose, she thought.

Bill Reynolds was an agricultural engineer, based in Hermiston. He was divorced, and his staff thought they needed to do something about that. So they circled a personal ad in Ruralite placed by the woman from Eugene.

Twenty-five years later, Thelma Wynne and Bill Reynolds are happily married and look back fondly on the old-school way they met and fell in love.

She grew up on the banks of California's Merced River, fed by in the crystal waters of Yosemite Park. Her father worked in the vineyards and mother was a homemaker. Thelma grew up to become a mother of three, and never left behind her love of the outdoors.

In Eugene, composing her personal ad, she compressed her world into 25 words maximum. Her blind-box ad read in part, "Professional lady. Many interests, from ranching to theater. Intelligent, fun-loving, playful, passionate, honest and caring. I will call."

She received multiple responses to her ad. It took a month or so to get around to calling Bill.

"We hit it off on our first conversation," she says.

After many calls and letters, Bill said, "Am I ever going to meet you in person?"

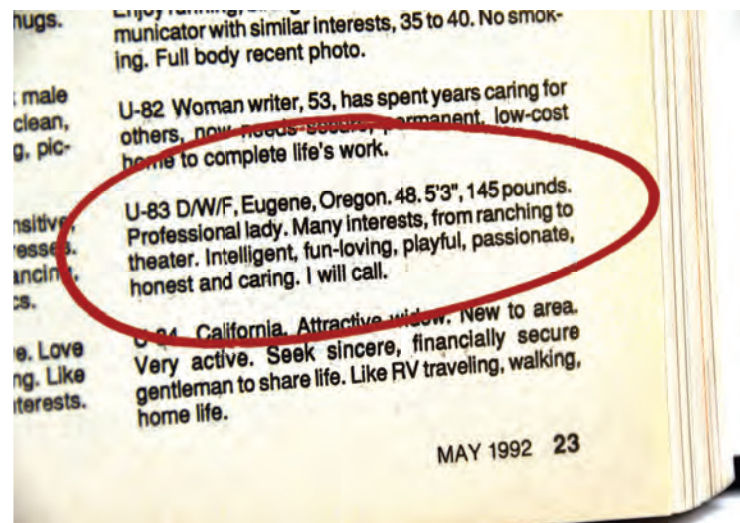
"Bill is a gifted writer and a great conversationalist," Thelma says. "We got to know each other. I think I'm one of the last women in the world who was actually courted."

Bill would ask if others had answered her ad, saying, "I love competition."

A year later, in June 1993, they were married.

"I really liked his self-assured attitude," Thelma says today.

Bill had been raised in Roswell, N.M., His mother was a homemaker, and his father was a medical technician who had moved the family from Mississippi to the Southwest to help recover from TB.





Bill became a father to five children and was working in Hawaii for a sugar company when he was asked to move to Hermiston, where the 1970s irrigated agriculture boom was under way. When he first answered Thelma's ad, "She didn't respond back. I thought it was a dead issue," Bill says.

But she was just carefully considering her options before making the call.

In calls and letters, "I quickly found out that she was my equal, and probably my superior, in terms of interests and intellect. And I thought she might also be good looking too," Bill says.

"Turned out, she was all of the above."

After marriage, they built a house on

Hermiston's West Moore Avenue. They have developed their expansive backyard into a wildlife haven, with basalt boulders, running water and a

footbridge. Two playful dogs, one large and one small, get up close and personal with any visitor who passes through the front door.

Not all has been roses through the years— he has gone blind, and she suffered a brain tumor. Each of them has lost one of their children.

But they are heavily involved in volunteer work, and after 25 words and 25 years, "I don't think there is any way to find a better friend, companion, support

person. It worked out really well," Thelma says.

*"We hit it off on our first conversation," she says. After many calls and letters, Bill said, "Am I ever going to meet you in person?"*

*Story by Steve Meyers*



Whistler, a cougar, is one of five felines Craig Wagner will bring to the ServPro Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show February 16-18 in Roseburg.

## Outdoor Show Guests Will Have You Purring

*Five felines from Great Cats of the World Park perform this month*

**By Craig Reed**

Don't be surprised if you hear a growl or snarl during the upcoming outdoor and recreation shows in southwestern Oregon this month.

Some of this year's featured guests will be from the cat family. They will make their presence known under the guidance of Craig Wagner, the owner and operator of Great Cats of the World Park. Craig will bring five cats from the park on the western edge of Cave Junction in southwestern Oregon to three shows: The KEZI Eugene Boat & Sportsmen's Show, February 2-4 in Eugene; the Servpro Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show, February

16-18 in Roseburg; and the Newswatch 12 Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show, February 23-25 in Medford.

The feline guests will be Linka, an 8-month-old Siberian lynx; Turbo, an 8-month-old North American bobcat; Sancho, a 2-year-old Geoffroy's cat; Whistler, a 15-month-old North American cougar; and Maki, a 6-year-old Asian fishing cat. Fishing cats have partially webbed feet—they swim like otters, and the fish they catch make up 80 percent of their diet.

Craig and his cats will put on several presentations during each of the outdoors shows.

"They are educational," Craig says. "I talk about the

cats' habitat, about the issues the cats are facing. Cats as a group have some of the most endangered species in the world. Twenty-three out of the 37 species of cats in the world are on the endangered species list, and several of the other species are considered threatened.

"The problems these cats have are loss of habitat, poaching, illegal trade of body parts and a lack of prey items for food," he says.

Craig, 62, has been working with and training exotic cats for 36 years. He opened his park 13 years ago to give people a chance to see the animals up close. The park is home to 52 cats from 18 species. He calls it the most varied group

of cats in the world.

"The cats are just 5 feet away from people," Craig says. "You can see natural-type cat behaviors. They are so close you can count their whiskers."

Craig has trained most of his cats since they were kittens, then shared them with the public through stage shows, photo shoots for advertisements, calendars and posters, and in movies.

"When the most dangerous predator in the world treats you as an equal, there's nothing better," Craig says. "It's a very unique bond that I have with the cats."

On stage, Craig has the cats on leashes, climbing poles, jumping from one platform to another, walking

across logs, snarling and sharpening their claws on a post. He also will “horse around” with them, having them jump up or stand up for a hug, or have them jump on his back.

“It’s important to keep a cat busy, and not have it focus on you or the audience,” Craig says with a smile.

The park, located 1 mile south of Cave Junction, offers 90-minute tours from mid-March through October and on weekends only in November and February. ■

*For more information on the park and its endangered cats, go to [www.greatcatsoftheworld.net](http://www.greatcatsoftheworld.net) or call (541) 592-2957.*

## Living a Fishing Dream

After years of dreaming about being a fishing guide on the ocean, Clarence Cole Jr., is living his dream.

The 54-year-old established Fishin’ Trips Charters in 2017. In his 2015 26-foot Hewescraft Pacific Explorer, Clarence takes clients on fishing trips out of Brookings and Coos Bay along the southern Oregon Coast, pursuing salmon, tuna and bottom fish.

“I’ve been dreaming about this forever,” he says. “I love to fish. That’s what I do, I fish.”

Clarence will be available to talk about fishing and his own fishing experiences at the three outdoors and recreation shows in southwestern Oregon.

Clarence had many fishing experiences in his younger years, working as a teenaged



**Clarence Cole Jr. will talk about his experiences as a charter boat owner at the show.**



**Rob Gensorek will be give demonstrations on perch, bass and salmon fishing.**

deckhand when his father, an Air Force veteran, ran charter fishing trips out of Pacific City and Charleston for active military members and retired veterans. After high school, Clarence joined the Coast Guard and was able to fish when stationed at Ketchikan, Alaska, Winchester Bay and

Coos Bay.

After four years in the Coast Guard and full-time jobs with Jeld-Wen and Pacific Power, Clarence turned his full attention to fishing last year. He fishes out of Brookings from March through June and then moves north and fishes out

of Charleston during July, August and September. He wraps up the fishing season back in Brookings, fishing out of that port during October. ■

## Fishing Along the Oregon Coast

“Fishing: It’s the primal nature of going out and getting your own food, being in the outdoors, in the elements,” says Rob Gensorek. “To me, it is always about getting your own food. And I love to cook.”

Rob and the Basin Tackle staff from Charleston will bring their expertise and experiences from fishing the Pacific Ocean and the Central Oregon coastal rivers and streams to the three outdoors shows. They will give demonstrations on clamming, surf perch fishing and on fishing techniques for bass and salmon.

“We kind of represent the Joe lunch bucket folks,” Rob says. “That’s the working class and one of our goals at Basin Tackle is to encourage those people to get outdoors, giving them the knowledge and the skills to successfully fish.”

He speaks highly of the fishing options available to anglers along the Central Oregon Coast.

“Unparalleled,” he says of the fishing. “We have access to difference species out in the ocean—salmon, tuna, bottom fish—and we have freshwater fish in the coastal streams. This place has everything. If I had to pick one place on the planet that would have major appeal for the outdoorsman, this would be the place.” ■

Surprise Valley

# Ruralite

FEBRUARY 2018

Larry Moore and his Norwegian elkhound, Hakon, travel hundreds of miles a month to visit hospitals, homes and a variety of agencies to provide comfort and reassurance.

PHOTO BY JEAN BILODEAUX



# Canine With a Mission to Calm

*Norwegian elkhound  
Hakon is the first registered  
therapy dog allowed in the  
Modoc County Courthouse*

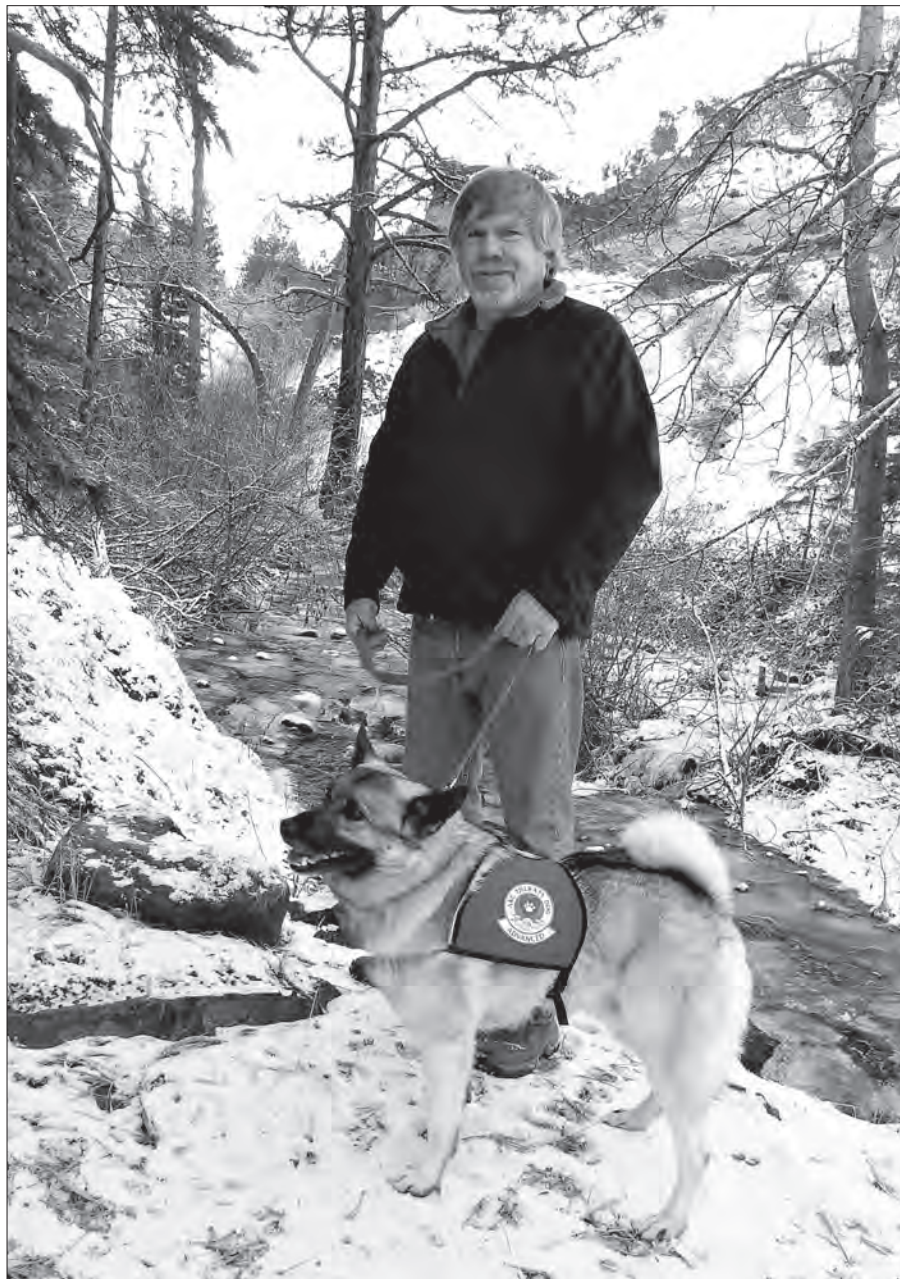
**By Jean Bilodeaux**

Imagine a small child whose trust in adults has been destroyed—abused, sexually molested, betrayed and deprived of the joys of childhood. The child is then forced into a courtroom where the people who hurt the child may be present.

Who does the child turn to for comfort or protection? Adults say the person will be punished; that he or she will go away. But the question on the child's mind is, 'Will they return?' No one protected the child before.

Recently, for the first time, a Norwegian elkhound named Hakon became the first registered therapy dog allowed in the Modoc County Courthouse to comfort and encourage a young victim-witness and her family in a sexual abuse case.

Hakon greeted each person present on the victim's side of the room. When he got to the victim, Hakon sensed



**Hakon and his owner-handler, Larry Moore, travel hundreds of miles a month to visit sick, disabled and traumatized individuals in need of comfort or companionship.**

anxiety and fear. He sat down on the victim's foot, presumably providing a reassurance that all would be well.

Soon, the girl's small hand reached

down and pet Hakon. It was a tentative touch, but the child's fear lessened—a first step toward recovery.

Several years ago, Larry Moore and

his wife, Dawn, retired and moved to Lake City in Surprise Valley. Not being used to the slow pace of country living, Larry says he decided to pursue hobbies he had only dreamed of before. He had always liked dogs, especially Norwegian elkhounds. It wasn't long before he was training a dog he named Hakon.

"Hakon has been the name of several Norwegian kings throughout history and this puppy always displayed a king-like demeanor," Larry says.

Elkhounds are one of the oldest dog breeds and are the national dog of Norway. They are known for their courage in tracking and hunting moose, elk and bears.

Hakon earned the coveted TDX—Tracking Dog Excellent—title. He completed his 865-yard course in 12 minutes, pausing only to indicate the track layer's articles as well as a bonus article: the track layer's reading glasses, accidentally dropped while setting up.

Although a competent tracker, Hakon was destined to become a therapy dog.

Confusion sometimes arises as to the difference between a therapy dog and a service dog. Service dogs are trained to perform tasks and do work that helps their handicapped handlers.

Therapy dogs receive extensive training and accompany their owners in settings such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes and other agencies.

Hakon is becoming known as a source of help to various agencies dealing with the handicapped, substance abusers and stroke or accident victims.



**Hakon earned the title of Therapy Dog Excellent in December 2017.**

At least four times a month, Hakon makes the 50-mile roundtrip to people at several recovery, emotional, psychological and wellness centers.

Larry watches when they enter a room, and says Hakon greets and lingers with children and adults who need him. He is patient and attentive.

Hakon and Larry volunteer their time, mileage and training to help those in need, including "Susan," whose name is changed to protect her privacy.

"Susan lives an isolated existence in a small, remote community, seldom able to interact with others," Larry says. "Her parents are loving and dedicated to keeping up with new technology in regard to cerebral palsy. With minimal rehabilitation facilities in the area and

trips for minimal care involving a 50-mile trip and specialists more than 300 miles away, interaction with society is limited.

"About a year ago, Hakon made the first of many 20-mile round-trips to visit Susan. During their visits, Hakon would interact with Susan, obtaining animated responses during his visit. She may or may not recognize Hakon, depending on the day. Hakon interacts with Susan at each visit and gets her to move a bit. He's slowly developing a trust and friendship with her."

For almost two years in varied situations, Hakon and Larry have traveled thousands of miles.

Hakon gets excited when he sees Larry get out his special collar and his vest that displays his awards and patches.

Of course, it takes more than fancy dogwear to have a high-quality service animal.

"It's very important to research the breeder that you are thinking of buying a dog from," Larry says. "Some are reputable, some are not. It may cost more money to deal with a respected breeder, but you will save time and money in the long run. I've been lucky with the facility I've dealt with."

In December 2017, Hakon completed 200 therapy visits, earning his Therapy Dog Excellent title. He is the first Norwegian elkhound to receive the title from the American Kennel Club. Hakon is now working on his next 200 visits, toward his Therapy Dog Distinguished title. ■

# Two Icons Retire From Lane Electric

*Pair leaves with combined 53 years of experience at the co-op and 76 years in the field*

**By Craig Reed**

Many years of electric cooperative experience walked out of the Lane Electric Cooperative office last month and into retirement.

Wayne Schvaneveldt, 57, bowed out January 8. Dave Davanzo, 62, followed January 31. Both had 38-year careers in the electric cooperative industry.

Wayne spent all of his career with Lane Electric, working the past 21 years as a serviceman for the Cottage Grove, Row River and Upper McKenzie areas.

Dave worked for four electric co-ops. He has been the member services manager for Lane Electric for the past 15 years.

"I'll definitely miss it," says Wayne. "I'll miss it very much. It's been a great career and I would definitely work here again. The best part of my job was talking with the members, especially the older ones who know the electric cooperative history."

Dave expresses similar feelings.

"It's been a wonderful career," he says. "It's a people-based business that has provided relationships with the members, with co-workers and with many others in the industry. The co-op is not privately owned, so we've gotten to be part of the community through interviews, attending



**Wayne Schvaneveldt has spent all of his 38-year utility career at Lane Electric Cooperative.**

Photo by John Murray

different meetings, sitting on community boards and being involved in school events."

Tony Toncray, the co-op's manager of engineering operations, has worked with both Dave and Wayne for many years.

"Wayne has been a cornerstone and a face of Lane Electric," Tony says. "He's been solid in his work and in representing Lane Electric. I know he has thoroughly enjoyed his interactions with our members, and I'm sure he'll miss that."

"Dave is an awesome guy who is well respected in the entire industry. He'll be missed."

Wayne, a 1978 Bandon High School graduate, started

working for Lane Electric part-time while attending Lane Community College. He earned a degree in diesel mechanics and was hired full time by the cooperative in 1981. He worked at the home facility until 1984 when he became a groundman equipment operator.

"My goal was to become an apprentice lineman and then a journeyman lineman," Wayne says.

He earned the apprenticeship position in 1986 and began the three-year on-the-job training program, earning journeyman status in 1989. For the next eight years, he worked on a crew, setting poles and maintaining the lines.

In 1997, he became a one-man crew, working as a line serviceman. He had his own service vehicle and on a 24/7 basis was the first responder for any electrical issues in his service territory. Those issues included power outages, voltage problems, connects and disconnects, and underground locates.

"I think I speak for all the linemen when I say storms are always a challenge," Wayne says. "When you work a 12- to 16-hour day for seven or eight days in a row, you know it is all about getting the power back on for the members."

Wayne says that in his career, the longest outage in an area he was involved with



**Dave D'Avanzo is a big Elvis fan and kept a large collection of memorabilia in his office.**

Photo by Mike Teegarden

was 12 to 13 days. His longest stretch of work without a day off was 13 days.

"It can be hard work and it can be challenging, but you know the majority of people very much appreciate everything we do out there," he says. "People often stop in their vehicles, roll down the window and say thank you. People are always offering coffee, cookies, snacks, even when homes have no power."

Wayne says during those long hours of work following wind, ice and snow storms, the linemen make it a point to look out for each other to make sure everybody remains safe while on the job. Tony says Wayne had an impeccable safety record during his years of work for the co-op.

"You face many challenges as a first responder," Tony says. "Wayne has been stellar in his decision-making throughout each situation.

You never had to worry about Wayne being out there in regards to safety."

While Wayne spent most of his co-op years in the field, Dave spent his career working from an office. A graduate of Hermiston High School in 1973 and then of Eastern Oregon University in La Grande in 1977, Dave started his co-op career in 1980 when he was hired as a drafts person by Umatilla Electric Cooperative in Hermiston. He spent 10 years there and was soon doing energy audits, public relations, writing for Ruralite magazine and participating in community service.

To move up to a manager position, in 1990 he moved across the country and became the member services manager at Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative in northeastern Pennsylvania. But he was there only for a year because Bill Kopacz, whom he

knew from Umatilla, became the general manager at Midstate Electric Cooperative in La Pine and offered Dave the job of member services manager at Midstate. Dave accepted and worked in central Oregon until 1999, when he worked a few years as a distributor for a new piece of heating and cooling equipment that was being developed and introduced to the electrical industry.

Dave returned to electric cooperatives in 2002 when he was hired as manager of member services for Lane Electric.

"We've gotten some fun things done, some changes done to our systems," Dave says of the past 15 years at Lane.

He was the project leader for the introduction of the original automated meter reading system for the co-op.

"We've upgraded our

processes, our procedures, we've really enhanced our community service involvement," he says. "Our goal was that the communities we serviced understood we were their company. We wanted people to know it is a member-based, a person-based co-op and not just another business down the street."

John Murray, energy services representative at Lane Electric, says Dave built his legacy at the co-op on hard work, determination and caring for others.

"If there was ever a need among our members, our community or from the employees, he was there for all of us," John says. "He was always helping in any way possible and finding solutions in tough situations with compassion and sensitivity. His positive attitude and true character will truly be missed by everyone."

Of his decision to retire, Dave explains that the time is right to spend more time at home and more time doing new things. He says announcing his retirement was bitter sweet.

"It's a new beginning," he says. "I'm not sure what lies ahead, kind of like my first day at Umatilla Electric on June 16, 1980. I wasn't sure what was in store for me then, but I was pretty sure it was going to be OK, and it was thanks to countless friends, partners and counterparts." ■



Isaac Kwake makes adjustments to CUBED, the Lakerbots team robot.

## Lakerbots Power Up STEM Education Opportunities

By Pam Spettel

This time of year, 15 middle and high school students at Triangle Lake Charter School spend much of their time with CUBED (Controlled Utility Battery Enabled Device), the robot they conceptualized, designed, built, and code together as the Lakerbots Robotics team. CUBED is 144 inches around, weighs about 120 pounds, and stands about 3.5 feet tall.

The Lakerbots team has existed since 2013. Triangle Lake Superintendent James Brookins and Darrel Rothauge, the school's career and technology educator and team adviser, put their heads together to develop this aspect of the school's science, technology, engineering and math focus.

"When I interviewed for a position at Triangle Lake, I asked if there was a robotics team," says Darrel. "The concept fit with the emphasis the school puts on hands-on STEM activities for our students. We believe in these types of programs and how they change the lives of kids."

The students participate in the annual For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and

Technology robotics competitions. The mission of FIRST is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders by engaging them in mentor-based science and engineering activities.

The Lakerbots participate in a season-long competition, called a game, against other regional schools with hopes of making it to the national competition.

Sophomore Zach Pennel, this year's team captain, found STEM-related activities interesting since his first exposure.

"In the eighth grade, I started coding with my teammate Weston McAllister, and I was the supply guy who provided the team with the tools they needed to work on the robot," says Zach. "In ninth grade, I had to step up and apply what I'd learned from the previous years and help teach the team."

"I like conversing with my teammates to create a better robot. Going on trips to compete is fun, too, but it's serious when we're competing. This experience helps prepare us for the future."

Zach says the experience helps students understand how important teamwork is for future careers.

Zach is interested in electrical and mechanical engineering, and plans to pursue engineering in



From left, mentor Spence Hollinger, Elianna McAllister, Chris Pearce and mentor Fred Burkert work through an autonomous coding sequence.

college and as a career.

Senior Will Ellis, in his second year on the team, pores over a safety manual to serve the team as its safety captain.

“It’s my job to keep these guys safe and make sure they follow the safety protocol,” he says.

The robot’s driver for the team, sophomore Weston McAllister, controls its joystick. Practice for this job might be harder than it looks.

“To be ready, I play video games that have to do with strategy and skill,” says Weston. “Before we start driving the robot, it’s going to take practice and knowing the rules of the game. Driving the robot is the most fun job.

“It’s exciting taking on a large responsibility for the team. I have to do what they expect.”

Students Elaina McAllister and Chris Pearce are the team’s designated coders. They create the autonomous code that animates the robot.

“I started on the team in the seventh grade,” says Chris, a sophomore. “I started programming in the fifth grade, and I enjoy coding the robot. I love math, and want to have a job someday in a gaming company.”

Community member Fred Burkert has been a Lakerbot mentor for five years. He was a machinist who made prototypes for NASA and the aerospace industry before retiring.

“I like the entire STEM program,” he says. “Science and technology has been neglected in our smaller schools that weren’t able to afford it. The community has made a commitment to this program. The more adults, the better.

“It is important that this is a co-ed program. Females are coming to the forefront in technical fields, at NASA and so on. To get into technical fields, girls need to have this education and encouragement.”



Above, the Lakerbots’ public relations and finance team at work. From left, Simran Khinda, Jimmy Lande, Katarina Dutton and Abby Gangle.

Other students support the team in nontechnical ways. Student Abby Gangle develops her accounting skills as the team’s financial coordinator. Simran Khinda, Jimmy Lande and Katarina Dutton serve as the public relations and social media coordinators.

“I’m not quite interested in robotics,” says Abby. “The sent me the budget, and I keep us on track. I also manage our donations.”

Darrel says the monetary and in-kind donations sustain the team.

“Mentorship, sponsorship, and donations of supplies and knowledge make the team,” he says. “Whatever we can harvest from the community for this program is good.”

“A program like this is diverse,” Zach says. “It develops builders, coders, and business management and finance skills. A program like this is worth keeping. It’s valuable for young minds to get this kind of experience.” ■

To make a donation to the Triangle Lake Lakerbots, contact Triangle Lake Charter School at (541) 925-3262.

Idaho County

# Ruralite

FEBRUARY 2018



Roy Schumacher is the proud owner of Intermountain Machine and Fab Inc. Roy says the biggest part of Intermountain's business is building rock crushing equipment, overhauling work at the IFG Grangeville mill, and for the region's agricultural operations.

PHOTO BY DAVID RAUZI



Intermountain Machine and Fab Inc. owner Roy Schumacher expanded his operation to include work on heavy equipment, motorboat engines and just about everything in between to keep his customers happy.

## Building His Own Success Story

*Grangeville business thanks supportive customers and hard-working employees*

**By David Rauzi**

Bright, white flashes strobe from behind an excavator as machinist Roy Schumacher works with an arc welder. The crackling sounds echo through the steel building that carries the smell of hot metal.

More heavy equipment is interspersed among roll carts and work stations where steel can be cut, forged, shaped and tooled to perform, up to high-performance tolerances.

Roy is proud of his Grangeville business. He says the success comes from supportive customers and

dedicated employees.

“We have a good clientele,” Roy says. “The people around here are great to work with. And I have a great bunch to work with who come through that door every day.”

Eleven people work at Intermountain Machine and Fab Inc. Overseeing it all is

owner Roy.

Regional clients range from McCall to Ellensburg and the Tri-Cities in Eastern Washington, as well as an extended national and international customer base.

The business is a historic trade as old as the history of tools themselves.

“If a guy has an idea on what he wants built, we’ll work with him and get it built,” Roy says.

A Camas Prairie native, Roy is married to his wife of 31 years, Debbie, a human resource director for St. Mary’s Hospital and Clinics. The couple has two grown children.

Roy learned his trade through a two-year machinist and welding program at North Idaho College, after which he started part time at Dye Machine Supply in Grangeville. That turned into full time two years later in 1978. That was when his real education started.

“I was lucky,” Roy says. “I worked with two old-timers: Jack Cuddy and John Crawford.”

He says he learned “just about everything as far as repairing equipment, and talking with them I learned all the tricks. There’s a lot of guys like that in this town, and I’ve picked up all kinds of information from them.”

When Dye shut down in 2000, Roy took his shares in the business and some equipment. Roy couldn’t afford to build a shop, so Rod Vessey—then-owner of Stuiwenga-Vessey Drilling—provided space at his facility. Within a week, equipment had been moved in, and Roy’s new machining business was up and running with four employees.

“We had a lot of help from people,” he says. “Several local businesses started throwing work at us right away. Idaho Forest Group really helped us

out with work right off the bat.”

About nine years ago, Roy was able to build his shop.

The biggest part of Intermountain’s business is building rock crushing equipment, and overhauling work at the IFG Grangeville mill and for the region’s agricultural operations.

“D-9s, D-10s ... about anything that wears out, we’ve probably fixed it at one time or another,” Roy says.

Intermountain has also worked on sewing machines for Idaho Sewing for Sports, and built bullet presses for CCI Speer and leveling jacks for rock crushing equipment.

“We fix up old equipment and then make it new again,” Roy says.

Intermountain also builds new equipment, such as the Final Pass—a road compactor attachment. The idea came from an employee with the White Bird Highway District. Roy started on it while at Dye’s. After several refinements, it was manufactured in-house.

“It’s pretty much an indispensable piece of equipment,” Roy says, noting it reduces man and machine hours by providing grading and compacting in one operation. He says it is popular for work on the Oregon Coast.

Ron says that what started as a hobby and turned into a business is repairing jet boat pumps, mostly the Hamilton 212. His interest in boat repair started when he bought a Bentz boat in 1986 and the pump went out.

“I tore into it to see if I



**Roy first worked on jet boat props and pumps when he needed to repair his Bentz boat pump in 1986. It quickly became a hobby.**

could fix it,” Roy says. “I found if you tighten up the tolerances, you can improve performance. That started it. We’ve been working on them since.”

Roy says about 80 percent of the pump repair work comes in late fall and winter off-season—about two a week for fishermen and guides. He says a lot of the work comes from Alaska, with others across the U.S. and even Africa and Spain.

Blades wear down from rock and sand being pulled in by the pump, causing more clearance in the housing and reducing efficiency. Roy’s

crew builds blades back up with layers of welding, followed by a polish and balancing. The latter is important—and noticeable if not correct—for props turning at 3,000 rpm.

“Every job that comes in here is a little bit different” Roy says. “When jobs come in here, it’s never the same thing.

“This kind of work has been good to me, and I have a really good crew here,” he says. ■

Contact Intermountain Machine and Fab at (208) 983-0240, by email at [intermachine@msn.com](mailto:intermachine@msn.com) or at [www.imtrnmachfab.com](http://www.imtrnmachfab.com).

# Finding Comfort in Food

*Women share the stories behind well-liked recipes*

By Craig Reed

When Lynne Schaefer was a youngster, the bread pudding fixed by her mother, Ruth Richards, was a favored comfort food.

Because Lynne was also a chocolate lover, several years later when she began to do her own cooking, she added chocolate chips to her mother's bread pudding recipe.

"I thought it tasted pretty good," Lynne says.

Through the years, Lynne, now 84 and a resident of Sunriver, has made a few other tweaks to the recipe, and it has turned out to be a winner. The judges of Ruralite's recent Comfort Foods Contest selected the chocolate bread pudding as one of their seven favorite recipes. The recipes were featured in the October 2017 issue of Ruralite.

Mindy Street, another Sunriver resident and Midstate Electric member, also had a recipe selected as one of the seven favorites. Her Chicken Reuben features a blend of chicken, sauerkraut, Thousand Island dressing and Swiss cheese.

The recipe came from Mindy's mother, Ruthe Mueller, and is now prepared by the next generation: Mindy's daughter, Kat Olson.

"I love it," Mindy says. "Chicken is chicken is chicken, but this is a very different way to eat it. People don't normally choose sauerkraut to eat with chicken, but even non-sauerkraut eaters enjoy it. The cooking of the sauerkraut makes it sweet. It isn't as stringent as what people might think."

The ingredients and preparation directions for the recipes submitted by Lynne and Mindy are included in



**Lynne Schaefer prepares chocolate bread pudding, which was selected as a winning recipe for Ruralite's recent Comfort Foods cookbook contest.**

Ruralite's most recent cookbook. Both women say they were surprised but honored to have their recipes selected.

Lynne says she didn't get serious about cooking until after marrying Lee Schaefer at age 22.

"Then I had to learn to do something," she says.

Throughout the years, Lynne has clipped many recipes from magazines and newspapers, and has collected many cookbooks. Her goal was to never have the same meal two days in a row.

Lynne has submitted recipes to Ruralite before. Her broiled crabwiches recipe

was printed in the *Cooking for Two Cookbook* in 2008.

Her husband says he's never had a complaint about her cooking.

"All of her cooking is fantastic," Lee says. "I don't think there has ever been a failure. She'll say something is not so good, but to me it is always fantastic."

"Even when she experiments with something it turns out great. I'll say, 'This tastes pretty good,' and she'll usually say it could be better. But I think it is all great."

In addition to tweaking her mother's bread pudding recipe by adding chocolate chips, Lynne has substituted a bit of



**Mindy Street says she can't get enough of her winning recipe for Chicken Reuben.**

Photo by Ian James

honey and cut down on the sugar. She also uses the end pieces from loaves of cinnamon bread, replacing the white bread called for in her mother's recipe.

"I like to be creative," Lynne says of trying different recipes and experimenting with ingredients. "It's better than sitting and watching TV."

The Schaefers admit that they don't eat out much.

"Why would you want to eat out when you have an excellent cook at home?" Lee asks. "Our dinners are far better at home than at any restaurant. It tastes better when its home cooked."

Mindy, 59, says she has always liked to cook. She says a few cooking tips she learned from her mother were not to overcook and over-season foods.

"Everything she made was really good," Mindy says of her mother. "It was kind of old-school, farm-type food. You would have thought we were going out to bale hay. She fed us well."

One of those dinners was the Chicken Reuben. Mindy says she believes that

## Chocolate Bread Pudding

- 6 slices cinnamon bread, cut in ½-inch cubes
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg
- Zest of one orange
- ¼ c. cooking oil
- ¼ c. orange juice
- ½ c. honey
- 2 eggs
- 1 c. milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ c. chocolate morsels

In a 1½-quart casserole dish, combine bread, cinnamon, nutmeg and orange zest. Measure oil, juice and honey in the same cup. Mix well and pour over bread mixture. Slightly beat together eggs, milk and vanilla. Pour over all. Add chocolate morsels. Mix all ingredients until bread is moistened.

Cover and microwave on medium for 10 minutes, stirring every 3 minutes. In oven, bake at 350 F for about 40 minutes. Stir to remix ingredients. Bake 20 minutes longer.

## Chicken Reuben

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Salt
- Pepper
- 16-oz. can of sauerkraut, drained and pressed to almost dry
- 1 c. Thousand Island dressing
- 4 to 5 slices Swiss cheese
- 1 T. chopped parsley

Heat oven to 350 F.

Place chicken in a greased Pyrex dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread sauerkraut over chicken. Top with cheese. Pour dressing over cheese. Cover with foil and bake for 1 hour. Sprinkle with parsley and serve. This is really tasty with toasted rye bread on the side.

recipe was the only one her mother could fix that would get her father to eat sauerkraut.

After Mindy left home as an adult and did her own cooking, she asked her mother for some recipes. The Chicken Reuben recipe was passed on.

"I gave that one a whirl, and now I can't get enough of it," Mindy says.

She also has tweaked the original recipe, reducing the amount of Thousand Island dressing and Swiss cheese.

"It is still delicious, even with a little less dressing and cheese," Mindy says.

In addition to her family, Mindy prepares and serves her Chicken Reuben at special events at her church and enjoys sharing leftovers with her neighbors.

"I like to feed people," she says. "I don't get nervous cooking for others. It just comes natural. It breaks my heart when kids order pizza, because it is so simple to fix better foods." ■



Corinne Bartschi leaps from a bridge as her husband, Marc, gives her a pilot chute assist so her canopy will open quickly to slow her descent.

Photos courtesy of Corinne Bartschi

## Jumping for Joy ... From Bridges and Planes

*Exhilaration and a little fear accompany Corinne Bartschi when she dives into the air*

By Dianna Troyer

“Three, two, one. See ya!” shouts Corinne Bartschi before flinging herself off the Perrine Bridge.

With a parachute strapped to her back, she is intensely aware of time and vital numbers that will keep her alive.

Falling at about 16 feet per second from the 486-foot-tall bridge at Twin Falls, she has two to three seconds to freefall before she must deploy the canopy she has meticulously packed. If she

waits longer than 4 seconds, the canopy will not fill with air in time to land safely.

“It’s about 5 seconds to impact,” Corinne says.

For the Raft River High School graduate, the risk is more than outweighed by the euphoria she feels for about a minute as she drifts down, guiding her canopy safely to the banks of the Snake River.

“Before every jump, I feel a complex set of emotions: anticipation, excitement and some fear,” she says. “My favorite part is the canopy flight. It’s peaceful and freeing.”

Corinne, 37, and her husband, Marc, live about 5 minutes from the bridge.

They jump several times a week when she is not working as a nurse practitioner and he has time off as a skydiving and BASE jumping instructor.

BASE jumping is an acronym for the objects from which people leap: buildings, antennas (or towers), spans (bridges or beams), and Earth, which refers to cliffs and canyons.

Corinne’s interest in BASE jumping evolved from skydiving.



**Left, after leaping from the Perrine Bridge into the Snake River Canyon, Corinne and Marc take a break while hiking out. Above, Corinne skydives in Utah. After a couple of hundred skydives, she says she was experienced enough to learn to BASE jump.**

When people ask her why she likes to fall from the sky, Corinne describes a feeling of clarity.

“It’s the one thing where I’m focused only on the task at hand,” she says. “I’m not worried about checking things off my to-do list, work or other tasks. My mind is clear, and I’m only focused on the jump. There are few things in life that help you tune out the rest of the world and stressful aspects of life. It’s great therapy.”

Since her first BASE jump from the Perrine Bridge in June 2017, she has jumped about 30 times.

Corinne describes herself as a newbie who is getting more comfortable.

“At first, the feeling of falling in dead air was such a strange feeling—different from skydiving with the relative wind—but it has become a more comfortable feeling,” she says.

Corinne became interested in BASE jumping after completing a couple of hundred skydives—a sport she began because she made a promise to her brother.

“I told him when he got home from the military, we would do a tandem

jump someday, but it takes preparation and education with skydiving first. The industry standard is usually 200 skydives before BASE jumping.”

Corinne credits her husband, Marc, with mentoring her after the two met through mutual friends. He learned to skydive and BASE jump after moving to Twin Falls to complete a physical therapy internship.

“I’d been skydiving a few years, and really enjoyed the culture and community of BASE jumping,” Marc says. “I went out to the bridge frequently, took lessons and did my first jump in 2010.”

Since then, he has since jumped 800 times in the United States. Two years ago, he decided to take time away from his job as a physical therapist to focus on skydiving and BASE jumping education and building his company, Twin Falls BASE Co.

Corinne and Marc’s love for aerial sports has led them around the world.

“We definitely plan our vacations around jumping,” says Corinne. “We usually take a winter skydiving trip to California, go to West Virginia’s New

River Gorge Bridge in October for their festival, and Moab for the Turkey Boogie in November.”

Marc recalls the most memorable places he has jumped.

“The Balinghe Bridge in China and Shipwreck Beach on Zakynthos Island in Greece definitely stand out,” he says. “Moab, Utah, is fun and a really pretty place to jump, too.”

Marc describes the second-by-second sensations during a jump.

“Freefall feels like weightlessness and freedom for a short period, with a certain rush and sensory excitement and anticipation for the next step in the process,” he says. “You can feel and hear your airspeed increase until you deploy the parachute with a great and brief sense of relief. Then you need to quickly and efficiently pilot the canopy to an appropriate landing zone.”

When Marc teaches beginning BASE jumpers, he reminds students of the risks.

“You have to be detail oriented and make wise decisions,” he says. “Critical thinking and problem solving are key skills needed to have a fun, safe and long-lived career in the sport. It’s not a sport you rush into. Your progression should be steady, and you should stay well within your own skill and ability level.” ■



Crews from Probst work on power lines near Fields Substation as ominous weather approaches.

Photo by Brent Beverly

## Setting Poles, Stringing Wires

*Major construction project underway for Harney Electric Cooperative*

**By Stephanie Bowen**

Harney Electric Cooperative Operations Manager Brent Beverly says he has two states of consciousness: stressed and hyper-stressed. Asked if he's sleeping OK, he blinks wearily and launches into a narrative of the things that keep him up at night.

The primary reason for his current state of agitation is the \$11 million transmission line being erected between the HEC Fields Switch and the Quinn River Substation—a distance of about 52 miles.

The project is Harney Electric's first major transmission line construction since 1979, when HEC expanded from

Winnemucca to Valley Switch, Orovada, Daveytown and Quinn River. After years of discussion and nine months of meticulous planning, work has begun in earnest.

General Manager Fred Flippence says HEC's system is aging, so replacing old infrastructure is necessary to ensure ongoing reliability.

The new transmission line is being built along the highway and will feed all southern substations.

The existing transmission line between Fields and McDermitt goes up over the mountains and is difficult to maintain, especially in winter. HEC can rebuild the old line or remove it.

"The upgrade to larger conductor and the more direct route of the new power line should translate to a decrease in system line losses," Fred says. "The line also allows HEC to add another substation near Denio—one of the few

areas still open to agricultural drilling—which helps the co-op prepare for potential load growth."

HEC opted to combine distribution and transmission on the existing right-of-way, which will reduce the co-op's footprint on heavily regulated public lands.

According to Brent, a new right-of-way can cost up to 2 percent of the cost of a construction project and can delay necessary upgrades to the system. HEC is managing costs from top to bottom.

"We have the experience, and we don't need to pay for a lot of the outside services," Brent says. "Many places pay full price for a turnkey construction, but there are many things we can take care of ourselves."

This includes staking, buying materials, facilitating delivery, some pole spotting and cleanup.

"Everything we can do in-house will

be done in-house,” Brent says.

The decision to build during the winter was necessary because HEC’s irrigation load prohibits taking any section of line out of service for any length of time during summer.

Winter construction is not without its difficulties, however, most of which comes down to a single factor: weather.

“There’s a 4-mile stretch of line that goes up over Denio Summit through to the Nevada Department of Transportation maintenance station that was a critical area,” Brent says. “We had to get that section constructed before the storms hit.”

Wind is a year-round factor, but a day of heavy wind in November made stringing conductor impossible for approximately four hours.

Freezing temperatures present difficulties beyond just construction of the line. Dave Crawford—an inspector with the engineering firm Brown & Kyser—had his RV water freeze up indefinitely. He has to shower at a rental house in Denio.

“We knew it was going to be interesting, but hoped the winter would be mild enough to get the line built,” Fred says.

The timing of construction has other challenges. In a typical fall, linemen spend most of their days disconnecting irrigation services for the winter. However, time had to be made for crews from Orovada and Fields to facilitate materials delivery and tracking at the eight lay-down yards on the construction route.

Brent says HEC crews are doing an excellent job with the logistics on a project this size, which includes preparing sections of distribution line for removal and facilitating outages so contractors don’t have to build the line “hot,” or energized.

The remote location of the new line has made delivery of materials especially interesting. Freight needed to be rigidly scheduled to ensure an HEC lineman was



**Harney Electric employees meet with Probst team members to discuss safety on the first day of building an \$11 million transmission line.**

on hand to help unload.

With inconsistent cellphone coverage, communication with truck drivers was limited. One truck driver drove right through Denio, not realizing he had passed the drop zone until he arrived in Winnemucca. The foreman in Fields had to catch up with him and get him turned around from Reno and specifically detail the drop-off location.

The contracting crew from Probst had a first-come, first-serve mentality to the few RV hookups and hotel rooms available in the area. Those who couldn’t secure a space are dry camping nearby—a condition the crew is accustomed to, says Zach Hutchinson, Probst project manager. The company secured a room for showers in the event of a freeze up.

Local businesses are scrambling to find other ways to meet the needs of the new temporary population—and doing a nice job, according to Brent.

The holidays threw another wrench in production, as contractors took a week off for Christmas, and another week to attend a mandatory companywide annual safety training. Probst crews have been working seven days a week, and will likely continue that rigorous schedule to meet project deadlines.

Safety is a priority at Harney Electric, so Brent is agreeable with the necessary week off. He has attended Probst safety meetings to stay in the loop, and says he is impressed with the safety aspect so far.

Despite the challenges, the team is confident that the line will be built, inspected and energized before irrigation season ramps up in 2018.

“It just has to be,” Brent says. “That’s all there is to it.”

Brent recognizes the achievements of the project team, which includes Engineer Shane Sweet, who has worked closely with the engineering firm throughout the process, and Jason Hill, who directs the crews to “break and run” when needed.

“Whenever there’s a change, we have to reorganize to continue to push to that date of completion,” Brent says.

He says he is proud of the HEC guys who have taken on this project and have been instrumental in keeping it on schedule.

As for Brent, he says he will sleep better when the poles are set from the Fields Substation to Denio Junction.

“That’s the turning point,” he says. “When that gets done ... Well, I’ll sleep then.” ■



Lloyd Blackstone hauled his bagpipes to the top of Mount Borah—Idaho's highest peak at 12,662 feet—where he played “Amazing Grace” and “Scotland the Brave.”

Photos courtesy of Lloyd Blackstone

## A Mountaintop Musician

*The Ghost Piper of Mackay plays on rugged mountains, in solitary valleys and along crowded main streets*

By Dianna Troyer

For reasons he still cannot explain, Lloyd Blackstone became enthralled with bagpipe music nearly two decades ago.

Wondering if his heritage was Scottish, he did a DNA swab with a genealogy website.

“I was adopted at birth, so I’ll never know for sure,” he says. “The results showed that 42 percent of my makeup comes from the British Isles. There’s a saying that if you have any heritage from that region, the bagpipes will boil

it out of you.”

Lloyd has become known near his weekend home as “The Ghost Piper of Mackay” for playing in the Lost River Valley, especially in canyons or mountains where the natural acoustics echo his haunting songs.

For several years, he and his wife, Laurel, had been coming from their home in Meridian to Mackay for outdoor recreation and the quiet, small-town atmosphere.

“About three years ago, we bought a house on Spruce Street,” Lloyd says. “We



**Lloyd, front and center, plays with the Boise Police Pipes and Drums at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Boise.**

come up when we have time on weekends. I love to walk across the street to the school and play because the music echoes off the building.”

Besides the school, he randomly picks scenic places to play.

“Lofty places and a set of Great Highland bagpipes go hand in hand,” Lloyd says. “I fixate on some point on a mountain and start playing. For me, it’s meditative. I get lost in the music and the mountains.”

Lloyd began taking bagpipe lessons in 2000.

“It took me about a year to learn the music for a couple of simple tunes,” he says. “Then it took another year just to build up my lungs enough to play through a single tune from start to finish.”

He joined the Boise Highlanders, Idaho’s largest and oldest bagpipe band. As a Highlander, Lloyd practices weekly and performs with the band at parades, funerals, St. Patrick’s Day parties, Scottish games and other community events.

He is also a member of the Boise Police Pipes and Drums.

Lloyd says the bagpipe is a powerful instrument.

“I can’t explain it, but for some people it stirs a response deep in their soul,” he says. “I can make a grown man cry without even touching him. I just start playing.”

Not all bagpipe songs are mournful, though.

“Some people think of the pipes as just being played for funerals, but there are plenty of happy songs that have been written for them,” says Lloyd, who has a repertoire of more than 50 songs.

While he has played at countless venues, one place he secretly dreamed of playing was atop Mount Borah, Idaho’s highest peak at 12,662 feet about 20 miles north of Mackay.

When friends invited him to climb Borah, he accepted, but did not tell them of his plans to play for fear he would not reach the summit. He disassembled his pipes, wrapped them in cloth for protection and stashed them in his backpack.

“I work at a desk job and hadn’t really trained for it other than hiking while hunting,” says Lloyd, 53, an estimator for A-1 Heating and Cooling in Meridian. “Once we started, the thought of playing up there really kept me going.”

The strenuous trail up Mount Borah rises about 5,200 feet in 3.5 miles with a grade of 30 to 40 percent most of the way. Some people turn back at Chicken Out Ridge—an intimidating obstacle with drops of more than 1,500 feet on either side. Climbers scramble hand-over-hand along the narrow ridgetop.

“After finishing the ridge and crossing the snow bridge right after it, I had an overwhelming sensation of a chill at the back of neck,” Lloyd says. “I stood there in disbelief because I knew I’d make it.”

The final ascent is about 1,000 feet. At the summit,

Lloyd reassembled his pipes and wondered if they would even work at such high elevation where the air pressure is lower compared to the valley.

“They’re sensitive to elevation, temperature and humidity,” he says. “When I filled up the bag, it was softer than usual due to the air density up there. I had to tweak the reeds and make a few other adjustments.”

At about 3 p.m., he played the haunting notes of “Amazing Grace” and “Scotland the Brave,” which can be seen on YouTube.

“I believe this is the first time that bagpipes have ever been played from the highest point in Idaho,” says Lloyd, whose roundtrip odyssey took about 14 hours. I don’t really have the desire to do it again because I’ve got some lower back issues. I’m sure glad I did it once, though.”

Even after playing for nearly two decades, Lloyd never takes bagpipe music for granted.

“I’m still drawn to the intriguing sound and to hearing more and more of it,” he says. “Mastering the pipes is a lifelong process.” ■



## CVEA Marker Balls What They Are & Why They're Being Replaced



Above, a specially trained lineman performing marker ball replacement on a power line from a platform attached to a helicopter

Do you know what a marker ball is? What it does? Have you ever noticed them; the orange, white, or yellow balls attached to electrical lines as you drive between Valdez and Glennallen? Have you ever wondered what they are used for?

Most often referred to as just marker balls, these visibility marker balls are very important for system reliability and safety. Simply put, marker balls are used to help identify the electrical lines, primarily for aircraft, so they can see where power lines exist to avoid flying into them. If an aircraft came into contact with an energized power line, it could cause an outage or costly damage to the system, damage to the aircraft, and injury or worse for the people in the aircraft.

Typically marker balls are located on lines near airports or runways, which is mandated by Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) regulations. They are also required where electrical lines cross rivers, canyons, and highways as visibility in these areas can be difficult and they are common areas for aircraft to travel or land. Along CVEA's system there is a 2100 foot span between two structures that cross a very impressive gorge and another that is visible from the Richardson Highway that is 1900 feet long and spans the Lowe River. CVEA owns and operates a 106 mile, 138kV, transmission line that connects Valdez and Glennallen. Over the 106 mile area, there are over 250 marker balls installed for the safety of aircraft.

Marker balls are typically 36 inches in diameter and weigh between 15 and 20 pounds each. They are international orange, yellow, or white in color per FAA requirements. These colors



are selected to stand out against all background colors, so colors are alternated to ensure lines are visible.

The average life expectancy of a marker ball is 10-15 years. This is the length of time before fading or damage causes the need for replacement. Currently, many of the marker balls along CVEA's system have faded due to ultra violet light from the sun, are damaged or parts have failed from exposure to ice and wind, or have unfortunately been used as target practice.

To ensure the continued safety of the aircraft flying within the service territory, CVEA will complete a marker ball replacement project along the entire transmission line in 2018.

Due to difficult terrain and accessibility issues surrounding many of the marker balls, a majority will be installed utilizing a helicopter and specialty trained linemen. These linemen will work off of a platform attached to the helicopter high in the air to remove the old marker ball and install the new one. CVEA is projecting to spend over \$1.1 million on this project, with most of this cost due to the required use of the helicopter.

CVEA reminds everyone that marker balls are used for the safety of aircraft and should not be shot at. Shooting and damaging a marker ball creates an extremely dangerous safety hazard for aircraft, is very costly to replace, and can potentially cause a power outage or damage to the power line or other related equipment.

As you're driving on the Richardson Highway between Glennallen and Valdez this summer, keep an eye out for the crew installing the marker balls. After the markers balls have been replaced, if you see someone shooting at marker balls or power lines, or you see damage such as an open ball, pieces of a ball hanging off the line, obviously frayed wires or missing pieces, or smoke or fire, please immediately contact the CVEA office at 822-3211 in Glennallen, 835-4301 in Valdez, or CVEA dispatch at 1-866-835-2832 if it is after office hours.

For additional information on marker balls, marker ball safety, or any related topic, contact Sharon Crisp at 822-5506, 835-7005, or email [crisp@cvea.org](mailto:crisp@cvea.org). ■



**Top left, marker ball with bullet holes and frayed wire from being hit by bullets  
 Top right, a brightly colored marker ball stands out against the surrounding terrain to demonstrate the location of the line  
 Middle, marker balls crossing a span of line over a gorge between structures  
 Bottom, a damaged marker ball**

# Real Men Wear Pink

*Jeff Cook is top nationwide fundraiser for the American Cancer Society in 2017*

By Kris Capps

Alaskans know they can do anything. Now the rest of the nation knows that, too.

With the help of more than 350 individual donors, lifelong Fairbanksan Jeff Cook is the American Cancer Society's top nationwide fundraiser for the recent Real Men Wear Pink campaign. It's a satisfying achievement for a man who initially agreed to participate somewhat reluctantly. It also is the first time someone from Alaska and the western region has claimed the top spot.

"It's an amazing story," says Christina Kelly, communications director for the American Cancer Society in Alaska and Washington.

She and her colleagues watched as Jeff's tally continued to grow, all by individual donations.

"We are celebrating his victory up and down the West Coast," Christina says. "It's really thrilling."

"Where else can you do that, but Fairbanks," says Jeff, who gives all the credit to family members, friends, friends of friends and community members who supported him.

His total, which continued to grow in December, reached \$120,100. The smallest donation was \$20 and the largest was \$6,500. Bit by bit, those donations added up to the winning total.

"If you look at his donations, there's \$100 here, \$200 there," says Christina. "Whatever he said to people, when he personalized it and talked about the BRCA2 gene in his family, people got it."

When a friend asked Jeff to join this special campaign last fall, he agreed, somewhat reluctantly. He hoped he would be able to raise the \$2,500 needed to join the fundraising effort, but he also had some personal motivation to get involved.

Jeff's youngest daughter, Chrissy Alberts, was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2017. Further genetic testing revealed a positive match for the BRCA2 gene, which increases a person's risk of developing breast and/or ovarian cancer.



From left, Jeff Cook, daughter Chrissy Alberts, and Jeff's wife, Sue, at the Fairbanks cancer walk.

Chrissy's diagnosis convinced Jeff that his entire family should get tested for presence of the gene. Those tests revealed five other family members carry the gene. That doesn't mean they have cancer. It means they are at a higher risk of developing cancer. All immediately enrolled in a special monitoring program.

Newly retired, Jeff found motivation to raise funds for cancer research. He dressed all in pink for the Real Men Wear Pink event in Fairbanks in the fall and continued sharing his personal story throughout October, which is Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Donations poured in. Jeff kept adjusting his fundraising goal higher and higher.

It wasn't long before he was in the top 10 nationwide. Jeff says he felt pretty good about that, but figured he didn't have a chance to catch any of the fundraisers ahead of him. Most were from big cities outside Alaska. One, in fact, was ahead of Jeff because of a sizable corporate donation.



Staff in the American Cancer Society's Anchorage office celebrate Jeff's fundraising success.

But after a friend nudged Jeff to go for it, his competitiveness really kicked in. Before long, he was in first place, then widening the gap.

The second-highest fundraiser was out of Pittsburg with \$76,950 and the third place fundraiser was the CEO of Kroger (parent company of Fred Meyer) who raised \$75,535. A total of 3,106 men participated in this program and raised \$4 million nationwide.

"I never dreamed I'd pass these guys," says Jeff, who is still amazed at all his hometown supporters. "It was so gratifying to find out how much your longtime friends care and support you. These are all good-hearted, compassionate people who have a story and want to be part of this."

A longtime supporter of all things Fairbanks, Jeff also takes special pleasure in putting Fairbanks on the national fundraising map.

His participation led to greater awareness of breast cancer and created a significant investment in cancer research, says Christina.

"It's going to save a lot of peoples' lives," she says.

Others are taking notice of Jeff's accomplishment.

He plans to attend an American Cancer Society event in Seattle in mid-January, where he will be recognized as the top national fundraiser and will

also tell his story.

"It is amazing the response from across the country," he says. "I have been contacted by the BRCA Foundation out of San Francisco to be an occasional traveling ambassador."

An advocacy/lobbying group for "all things BRCA" has contacted Jeff, and he accepted a congratulatory phone call from the CEO of the American Cancer Society's central Atlanta office.

"It's an amazing story," says Christina. "It's even more amazing that he took something that was a family issue—a personal issue—and turned it into a silver lining of saving lives."

"It really shows when you put your mind to it, you can raise money anywhere."

Jeff is excited to help make a difference.

"Knowledge is power, and people who know about genetic mutations, treatment options and potential for good outcomes will be served if armed with the right knowledge," he says. "I am also excited about the progress that is, can and will be made through research and advancements funded by American Cancer Society-generated dollars."

"I am humbled and overwhelmed by the many and generous donors who have supported my Real Men Wear Pink campaign." ■

*Breast cancer affects both women and men. The Real Men Wear Pink program invites community leaders to raise awareness and money for the American Cancer Society. Every dollar raised saves lives through early detection and prevention, innovative breast cancer research and patient support.*

# Love Lasts in the Uhlig Family

*Siblings and their spouses celebrate golden wedding anniversaries*

By Dianna Troyer

Married for 59 years, Metropolis ranchers Herbert and Iona Uhlig set an example of a lasting love for their children. Three of them—Willard, Carl and Annette—and their spouses celebrated their golden wedding anniversaries.

The couples tell how they met and offer advice about having a loving relationship every day, not just on Valentine's Day.

## **Willard Falls for Sharon**

At a church dance, Sharon noticed Willard intended to ask another girl to dance, so she stopped him.

"I tripped him right when he was about to walk past me," says Sharon, who was sitting with other girls waiting to be asked to dance. "We'd

met at a previous dance. I could tell he was going to ask a blond girl to dance, so I had to do something. After I tripped him, I said, 'Where do you think you're going? You don't need to go any farther than me.'"

They still laugh about her dating strategy when Willard was a student at Weber State in Utah.

"She was cute with dark hair and had a good sense of humor," says Willard. "We still tease each other. We don't dance anymore though. I'm so stoved up, I can hardly walk across the room."

Willard and Sharon met in December, were engaged in April, and planned a summer wedding.

"We got married on July 1, 1964," says Sharon. "It was a Friday. The following Wednesday, he got a draft letter to go to Vietnam. If it wasn't for our marriage certificate, he would have had to leave."

The couple lived in Wells, where Willard drove school bus for 33 years. Sharon was an administrator at BeeHive Homes, an assisted living residence.

While raising their five children, they always remembered to celebrate their wedding anniversary, often with a camping trip.

Willard, 76, offers advice for young couples.

"Before you get married, make sure you really love each other," he says.

"Having a sense of humor helps, and sharing similar values is really important, too," says Sharon, 77.

They pass those values on to their five children, 25 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

## **Romance Blossoms At the Bowling Alley**

Sharon was working at an insurance company when Willard dropped by to visit her and introduce his brother, Carl, to her and her co-workers, including a woman named Glenda.

"When I heard his name, I thought I'd never date a guy named Uhlig because it sounded so funny," says Glenda. "Then the joke was on me because I married one and became a Uhlig."

The day she met Carl at the office, she happened to be going out with girlfriends to a bowling alley that evening.

"The guy I'd been dating for two years had dropped me like a hot potato and came in with his new girlfriend," says Glenda.

She noticed Carl was working at the desk.

"I started flirting with him just to show I wasn't bothered by the breakup," she says. "If my old boyfriend hadn't been there, I would never have had the nerve to talk to Carl."

Carl took a break from attending Weber State and returned home to work at the family ranch. To maintain



Herbert and Iona Uhlig are the original golden anniversary pair in the family.



their friendship, he and Glenda wrote letters.

“One thing led to another,” says Carl.

About 18 months after they met, they married June 10, 1966.

To have a happy marriage, Carl, 74, advises, “Always consult and confide in each other. Put your partner above yourself. Don’t worry about making a lot of money, either. Do things you can afford to do.”

Glenda, 74, says to give 100 percent in a relationship and not expect a spouse to meet you half way.

“Don’t give up on a marriage because of a

disagreement,” she says.

Carl and Glenda have four children, two of whom are adopted Throughout their marriage, they accepted each other’s time commitments with jobs and civic obligations.

Carl served 40 years on the Starr Valley Conservation District board and 14 years with the Nevada Conservation Commission.

Glenda worked at the Four-Way, the El Rancho and 25 years for the Elko County School District.

“I drove the school bus route around here,” she says. “Once we got to school, I went

to my other job working in the kitchen. For several years, Carl drove half the bus route, too.”

They say they hope to be role models to their four children and four grandchildren.

### **Summer Job Leads to Lasting Romance**

Dennis and Annette Branning met at the Wagon Wheel, a motel and restaurant in Wells where she worked as a waitress during her summers off from college.

Both say from the first time they met, they were always comfortable with each other

**From left, Dennis and Annette Branning, Carl and Glenda Uhlig, and Willard and Sharon Uhlig celebrated their 50th anniversaries within a few years of one another.**

Photo by Sarah Spratling

*Continues on page 8*



Sharon and Willard Uhlig on their wedding day.



Glenda and Carl Uhlig on their wedding day.

## Love Lasts in the Uhlig Family

*Continues from page 5*

and could talk about anything.

“He came in for supper because he was working on a road construction crew,” says Annette.

One day, she talked him into giving her a ride home.

“My parents thought he was great,” Annette says. “He helped my dad at the ranch.”

They married October 20, 1967, and lived in Wells. Dennis worked 30 years with the Nevada Department of Transportation on a road maintenance crew. Annette had a 40-year career in banking with Nevada State Bank, retiring in 2009 as manager.

While juggling jobs and raising their three children,

Annette, 70, says they had a work ethic and helped each other with chores.

“I’d iron his shirts, and he always kept the car filled with gas and opened the car door for me,” she says. “I appreciated that he was always willing to help take care of the kids, too, and now our three grandchildren.”

Dennis, 72, says helping Annette was a way to show he cared.

He advises young couples to figure out how to get along through life’s ups and downs.

“We talked and listened to each other,” Dennis says. “We never fought. There was nothing to argue about.” ■



Annette and Dennis Branning head to a dance at BYU.

## Desert Roads Less Traveled



A slow drive along Morningstar Mine Road is like a trip back in Time.

Photos by John Glionna

By John M. Glionna

### *Kelso Cima, Kelbaker and Morningstar Mine*



Joshua tree near Cima and Kelso.

Motorists who veer off Interstate 15 for the back-country cruise along Morningstar Mine Road are rarely in a hurry. Slowpokes are rewarded with one of the most eyeball pleasing high-desert drives in the Southwest.

Ruralite readers tend to live off the beaten track in places where the roads have character and personality. They know all about dangerous curves, soft shoulders and straightaways to die for. The Morningstar Mine Road, named after a long-abandoned 110-year-old ore claim, is just such a creature.

The route is cobbled together from three different roads – Morningstar Mine, Kelso Cima and Kelbaker – that run through the pristine 1.6-million-acre Mojave National Preserve.

Traveling west, the 45-mile stretch starts just off the Nipton Road exit from I-15 (just past Primm) and winds through groves of majestic Joshua trees, past the historic settlements of Cima and Kelso along an undulating roadway that makes a car gently rise and fall like a boat on ocean swells. Then it's on to the Kelso Dunes and conversation-piece Granite Mountains before reaching Interstate 40 and the turn-around point.

Embarking onto Morningstar Mine Road from the east is like traveling back in time. At the intersection of Ivanpah and Morningstar Mine, the tarmac is covered with blown sand several inches deep. Morningstar Mine Road heads due west through the vast Ivanpah Valley, a two-lane affair on

which passersby wave like it's still the 1950s. This is truly a one-of-a-kind drive.

Along the roadside, fat crows sit on fence posts, paying little mind to vehicles that pass infrequently. There's also a sign warning about the endangered desert tortoises, which can be found on the road, basking in the quivering heat.

Way up ahead on the straightaway, there's the blurry image of some vehicle pulled over to the side of the road, yet this is purely a Mojave Desert illusion. A closer look reveals a big fat wild shrub – the kind of thing that turns into a tumbleweed once broken off from its stem – that has sprouted on the road's edge. It's the first assault by a desert anxious to reclaim this asphalt path from man and

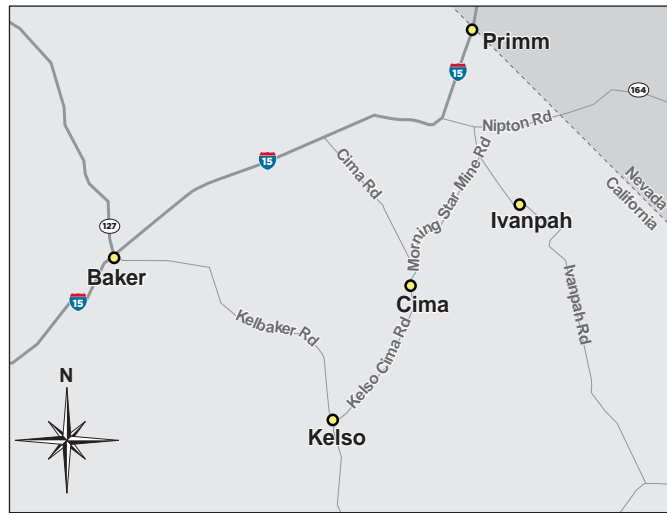
take the land back for itself.

Of course, not everyone observes the Morningstar Mine protocol. Occasionally, cars with California plates pass in a wicked hurry, but they're only chimeras, to be ignored.

Gaze out onto the sweep of high desert and you can easily imagine the first wagon trains that passed through here on their way west and the inhabitants of early Native American sites dating back 12,000 years; the landscape seems that untouched. Then, like a sentry, the first Joshua tree appears. Then another. Soon, the roadside is thick with the sublime plants whose outstretched limbs look like they're waving at passing vehicles.

Phillip Gomez, a guide at the Mojave National Preserve, says they're a breed of Yucca, renamed by early Mormon settlers who thought the plants resembled the prophet Joshua.

"They're bushier and wilder here than in Joshua Tree National Park because we're 100 miles north at a higher elevation. The branches bifurcate with each frost. That's why they're bigger and bushier."



Not far from Morningstar Mine Road, in the nearby Shadow Valley, is the world's largest and densest population of Joshuas. To drive the road at night is to see skies unadulterated by the light pollution from Las Vegas or anywhere else. Imagine true darkness.

Traveling west, the road passes through the ghost town of Cima, founded in 1905, that once served as a railroad depot and a commercial center for ranchers and miners. Today, nothing is left but a few old buildings. After Cima, the route changes its name to Cima Kelso Road. On the way west to Kelso, the Joshua trees

fall away, and the road tracks the Union Pacific railroad line that brought the towns into being. Between the two towns lies the Cima Grade, the steepest part of the line between L.A. and Las Vegas, which rises 2,000 feet in 20 miles, making the big freight engines work hard.

Here's where the road rises and falls like a fun ride, a hold-over topography, Gomez says, from when the entire desert was underwater eons ago.

In Kelso, the old train depot includes a well-appointed museum of the railroad's heyday. Built in the 1920s, the depot is a rare

surviving example of a combined depot, railroad restaurant and employees' rooming house – all well-preserved and free to tour.

At Kelso, you take a left at the T-intersection and head south along Kelbaker Road several miles to the 45-square-mile Kelso Dunes, the largest sand deposit in the entire Mojave Desert, where, if you don't mind sand in your shoes, you can climb 650 feet to the top and star in your own Lawrence of Arabia remake.

Finally, you pass the Granite Mountains that rise from the desert floor like reptile's teeth. They're the kind of peaks where if you look closely, you can make out faces, like your mother-in-law or first-grade teacher.

By the time you reach I-40, you can travel on to the tiny town of Amboy or head back the way you came. And here's the beauty of traveling on the Morningstar Mine route. Even after numerous excursions, you don't run out of fascinating things to see and places to stop.

The last trip is as fabulous as the first. Name another road that can make that claim. ■



A railroad depot at Kelso is a reminder of a bygone era. A photo of a horse-drawn wagon, right, hangs in the depot, where tours are free.

## VEA Employee Shares Creative Talents With Co-Workers

*The go-to person for crafty ideas*

By Vern Hee

When it comes to crafty creative projects, Valley Electric employees often turn to Customer Service Representative Gina Cummins. In her 25 years at VEA, Gina has built a reputation for being a creative and crafty person.

"It has been that way for at least the last five to six years," says Quin True, VEA Customer Service Representative. "(Gina) sees things differently than other people. She can look at ordinary things and see the beauty in them."

Cheryl Setzkorn, VEA Accountant, agrees.

"Gina has a special gift for creative projects," Cheryl says. "For instance, she can have a small wood table before her. Next thing you know it is a mosaic masterpiece. When making craft projects for others, she will find out their favorite stuff and create something from there. She made beautiful Christmas wreaths one year."

Gina has a unique talent. As a young child she found out that she was creative and artistic.

"I loved to draw as a kid," Gina says. "I like to do crafty things. I started crocheting when I was 10-years-old. When we lived in Trout Canyon, there wasn't much for kids to do there, and so I made



Where some might see a weather-worn power pole, Gina sees a side table with a mosaic top.

Photos by Horace Langford



Longtime Valley employee Gina Cummins finds craftwork to be relaxing and fulfilling.

things, like little rock houses."

Gina is among the first that people think of when VEA needs something creative done or there is decorating involved. She has done awards, the company Christmas tree, and she has even done numerous centerpieces for VEA parties.

For VEA she was the one who came up with the idea to make Christmas ornaments out of the faces of meters, and she has inspired countless VEA Christmas trees in the lobby.



Her talents vary. She works with wood. She can draw, and she paints. Gina does it all. In reality there are no limits to what she will do.

"It is just a gift that I found out I had on my own. My parents didn't have this gift."

Gina tries to be environmentally conscious. She recycles old power poles and makes mosaic table tops out of the poles.

"The rounded power poles

are for putting your drinks on," says Gina. "I like to make things out of old things. And I like sharing these projects with my husband, Ron. We do projects together."

Gina's talents have even been recognized by the town of Pahrump, including the grand prize for the annual Fall Festival. "But I don't do this for the recognition. It is very relaxing for me to do crafts. I also like to give things to people." ■



Through a growing literacy program, children up to age 5 receive a book in the mail each month, directly addressed to the child.

Photo by WavebreakMediaMicro

## Bringing Books to Cooperative Territory

*OTEC helps introduce Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Eastern Oregon*

By Lisa Jacoby

In an effort to bring additional literacy resources to Eastern Oregon's youngest citizens, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is helping bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to all residents in Baker, Union, Harney and Grant counties.

The Imagination Library began in 1995 in Dolly's hometown of Locust Ridge in Sevier County, Tennessee. The program provides age-appropriate books every month to children up to age 5.

Books are mailed directly to the home, and are addressed to the child.

Aletha Bonebrake, chairwoman of the Baker County Library Foundation in Baker City, says that whether a parent reads to a child or not, when the book comes into the home in the child's name, the child will begin using their imagination to tell the story, even if it's

just from the pictures.

"They 'read' to siblings, to their teddy bears, to imaginary friends," she says.

"The child develops motor skills, verbal skills and linear thinking skills."

Aletha heard about the Imagination Library program five years ago after meeting Jan Rippey, who brought the Imagination Library to Wilsonville.

The Imagination Library is run by the Dollywood Foundation, which partners with local nonprofits or school districts. The partnering entity is responsible for registering local children and providing stable funding to pay for the books, which is \$25 a child a year. There is no cost to families. All children are eligible, regardless of family income.

Although the program has been on her radar for several years, Aletha faced the issue of funding it without the benefit of fundraisers. She says the Imagination Library couldn't rely solely on donations,

which would vary from year to year.

"It has to have stable funding," she says.

A solution emerged in September 2017. The James and Shirley Rippey Family Foundation offered to pay 50 percent of the cost for new Imagination Library programs started by June 2018 in rural Oregon counties with a population of fewer than 100,000.

Through several meetings, an idea for funding surfaced: the OTEC scholarship fund, which is funded by unclaimed capital credits.

OTEC's scholarship committee and the board of directors approved the cooperative becoming a major funding sponsor for at least five years. This sponsorship has no effect on electric rates, because unclaimed capital credits are from members who have moved and cannot be found, or who have died without heirs. By law, these funds can

only be used for community programs.

With funding in place, the Imagination Library is set to launch early this year.

Aletha has been traveling across OTEC's service district to give presentations about the program and recruit partners in each county to help register children. Parents can also go online and register their child.

"Kids are already registering in all four counties," Aletha says.

As Aletha has promoted the program, the response has been positive, with "fabulous" and "unbelievable" being the most common reactions.

Aletha says she learned quite a few people expressed interest in starting the program but struggled with a funding source.

The Dollywood Foundation chooses the books and handles the mailing process. The local partner is responsible for managing the list of recipients in an identified geographic area, such as by town, county or school district.

According to the program website, [imaginationlibrary.com](http://imaginationlibrary.com), the Imagination Library at first focused only in Dolly's hometown. By 2003, the Imagination Library had mailed out 1 million books.

The program spread statewide in 2004. By 2006, it had gone across the United States and was eventually launched in Canada, followed by the United Kingdom and Australia.

Some books are in Spanish as well as English. The imagination Library can provide other formats, such as audio books and Braille.

By 2016, the Imagination Library was mailing 1 million books a month. In December 2017, the total surpassed 98 million books sent out during the past 22 years.

Collectively, Harney, Union, Baker and Grant counties will be the 18th location in Oregon to use the Dolly Parton program. According to officials with the Dollywood Foundation, OTEC is the first electric cooperative in the nation to take a leading role in bringing the



Dolly Parton reads "Llama Llama Red Pajama" to a group of developing readers.

Photo courtesy of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

## Books for Children

The following are partnering with OTEC in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

### Baker County

- ▶ Baker County Library District
- ▶ Baker County Library Foundation
- ▶ Eastern Oregon Head Start
- ▶ YMCA preschool
- ▶ Building Healthy Families
- ▶ CCRR (Childcare Resource and Referral)
- ▶ Preschool Promise
- ▶ IMESD Early Intervention
- ▶ EOMA
- ▶ WIC

### Grant County

- ▶ Grant County Library
- ▶ Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary
- ▶ Families First
- ▶ Head Start

### Harney County

- ▶ Harney County Library
- ▶ Harney County Library Foundation

- ▶ Early Childhood Center
- ▶ Harney District Hospital
- ▶ Harney County Health Department
- ▶ Little Blessings Preschool
- ▶ Laughing and Learning with Miss Liz
- ▶ Treasure Valley Community College

### Union County

- ▶ Cook Memorial Library
- ▶ InterMountain ESD EI/ECSE
- ▶ Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub (IMESD)
- ▶ Center for Human Development
- ▶ Babies First/CaCoon
- ▶ Union County C.A.R.E.
- ▶ Haven from Hunger
- ▶ Eastern Oregon Head Start
- ▶ Elgin School District
- ▶ Child Care Resource & Referrals

Imagination Library to its citizens.

"Books are the very best tools we have in society to help a child form the essential neural connections present in the brain at birth for cognitive development," Aletha says. "If the

pathways at birth are not connected during the first few years of a child's life, they wither and die. This is why early childhood literacy is such a critical component in preparing our children for entering kindergarten." ■