Phyllis Coble, left, is presented a patriotic quilt by Kathy Haskins, center, and Donna Scully. Phyllis served 26 years in the U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1999. She is now a member of the Umpqua Valley Quilters' Guild.

Quilting Guild Members Bond Over Blocks

Family feeling of organization fosters interaction while doing good in the community

By Craig Reed

What started out as a sewing session for a handful of women back in the early 1980s has evolved into a quilting and social activity for more than 100 women.

The Umpqua Valley Quilters' Guild has 110 members ranging in age from 12 to 80-plus. Membership has remained steady for the group that includes master quilters and beginners.

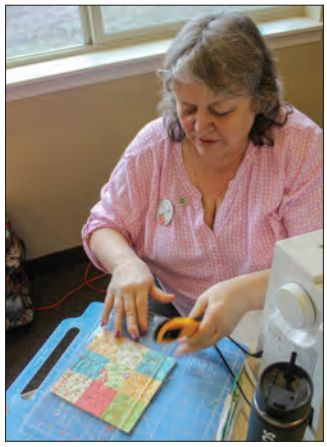
"It really is a family feeling," says Donna Scully. "And even if there wasn't that feeling, there have been many friendships developed by the members. It's very much a sharing group, people helping each other, and that is one of the things that makes it so much fun."

Donna is in her second year of her two-year term as the guild's president. She and quilters Sandy Wilson, Nancy Murphy and Kathy Haskins are Douglas Electric Cooperative members.

"Our love of quilting brings us together," says Kathy, who is the guild's recent past president. "It's interesting and fun to see and hear about the different aspects of life that brought people to quilting. Everybody is from different walks of life, ages, incomes, backgrounds—it's interesting and cool that this love of quilting has brought all of us together."

Nancy says quilting is a way to keep occupied, be creative and useful, meet people and make friends.

"I get inspired by those in the guild," she says. "There's a lot of really gifted people in



Sandy Wilson sews quilt blocks at a guild meeting.

the group. They help you get out of your box, to try new things. Quilters are some of the most friendly, helpful people I've ever met."

Sandy says piecing together the fabric blocks to make a quilt allows her to show off her artistic side. She admits collecting fabrics is an addiction, so quilting allows her to both add to her fabric pile and use from it.

"There's a sense of accomplishment when you finish a quilt," she adds with a laugh.

Through the years, the women of the guild have created and produced thousands of quilts. They have made quilts for themselves and their families, but also as gifts.

Donna says the guild annually gives away 130 to 150 quilts, ranging from children and youth sizes to full-size quilts for king beds. Several are donated each year to auctions that are held by nonprofit organizations.

In recent years, the guild has presented close to 150 patriotic-themed quilts to older veterans and to Oregon National Guardsmen who have returned from deployment overseas.

The creativeness of the guild members will be on display for public viewing and judging at the group's annual Umpqua Valley Quilters' Guild Quilt Show April 20-22 in Douglas Hall at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Roseburg. The theme of this year's show is "Dreaming of Diamonds." The Umpqua guild promotes the show as "Southern Oregon's Largest Judged Quilt Show!"

Donna says close to 300 quilts will be displayed, with some quilts and sewn items made by guild members for sale. Sewing and quilting classes will be offered with make-and-take products being created.

Daily admission is $8.

"The money is used to help support the guild and its community outreach," Donna says. "It helps buy materials that are then used in the quilts that are donated to children, veterans and the nonprofits."

Kathy says giving is part of the guild's mission.

"If something I made, something I created, brings somebody joy, then it is worth it," she says. "There's a chain of events. We enjoy making it, we enjoy giving it. It's a piece of love from us—one of the ways we as quilters show love. It's what makes us tick. And then we hope the recipient loves their quilt."

Nancy says, "You have to have a giving heart to make quilts for people you don't even know. It feels good to create something that will benefit someone else."

Nancy, who has been quilting for just over 30 years, says that for her, quilting is therapy.

"When there are problems in life and you can't do anything about them, it helps to have a project that keeps you occupied," she says.

Nancy admits the activity is both a hobby and addiction.

As is the case for most of the veteran quilters in the guild, each of their family members has one of their quilts, so now they produce for others.

Donna made her first quilt in the early 1980s. Her career and raising a family didn't allow her to spend much time quilting for a couple decades, but for the past 10 years, she has had plenty of time to quilt and to participate in the guild.

"It's a hobby that's allowed me to be creative, to meet some wonderful people, to make new friends, to learn new ways and techniques and to grow as a quilter with those," she says.

Donna is helped in management of the guild by Vice President Kathy Knapp, Secretary Margo Hess, Treasurer Phyllis Coble, Quilt Show Chairwoman Corrine Woodward, Show Assistant Rhonda Hjort, Chairwoman of Evening Meetings Myrt Thames, Members-at-Large Kathy Scarantino and Trudy White, and Evening Members-at-Large Vi Jobb and Yvonne Welton.

Like most of the guild members, Kathy Haskins says she just likes the feel of fabric, working with it and creating with it.

She then added, with a laugh, "We're excited to see the word quilt that will result from this article." ■

For more information, visit http://uvquilters.com.

How to Get Involved

The guild meets 10 a.m. to noon the first Tuesday of each month at Garden Valley Church, 1 mile west of Roseburg. An evening gathering is held the first Monday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Sleep Inn, 2855 NW Edenbower Blvd., Roseburg.

From 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month, sewing sessions are held at the Garden Valley Church.

The guild also organizes two four-day retreats during the third week in February at Gold Beach Resort.

The Show

The 2018 Umpqua Valley Quilters' Guild Quilt Show, "Dreaming of Diamonds," is April 20-22, at the Douglas County Fairgrounds. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday.

WOEC Plans for Upcoming Rate Increase

Improving reliability, providing good service to members and keeping the lights on remain the priorities of co-op management

A West Oregon Electric Cooperative lineman prepares for a day of work helping to keep members' lights on.

By Scott Laird

Last fall, West Oregon Electric Cooperative's board and management postponed the biennial operating increase to the rates, and only passed through the biennial Bonneville Power Administration increase to the wholesale power cost.

This decision was made solely with the members in mind so they would not have to shoulder the brunt of that increase during the winter when they use the most power. With the winter in the review mirror, it is time to have that discussion.

"When we made that decision to postpone the increase last fall, we were rolling the dice that we would not have a repeat of last year's expensive storm season," says WOEC General Manager Bob Perry. "We're not completely out of the woods yet, but it's looking better with each passing week as we get closer to spring."

Members might wonder, "Why does WOEC need an increase at all?"

Nothing in life is static, and raising costs should not be a surprise to anyone, says Bob. The cost to operate the co-op continues to increase every year.

"Labor is one of our biggest expenses, and that continues to rise with inflation," Bob says. "Over the years, we have kicked the can down the road on system maintenance, repairs and upgrades. Over the last four years, we have made substantial investments in the system and that is starting to show in reduced outages, overtime and response time to get the power back on.

"Without the necessary increases to cover increasing costs, we'd be just treading water and may even be going backwards as some services would have to be cut."

WOEC management will present to its board of directors a proposed small increase to the base charge and a fractional increase to the kilowatt-hour charge, which will cover increasing operating expenses during the next few years.

The increase to the base charge helps the co-op cover the fixed charges needed for day-to-day operations and keep power flowing to homes and businesses.

"The co-op has costs no matter how much power our members use," Bob says. "We have to maintain those lines to the end of each and every road where we have members that have meters. It also takes a certain number of people to run this co-op, whether we have 1,000 members or if we have 10,000 members."

"We're a co-op, so everyone shares equally in the cost to keep it operating," adds Finance Manager Dan Huggett.

Dan says most of the rate increase will go toward the continuing rise in the cost of labor.

"This is a very labor-intensive business, and we have union contracts," Dan says. "When you stop and think about it, you can only automate so much. We can buy and send out bigger and better trucks with more bells and whistles, but at the end of the day, someone still has to go out and pick up that wire and put it on the pole. We can bury all our lines—and we are doing that a bit at a time around our district—but it initially costs about three to four times as much as installing them above ground."

According to Dan, both management and the board have a fiduciary responsibility to an ongoing operation.

"I'm a member of the co-op too, and I would like to keep our rates as low as possible," Dan says. "But the fact is, we have to be thinking about not only today, but the next five and the next 10 years. And that's what we're doing right now with the changes we've made through improvements to the system that have increased reliability and keeping our members' lights on."

Past projects to improve reliability have included upgrades around the Green Mountain/Buxton area, and underground feeds from the Timber Substation that improve service and allow the co-op to backfeed other parts of the system if needed.

The co-op has experienced growth in the Green Mountain area in particular, with newer and bigger homes, which in turn comes with some initial costs for the co-op to serve those new members. Eventually, having more members receiving service will help spread out operations costs among all members.

Bob says a new work plan includes rebuilding and burying parts of the line from the Mist Substation to Vernonia, providing another backup to the co-op's most densely populated area.

"Operations Manager Don Rose has consulted with our engineer and with our linemen—who are out there every day and know where our trouble spots are—to develop our improvement plan," Bob says. "My philosophy since I took over as general manager has been to leave this co-op better than it was when I got here. I want our members to have the benefits of reliable electric service. And the way to do that is by upgrading the system to improve service, and decrease the number and length of time of any outages."

Bob says whenever anyone starts talking about WOEC rates, the size and makeup of WOEC's service territory arises. The total area of WOEC's service district is 1,225 square miles, with all of it rural—except Vernonia—and most of it forested, which causes trouble for utility lines. Keeping the lights on for all those members is expensive.

While the co-op has improved the reliability of the distribution system through upgrades and improvements—projects such as burying lines to eliminate overhead lines and increased tree-trimming work—both Bob and Dan say management has been looking at ways to cut costs.

WOEC management and staff continue to improve efficiency, cut costs and provide good customer service.

As Dan noted, one of the co-op's biggest expenses is labor. Dan says that regionally there is a shortage of qualified linemen—specifically meter technicians—which requires an additional level of training.

"They are hard to find," Dan says. "We're a smaller co-op, so finding qualified labor can be a challenge, and it is even harder to get them to come to WOEC."

Dan says most of the other ways WOEC management has looked to cut costs are small, but added together they help keep the bottom line as low as possible for members.

Dan worked to reduce monthly banking fees for the co-op and also replaced the co-op phone system at a significantly reduced monthly rate.

"We're a business, and it costs money to operate a business," Dan says. "I've been taking a look at everything and asking if things are necessary, or if it's the best price we can get. The savings are small, but they are on a month-to-month basis and they are ongoing,"

Bob says that by adding an extra staff member in the office who works to contact members who are delinquent on paying their monthly bill, shutoffs for lack of payment have been almost eliminated. Shutoffs cost members more money because of disconnect and reconnect fees, so this is a service that truly helps the members.

"We're working to improve our efficiency, cut costs where we can, and provide the best possible service to our members," Bob says. ■

Metal Masterpieces

Artist cuts creations by hand from sheets of metal

By Craig Reed

Metal bars and plates surround Wade Skinner as he creates artwork in his shop.

Traffic buzzes by on Highway 99 at the front of his driveway a few miles south of Junction City, but Wade slows his life down and pays attention to detail, turning plain metal into decorative pieces.

The artwork features running horses, evergreen trees, elk and other wildlife, and outdoors scenes. The finished pieces range from a small metal-plate quail to a long iron sign with an outdoor scene that will soon hang from an entry archway.

"I've forged my life on top of an anvil," says the 71-year-old Wade, who has a cowboy look with his wide-brimmed hat, a red bandana around his neck, a denim jacket and jeans. "I've learned hard work over an anvil. Nothing is impossible if you just take the time to figure it out."

Wade works with a cutting torch, burning through the metal on the lines he has previously traced around a template. There is no computer program, just Wade creatively working with his hands.

He gives himself artistic license to roam around the template so no finished artwork is exactly the same.

"Nature fuels my creations," he explains. "It gives me the inspiration. To work with the resources of the earth, to work with the materials I use, to work with the people to create what they like, it's a wonderful circle.

"I put as much emphasis on cutting and welding as a brain surgeon does. My code is, 'Do the best you can, but then always try a little harder.'"

Several years ago, Larry and Elaine Phillips of Vida had Wade cut out and create several metal pieces, including railings, Western scenes, fireplace doors and signage for the driveway for their new home.

After transferring a design to metal, Wade Skinner cuts the shapes out by hand with a cutting tourch.

"It's beautiful," Larry says of Wade's work. "Wade did it all by hand. There was no computer cutting. He does fabulous work. He's a real craftsman.

"We've recommended him and he's done work for people that we know. He's

Art and nostalgic lanterns are an inspiration inside Wade's shop. Left, one of Wade's signs.

fair and honest and on time. He's a good ol' boy."

Fyrel Fenton of Halsey has several of Wade's decorative pieces.

"He's good on design, good on quality, good on price," says Fyrel.

Developing a metal artwork business was kind of an accident for Wade, who initially started out working with industrial machinery.

After graduating from Junction City High School in 1965 and Lane Community College in 1972 with a degree in welding technology, Wade worked in heavy fabrication, building machinery for West Coast sawmills.

In 1979, he moved back to the property where he was raised to help care for his aging grandparents. His grandfather, Hisikiah Skinner, and his father, Sidney Skinner, had built a shop on the property for their auto body repair business and then later for an antique clock business.

When Wade returned, he was told he could use the shop. He converted it into an industrial fabrication business. When the recession hit in the early 1980s, he had to figure out how to diversify.

"I cut out two horse heads, put a bar between them for a towel rack, put it up on the wall and it sold within days," Wade says. "Then I made more using buffalo, elk, deer, and they all sold quickly."

Wade's business was then a blend of machinery and art projects for several years until he went full time with artwork in 1994.

Wade credits several "incredible elderly men" who mentored and supported him through the years. He says those include his grandfather, Hisikiah, his father Sidney, and friends Lane McFadden and Daymon Smith.

"I'd be nothing sitting here if not for their support," Wade says.

Because of the mentoring he received through the years, he has been inspired to do likewise for the children of younger generations.

For many years, he took a covered wagon and his two draft horses to grade schools in Lane County and gave 30-minute presentations about how settlers came to this state over the Oregon Trail. Although his draft horses have died and he has cut back on his presentation schedule, he and his wagon still visit Oakridge students.

In addition to giving students some Oregon history, Wade hopes to inspire them with his words.

"I tell them they are the future of the world and what they do with their lifestyles is important," says Wade.

He has two grown children of his own: Travis, who is a precision industrial welder, and Heather, who is a graphic artist.

"Live your life well, follow the code of respect, ethics, principles, values, morals and zero drug tolerance and life will be good to you, I guarantee it," says Wade. "We need to invest in our children because they are our future. Invest in our children, give them your time, tell them your life learnings so they can use them to make their own life better. We should respect each other and respect the earth we live on."

Wade says he will continue to create metal artwork and mentor young students in his shop and in his Oregon Trail presentations for as long as possible.

He admits the mistakes he has made in his own life journey and in his artwork has helped him build his own character.

"I'm always trying to do a little bit better the next time," Wade says. ■

Julie McEntire began making metal roses about 10 years ago. Although it started as a hobby, she now sells them at shows in Elko and Wells.

Photos by Sarah Spratling

Ghost Town Roses of Nevada

Julie McEntire creates artistic flower arrangements from discarded rusty cans

By Dianna Troyer

For decades, the idea of making flowers and other home decor from rusty tin cans kept nagging at Julie McEntire.

"The idea first ran through my mind about 40 years ago, but I never had the time to work on it," says the 72-year-old Pilot Valley resident.

She knew there were plenty of cans at nearby ghost towns and old dumps.

About 10 years ago, she finally had the time to transform the idea into reality.

"My mom could always make something beautiful from nothing, so that inspired me," Julie says.

She drove to an abandoned dump about 3 miles from her home and picked up a few cans. She still has the first flower she made.

"It looks like a big chocolate mess," Julie says. "They evolved over time. I decided to make roses because they're my favorite flower and remind me of my grandfather's flower garden."

Some of her favorite roses decorating her living room are sentimental and not for sale. Julie says they remind her not only of her grandfather, but of her mother's ingenuity.

When Julie first started, she made the roses for herself.

"I thought they were beautiful," she says. "Then friends told me I should sell them at craft shows. They gave me good advice."

Julie's tin-can roses sell quickly at shows in Elko, Wells and other places. She printed business cards with the name of her hobby: Ghost Town Roses of Nevada.

Clockwise from above, Julie uses needle-nose pliers to create rose petals. Her metal bouquets come from hand-cut templates in her workshop. A wall in Julie's home is filled with roses and other artwork she will not sell because of their sentimental value.

"I've had people look at them and tell me they're so lifelike that they didn't realize they were made from old cans," Julie says.

Roses range from the size of a quarter to about 5 or 6 inches across.

"I usually put two on barbed wire, old barn wood or white bark from river birch," she says.

Julie rummages through abandoned dumps and old settlements near her home for material.

"I look for suitable material and put it in the back of my truck," she says. "The cans have to be the right thickness. If they're too thick, they're too hard to bend. I like a certain patina, too, that only the weather can create."

She prefers using old MJB coffee cans because they were once green, and the color still shows in some places.

At home in her shop, Julie cuts the cans into workable forms. Next she uses pliers to turn up the edges of the metal into the shape of petals. Depending on the pattern and materials, she attaches them in different ways to form a rose.

"My brother gave me a pop rivet gun, so I'm going to experiment and see how well that works to hold them together," she says.

When Julie is satisfied with a rose, she sprays it with a shiny lacquer to keep any tiny rust particles from falling off.

She works on a batch of flowers for two to three days, making about 10 in a day.

"It's time consuming but fun," Julie says. "I've always loved making something out of nothing."

She says her floral hobby is relaxing.

"It gets me out walking around," Julie says. "You never know what you'll find or where a dirt road might lead."

She says the solitude of northeastern Nevada appeals to her.

"When I moved to Pilot Valley, I told the builder to make sure my living room window faces Pilot Peak," Julie says. "Every morning, I sit down and have coffee with the mountain. It's a great way to start the day."

While sitting there, she plans her day and whether to make another batch of flowers. Sometimes she makes other home décor, such as mirrors.

"I still love making the roses," Julie says. "I'll never run out of cans around here." ■

Salmon River
Ruralite
APRIL 2018

The sky over Little Redfish Lake is one of many night-viewing areas in and around Stanley, Idaho, which recently was designtaed a Dark Sky Reserve—the first in the United States. See more on page 4.

PHOTO BY GARY GADWA

Annual Meeting Information and Insert Inside

The view of the night sky over Little Redfish Lake in Sawtooth National Forest contributed to the area's designation as the first Dark Sky Reserve in the United States.
Photos by Gary Gadwa

Stanley Urges Visitors to Look Skyward

Sawtooth National Forest offers more than high mountains and lush forests

By Anna Means

The small town of Stanley has one more attraction as it kicks off its first year as a Dark Sky Reserve. Visitors will be encouraged to look up to see what the night sky has to offer, as the Sawtooth Interpretive and Historical Association holds programs to celebrate the celestial scenery throughout the summer.

The night sky was one of the first landscapes to inspire early storytellers. Tales were told about the images created by the stars, planets and Milky Way.

Explorers used the stars, moon and sun to plot their courses into and out of unknown territory.

For the most part, humans have turned their attention downward as technology has given them lights in their homes and on the streets. Navigation is as simple as plugging in GPS coordinates.

Stanley is on the side of imagination and wonder. In that spirit, it was recently designated the Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve. It is the first such place in the United States and only the 12th in the world where stars, planets, the Milky Way, comets and meteors can be seen or scoped without interference from ground lights.

According to National Geographic, those living on 80 percent of the planet's land areas—and 99 percent of those in the U.S. and Europe—cannot see the Milky Way because of light pollution.

Some people are ambivalent about this statistic. For others, such as Italian researcher Fabio Falchi, it is a shame.

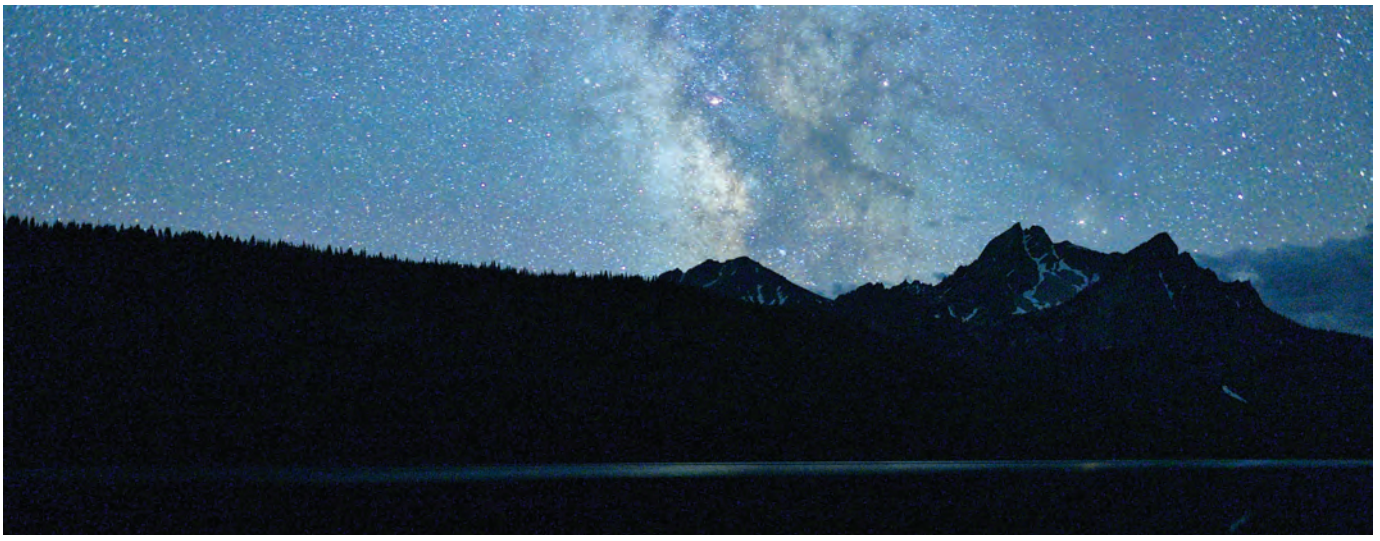
"We have lost the connection with our roots—of literature, of philosophy, of science, of religion," he says. "All are connected with the contemplation of the night sky. A new generation can no longer appreciate this beauty."

For Stanley City Mayor Steve Botti, it is a quality-of-life issue. Steve says he enjoys watching the night sky and is pleased to find Stanley offers that from his front door.

"It was one of the amenities I wanted to preserve," he says.

Several years ago, Steve saw articles about dark sky reserves from the International Dark Sky Association. Stanley was in the middle of the dark sky area in Sawtooth Recreation Area.

"It seemed like there might be



Clear, dark nights near the Sawtooth Mountains are an ideal time and place to watch a cosmic lightshow of stars, planets and streaks streching across the sky.

recreation opportunities associated with it and as a tourism community," he says. "This could be one more attraction."

While people can travel to the wilderness to see skies free of lights, Stanley and the Sawtooth Valley are easily accessible.

The city of Stanley was already trying to preserve access to the night sky.

At the city's request, Salmon River Electric Cooperative put shields over some street lights in 2012. Then, in cooperation with LED manufacturer Evluma and the Bonneville Power Administration, the cooperative replaced high-pressure sodium lights with LED bulbs in Stanley and Challis.

"SREC opted to partner with the cities and BPA because of the energy savings and reduced maintenance costs of the LED bulbs," says SREC General Manager Ken Dizes.

Steve knew Sun Valley and Ketchum were enacting dark sky ordinances, which signaled they were concerned about the same issue.

"This was exactly what International Dark Sky Association was talking about," Steve says.

He started the application process that included help from neighboring towns, organizations and interested individuals.

"It was not a simple process," Steve says. "It ended up at 140 pages and took 2½ years to get it written."

There was a fair amount of local support, but some believed this would mean more regulations on personal behavior. One citizen was worried he could not run his snowmobile headlights. Steve assured the gentleman the issue was with permanent lights only.

On December 18, 2017, Stanley received its designation.

The Sawtooth Interpretive Historical Association celebrates the designation this summer with at least three programs at the Sawtooth Forum and Lecture Series on topics related to the reserve. The organization will hold night-viewing programs June and July during new moon periods.

"We've come to acknowledge that this pristine night sky is part of our heritage and worth preserving for our children and future generations," says the website at www.idahodarksky.org. "Our effort is the expression of a collective commitment by communities, private landowners and public land managers to support the night sky experience.

"Together, we will preserve and enhance our superior nighttime ambiance and its benefit for health, environment, and tourism ... and set a standard for other communities to follow." ■

Other reserves in the world include two each in Wales, England and Germany; and one each in New Zealand, Ireland, Quebec, Namibia and France.

Creating ARTWORK for the Record Book

Roy Abo hopes his origami umbrellas earn a spot in the Guinness World Records

By Dianna Troyer

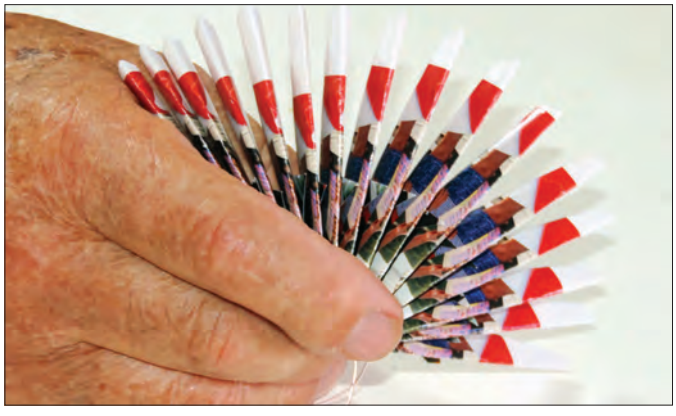
To keep his fingers nimble and his mind active, Roy Abo has made thousands of origami umbrellas—4,654 to be exact. To keep track of how many he has made, he keeps a tally on a piece of paper.

"I'd like to make 5,000," says the retired farmer who lives west of Paul. "I just need a few more years. I'm 92 and pretty sure I'll live to be at least 95. My brothers and sisters all lived into their mid- to late-90s. My brother, George, is 95."

Roy started making the sturdy 5-inch-diameter umbrellas in 1967 as a hobby.

He hopes his paper cutting and folding feat is fit to be listed in the Guinness World Records.

"I went to the library in Rupert to see if any origami records were listed," Roy says. "There weren't any, just a short explanation of what it is."



Origami is the Japanese art of cutting and folding paper to make decorative shapes and figures.

Roy, who retired at age 62 after raising grain, beets, beans and potatoes, says making each origami umbrella is relaxing.

"It gives me something to do when I watch TV in the evenings," he says. "It takes me about four hours to make one."

Several years ago, he went to a Japanese festival in Boise and had his own booth to showcase the art of origami.

"I sold 40 umbrellas in less than three hours," Roy says.

He learned how to make the umbrellas and lanterns from his brother, Isamu, who lived in Denver and loaned a book to Roy about the centuries-old craft.

"He sent me the instructions and materials for my first one," Roy says.

Once Roy mastered making umbrellas, his niece traveled from Denver to Roy's home so he could teach her to make them, too.

"Anyone can do it," says Roy. "It just takes time and patience."

Roy's wife, Trudy, read the book Isamu sent and decided to make an origami lantern.

"She was a seamstress and really good with her hands," says Roy. "We liked to give away what we made for gifts."

The lanterns take twice as long to make as the umbrellas.

"I've made 500 lanterns," Roy says.

Before Trudy died, she and Roy had a professional portrait taken of them. The photo hangs in the living room near a showcase filled with Roy's umbrellas.

To start an umbrella, Roy settles into his favorite chair with his materials and tools on a tray at his side.

"I don't need much—just small scissors, pliers, tweezers, wire, paper, toothpicks and these patterns," he says.

Using triangular shaped patterns, Roy cuts pieces from cigarette wrappers, placemats or brochures for cars and boats. He moves the pattern on the paper slightly with each cut, resulting in an umbrella with color variations.

The umbrella staves are made from Oriental

Left, Roy Abo joined the origami-enthusiast fold in 1967. He has made more than 4,500 origami umbrellas. Above, his lanterns take about eight hours to create. The umbrellas, top and opposite, take about four hours each.

toothpicks. The stem handles are made from chopsticks.

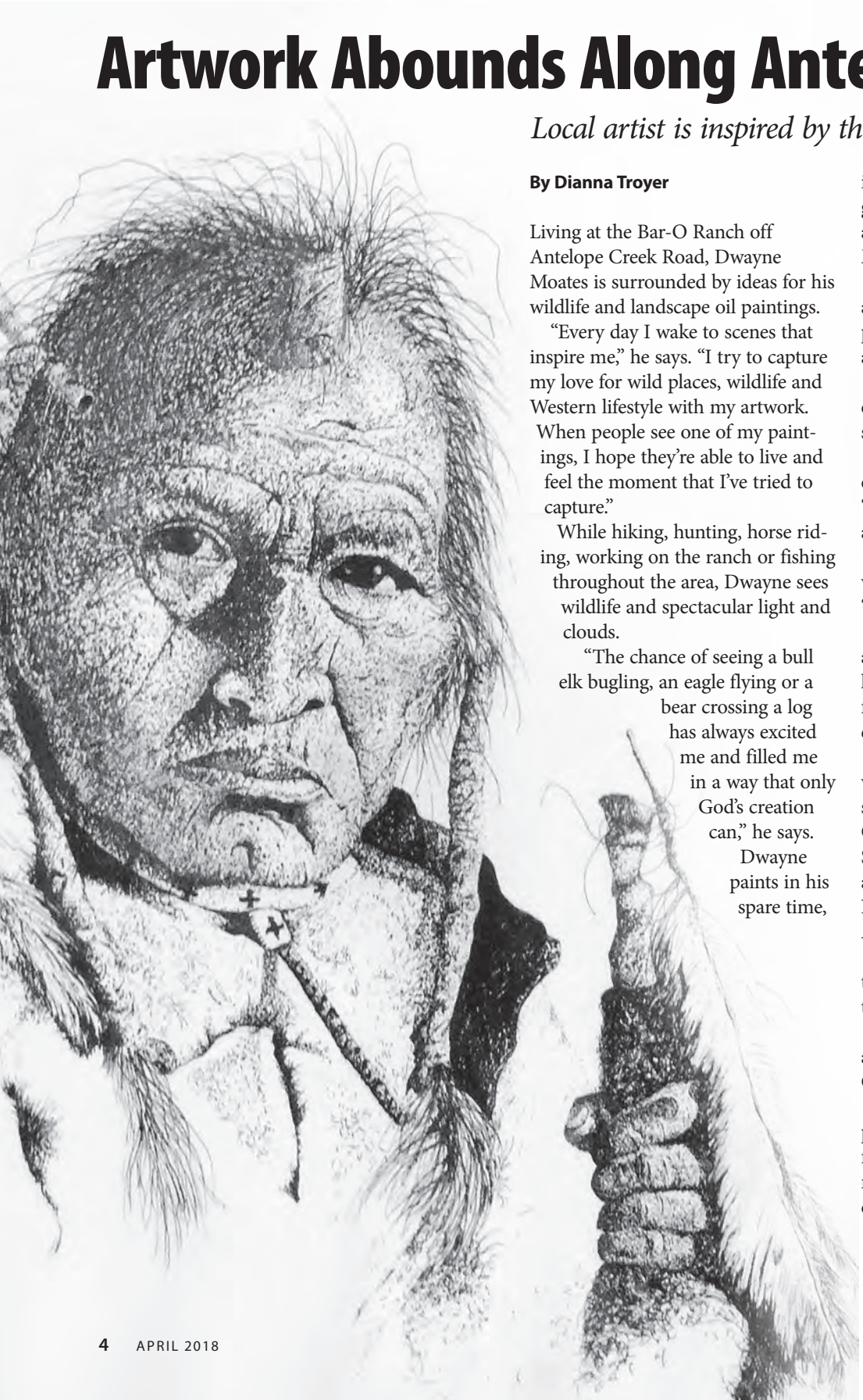
"Depending on the thickness of the paper, it takes 50, 60 or 72 pieces of the same paper," Roy says. "I need more if the paper is thin."

Considering Roy's generosity, it might take longer than he anticipates for him to reach his goal of 5,000 umbrellas.

"I like to give them away as gifts," he says. "I've given away about 3,300 umbrellas. If I know about people having a meeting or reunion, I'll donate some as gifts. I can always make more." ■

Artwork Abounds Along Antelope Creek

Local artist is inspired by the surrounding landscape



By Dianna Troyer

Living at the Bar-O Ranch off Antelope Creek Road, Dwayne Moates is surrounded by ideas for his wildlife and landscape oil paintings.

"Every day I wake to scenes that inspire me," he says. "I try to capture my love for wild places, wildlife and Western lifestyle with my artwork. When people see one of my paintings, I hope they're able to live and feel the moment that I've tried to capture."

While hiking, hunting, horse riding, working on the ranch or fishing throughout the area, Dwayne sees wildlife and spectacular light and clouds.

"The chance of seeing a bull elk bugling, an eagle flying or a bear crossing a log has always excited me and filled me in a way that only God's creation can," he says.

Dwayne paints in his spare time, in the evenings and weekends after getting off work as facility manager at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve.

He sees inspiration for his artwork at Craters, too. He once painted a pika surrounded by the lava flows and a rising sun.

Dwayne's wife, LeeAnn, says an employee had tears in her eyes when she saw it.

"It resonated with her and other employees," she says. "They said, 'That's what Craters means to me and what it feels like to be here.'"

Dwayne paints in his home studio, working from photographs of wildlife "to get the muscle structure right."

Many of his scenic backgrounds are from memory, including places he has explored while working for the National Park Service, his employer since he was 19 years old.

"I've been blessed to live in places where the beauty of nature abounds," says Dwayne, 54. He has worked at Glacier National Park in Montana, Saguaro National Park near Tucson, and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area near Los Angeles.

In 1999, Dwayne and LeeAnn left the mountains of California to be near the jagged peaks of central Idaho.

"I wanted to work in a more rural area, so we were excited to come to Craters," he says.

The move inspired him to begin painting again after taking time off from his art due to work commitments. In 2013, he built a website, dwaynemoates.com, and began selling paintings and prints.

Some of his earliest artwork, such as a pen-and-ink portrait of

Clockwise from above, Dwayne Moates says his paintings are an expression of his love of his surroundings. Inspiration for his work, including the cougar and bear paintings, comes from his professional and personal travel. Opposite page, one of Dwayne's earliest works is a pen-and-ink portrait of Sioux Chief Black Elk.

Sioux Chief Black Elk—will never be sold and hangs in their living room. He drew it when he was a student at Box Elder High School in Brigham City, Utah.

"I had a really good art teacher who saw what a friend and I were doing and realized how much we loved art," he recalls. "She let us work on whatever we wanted."

Dwayne has worked in watercolor and pencil, but now prefers oils. Whatever the medium, he says he is grateful to see so many scenes he would like to paint.

"I love anything outdoors and have always loved big skies, open spaces and wild places in the West," he says. "I love to share those places with others through my paintings."

Dwayne says he and LeeAnn appreciate living on a scenic ranch in central Idaho where natural beauty surrounds them. They laugh about how they planned to live in Montana again.

"We joke we never made it there and probably won't," says LeeAnn. "We're a little south of heaven."

Dwayne says Montana has changed since he worked there.

"The western side of the state has become developed," he says. "The feeling of wide-open spaces is disappearing. But here in this valley and especially up Antelope, there's still that feeling and plenty to paint."

The couple bought the ranch in 2001.

"We were always coming up here to ride, hike, hunt or fish and really liked this area," he says. "One day, we saw a for-sale sign was posted."

Dwayne and LeeAnn's appreciation of their property is shared by people who once lived there.

Several years ago, a woman and her relatives stopped by to see the log house.

"She said she was born in the house, and it was built in 1900," says Dwayne.

Members of the families who later lived at the ranch have stopped by in the summers to hike around the place.

Dwayne shares their appreciation.

"Creating these paintings is an expression of my love for places like this," says Dwayne. "I never tire of it." ■

Manzanita Radio Hits the Airwaves

Internet station provides community event announcements, music and a bit of humor

By Dan Haag

Ask a hundred people what retirement means to them and you will likely get just as many answers: travel, gatherings with family and friends, and catching up on some reading, to name just a few.

In the case of Manzanita's Gary McIntosh, it's a chance to dive into a new project.

Enter Manzanita Radio, a music and local news internet radio station that is rapidly evolving from Gary's retirement hobby to a full-time gig.

Before last year, Gary's experience with radio station operations didn't go beyond being an on-air interviewee.

A former State Elections Director for Washington state, Gary had an ongoing conversation with a friend about creating an internet station focusing solely on the Manzanita-Nehalem area.

As the idea gained steam, Gary realized the venture had broad possibilities.

"There's a lot of interesting people living here," Gary says. "We've got actors and actresses, musicians, authors, World War II veterans. A lot of different people make up this community."

He says the wide variety of popular local events means something worth talking about is always happening.

Housed in his condo above T-Spot on Laneda

Above, Gary McIntosh does a remote broadcast from the 2017 Manzanita Holiday Kids Fair. The remote setup keeps him on air even while he travels. Opposite page, Gary at home in Studio A.

Avenue in Manzanita, Gary works out of what he calls "Studio A"—a spare bedroom with a small desk that holds a computer, soundboard and two microphones.

"We haven't gotten big enough for a Studio B yet," he says.

There's also a "Traffic Observation Deck"—a small window facing east up Laneda—and "The Weather Deck"—an deck outside Studio A.

Traffic reports often consist of letting listeners know where on its route the garbage truck is, when delivery trucks are parked at Little Red Apple Grocery and Deli—just outside Gary's window—and if any construction projects are blocking Laneda.

"Listeners love the traffic report: 'Traffic is light in and out of the city, east bound and west bound,'" Gary says with a laugh.

Weather reports only require a quick glance out the Studio A window.

"There's other things people want to know, like what restaurants are open on a Tuesday, what band is playing at the Sandune Pub on the weekend, things like that," Gary says.

There's also a variety of music programs and event announcements, including applicable links.

The broadcast equipment came from Gary's son, who gathered together the various components for his dad. Local tech expert Tim Garvin helped set up the software.

Music is streamed from Gary's iTunes collection, with all required licensing in place.

Manzanita Radio has been on the air nearly a year. Gary has already found ways to expand the station's accessibility for a wider audience. The station can do live broadcasts at places such as the Manzanita Farmers Market or the recent Manzanita Holiday Kid's Fair. Broadcasting remotely means Gary can continue to offer programming even while on vacation.

Manzanita Radio offers 24/7 broadcasting, with certain days set aside for themed music programs: funk on Mondays, blues on Tuesdays, Latin music on Wednesdays, jazz on Thursdays and Fridays, classic rock on Saturdays and blues on Sundays.

"We play it by ear on the weekends, but people really seem to like jazz," Gary says, adding he announces full updates of station activities every weekday at 9 a.m.

Listener numbers are modest, but gradually expanding. Gary says he is not highly promoting the station quite yet as he works to perfect its on-air schedule and addresses technical issues.

"I'm always tinkering with new platforms to make it easier for listeners to enjoy," he says. "If anyone is having a problem, we can usually find a solution."

Folks from as far away as Texas and Arizona have begun to tune in—a hopeful sign of things to come.

"People like me, who can't be here all the time, want to find out what's going on in the little city they miss," he says. "If you have internet access anywhere in the world, you can find out what's happening in Manzanita." ■

Manzanita Radio is at www.manzanitaradio.com.

Above, Gary checks the view from the traffic observation deck.

Photo by Mike Teegarden

The new lobby is a big hit with Noel Wien Library patrons. New plants, benches and charging stations provide a comfortable surrounding.

Library Remodel Solves Tree Trouble

Creative solution gives new life to hazardous over-sized fig trees in lobby

By Kris Capps

It's not often that patrons of a library can take a piece of history home with them. But that is exactly what happened at Noel Wien Library in Fairbanks.

It was an unexpected gift, due to four long-lived trees that grew so tall they became a safety hazard in the library's lobby area. The four leafy sentinels—weeping fig trees also called ficus trees—were planted in 1977.

Library patrons walked by those trees every time they entered the library. For some, that happened regularly throughout their childhood, according to library director Melissa Harter. For others, library visits continued into adulthood. In fact, the library records 30,000 visits to the building every month. That's a lot of tree appreciation.

However, the trees grew so tall, their leaves flattened against overhead lights and became a fire hazard. Children playing in the lobby area started getting their feet stuck in the grates surrounding the tree roots. The borough government decided it was time to remove the trees.

Public outcry was instantaneous. Suddenly, those trees became heartfelt symbols of library visits. Petitions were signed and testimony was collected at public meetings.

The trees, say supporters, were nourishing and refreshing in the dead cold of winter. Everyone wanted to keep real trees in the lobby.

Melissa began brainstorming with the Fairbanks Library Foundation, and they found a way to turn the change into an opportunity.

"Something good had to come out of it," she says.

Above, Melissa Harter shows off the book she created from the library trees.

The lobby was destined to be remodeled. When the tall trees were removed, library volunteers harvested 600 cuttings from the trees. They planted those cuttings into small pots, and the tiny saplings settled in. Each pot was tied with a colorful ribbon. The plan was to sell the saplings for $20 each to raise funds for the library. The sale is ongoing.

The Folk School of Fairbanks—a nonprofit group that offers year-round classes and programs, including woodworking—harvested parts of the trees and used them as supplies in a bookmaking class under the expert guidance of an artisan. Branches and leaves became small, handmade mementos.

The Folk School had a display of handmade bowls, books and other items created from parts of the trees within the library.

The larger branches and trunks of the trees are drying and under the hands of a woodworker from 30 Below Woodworks, they will be turned into a piece of furniture for the library. Sticks from the trees were used in a bookmaking project at the children's library. A fabric artist collected leaves to create colorful scarves.

Clockwise from above, artisan Wesley Hathaway created these spoons from wood of the trees. By buying a sapling, Library patrons were able to bring a piece of the beloved trees home with them and support the library at the same time. Aldean Kilbourn of the Library Foundation spruces up saplings for sale.

No part of the trees have gone to waste. The trees have merely transformed into something different.

Meanwhile, everyone seems to appreciate the newly renovated lobby with the new smaller trees.

"Yes, the lobby seems to be a big hit," says Melissa. "It is often quite busy, and the benches around the trees are heavily utilized. We have new charging station tables that are also very popular."

All this renovation happened about the same time Noel Wien Library celebrated its 40th anniversary. That event featured a visit by the librarian who helped find funds to build the library, a public tour of the library's art collection and visits by many faithful library patrons.

Melissa is thinking about other improvements that could be made to the library lobby. Maybe adding a coffee shop. But for now, it's a popular place to enjoy some fresh greenery and a book—even in the dead of winter. ■

Richard and Eliette Candillier and son Julien moved to Pahrump from France in 2016 and took a chance that a French bakery would work.

Baguettes or Pastries, Bakery Gives Pahrump Customers All They Knead

By John L. Smith

PAHRUMP — Like the baguettes and croissants they crave, O Happy Bread's loyal customers rise early. The regulars often arrive at the doors of the delightful French bakery before it opens for business, and who can blame them?

A bouquet set between the offices of an attorney and an insurance broker in a strip mall at 1231 East Basin Avenue, O Happy Bread brings a genuine boulangerie and patisserie to the desert valley. Diminutive and unpretentious, it offers just a handful of tables in a friendly atmosphere.

Remember those low-carb New Year's resolutions? They're gleefully forgotten here.

Customers linger over lattes and cheesecake, buttery Madeleines, an apple-pear tart, or tiramisu. Some come for the popular Parisien (a very French ham and cheese sandwich) or one of the homemade soups. The lobster bisque goes fast on Friday, and effusive employee Gail Darby speaks with genuine affection about the homemade soups. The red pepper and gouda and fresh mushroom soups are her personal favorites.

But the bread may be the star of the show. The baguettes, loaves and rolls are baked before sunrise. Some are made with garlic and onion, others with walnuts and even figs.

The ingredients may be simple, but the hands are experienced.

The bakery is the creation of Eliette and Richard Candillier, who moved to Pahrump in 2016 from Toulouse, France. After retiring from the military, Richard spent a year in baking school before striking out for the United States and the desert solitude they've found in Pahrump.

With son Remi serving in Africa with the French special forces, the Candilliers are joined at the bakery by their son, Julien, a veteran pastry chef.

Even the earliest arrival won't beat the Candilliers to the bakery. Richard and Julien arrive about 4 a.m. (The bakery officially opens at 7 a.m. daily, and 8 a.m. on Sunday.)

By all appearances, they plan to continue to bring a tasty slice of France to their new desert home. When not at O Happy Bread, you might find the Candilliers with their wares at the Summerlin Farmers Market, or donating baked goods to the Community and Methodist churches in Pahrump.

Eliette Candillier warns an interviewer that she's still working on her English, but in any language her joy for O Happy Bread is clear.

But why Pahrump?

She laughs and says, "Why not?"

"We bought the house here four years ago, and Pahrump had no bakery, nothing like our bakery," she adds. "We enjoy Pahrump very much and enjoy seeing that people like our bakery, too."

Although the French and American cultures are different in many ways, Candillier says, there's something about the bakery that brings people together.

"Those people who are not used to this enjoy this," she says. "We also know we all have very much in common, and it is nice to know we can help them discover that. And it looks like it works."

While they are sometimes asked about expanding to a second bakery, the Candilliers are in no hurry.

"Right now, we have to make this bakery work, and work good," Eliette says. "Who knows, maybe later."

Baker Jamal Jackson pulls a baguette from the oven.

The Candilliers' enthusiasm for baking has rubbed off on Darby, who shows a refreshing gratitude for her job and the people she encounters there. As a gateway to Death Valley, Pahrump annually draws visitors from every point of the globe.

"Working here I've gotten to meet people from all over the world," she says. "France, Germany, India – you name it. They come in here on their way to Death Valley, and they find us. It's just amazing. How many people get to get up every morning and be happy to get to work? I've learned so much here. And some of the things I've eaten I don't even know how to explain how wonderful it tastes. I love my job. Sometimes I chitchat a little too much, but I love my job."

The duty is made easier even at the busiest moments by the fact that customers enter the bakery with anticipation in their eyes and leave with smiles on their faces. There's something about a stuffed crepe, chocolate royal cake, or festive baguette epis that does it every time.

Finding customers willing to provide an enthusiastic endorsement isn't difficult.

Frequent Pahrump visitors David and April Creech regularly ride their Harley trike to the bakery and usually go home with garlic and onion flutes.

"We get the garlic-onion, they're really, really good," David says. "The bread's outstanding. That's the reason I come back. We found it about a month ago. I heard about the place and we saw the sign and said, 'We've got to try this.' I've traveled through France and Italy, and this bread is as good as any we got there."

April adds, "It's the bread. We come back every week. We were riding today, and I said, 'Let's stop for the bread.' We normally get one loaf, and I told him, 'Get two.' It's just amazing."

After trying a baguette and Madeleines, customer Margaret Masanz was hooked.

"It's all so delicious," Masanz says. "It's a real unexpected pleasure in Pahrump."

After reeling off a long list of tasty treats and fresh-baked bread products, Darby reminds a visitor, "Come back again soon. You have to try it all."

Now that's a resolution worth keeping. ■

John L. Smith is a longtime Las Vegas journalist and author. Contact him at jlnevadasmith@gmail.com. On Twitter: @jlnevadasmith.

Danny 'Count' Koker, Amy Van-Dyken Rouen to Highlight Valley's Annual Meeting April 28

By Vern Hee

Danny Koker of Counts Kustoms in Las Vegas and host of the History Channel's hit TV series "Counting Cars" will join Amy Van Dyken-Rouen, a six-time Olympic champion in swimming, as guest speakers at Valley Electric Association's Annual Meeting, 1 p.m., April 28 at Pahrump Valley High School.

"We are excited to have Danny Koker and Van Dyken-Rouen who will engage and inspire members by reminding them that anything is possible with faith, determination and effort," said VEA CEO Thomas Husted. "Both Amy and Danny exemplify that there are many paths to success and happiness and many challenges that must be confronted."

The theme for the 2018 Annual Meeting is "Our Community. Our Co-op. Our Evolution."

"The last 12 months have been remarkable in many ways for Valley," said Husted. "The Annual Meeting is a time to celebrate how Valley has served our communities this past year and how we will continue to serve regardless of the challenges that are sure to come."

The VEA Annual Meeting is a time for member-owners to celebrate the Co-op's accomplishments.

Danny "Count" Koker

As the owner of Count's Kustoms, Danny "Count" Koker is the creative force behind each project leaving his Las Vegas-based hotrod and chopper shop. The Count is a self-taught mechanic, who grew up between Cleveland and Detroit in a family that had deep roots in the automotive industry. Danny has ties to Pahrump, having done business here and spent time at Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch

In 1989, Danny launched family owned television station, KFBT TV 33, and Desert Moon Productions, a Las Vegas-based video and recording studio. Danny became a local celebrity with the on-air personality "Count Cool Rider," hosting horror movies and interviewing guests every Saturday night for 10 years.

Danny "Count" Koker
Getty Images

As Danny became more focused on his passion for exotic cars, hot rods and motorcycles, he decided to turn his life-long hobby into Count's Kustoms, one of the most sought-after custom bike and hot rod shops in the world. His unique approach to chopper design and fabrication have gained him industry praise, attracting high-profile clients.

Amy Van Dyken-Rouen
Getty Images

Count's chopper designs have graced the pages of magazines including "Street Chopper," "The Robb Report," "Easy Rider," "Hot Bike" and more. Counts Kustoms creations have also appeared on various TV shows such as MTV's "The Osbournes" and "Cribs," along with other network appearances such as VH1, The Speed Channel, The Discovery Channel and featured in Godsmack's music video "Speak" in which the Count himself did much of the stunt driving.

Count brought original rock music back to Las Vegas in the form of a rock 'n' roll restaurant, bar and intimate live music venue – Count's Vamp'd.

Danny spent much of his early childhood traveling the world performing gospel music and even landing on-stage at some of the most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall.

In addition to Vamp'd he owns Count's Tattoo Company at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas and Desert Moon Studio. Danny's entrepreneurial spirit, personal drive and commitment to family and community will provide motivation and an inspiring message to VEA members at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

Members will be eligible to win prizes in the drawing.

Members always enjoy lunch before the program.

Amy Van Dyken-Rouen

Amy Van Dyken-Rouen has the distinction of being one of the few Olympians whose medals are all gold. Amy won four gold medals in 1996 in Atlanta and two more in 2000 at Sydney, Australia.

In 2007 she was the only American swimmer to be inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame's Class of 2007. She was also inducted to the Olympic Hall of Fame in July 2008.

After high school, Amy attended the University of Arizona for two years before transferring to Colorado State University, where she broke her first U.S. record in the 50-yard freestyle in 1994 at the NCAA championships. She also placed second in the 100-yard butterfly. That year she was named the NCAA Female Swimmer of the year.

After college, Amy moved to the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., to train full-time for the 1996 Olympics.

Amy is retired from swimming and lives with her husband, former NFL punter Tom Rouen, in Arizona. Since her retirement, Amy has been a public speaker, a disc jockey on a sports radio show in Arizona, served as the side-line reporter for The Seattle Seahawks and Denver Broncos football teams.

In June of 2014, she was badly injured in an ATV accident that severed her spinal cord, leaving her paralyzed from the waist down. Her optimism and positive attitude have been an inspiration to many who face similar challenges. Amy's motivational message resonates with people of all ages.

Our Community. Our Co-op. Our Evolution.

This year's theme is "Our Community. Our Co-op. Our Evolution." At the 2018 VEA Annual meeting, details of the major projects initiated by the Cooperative in 2017 will be highlighted, including:

- The sale of the 230-kV transmission line and the positive impacts the sale has had on communities served and members' lives
- The rollout of high speed fiber optic communication to communities throughout VEA's vast service territory.
- Beatty becoming the first all-fiber community and its spinoff effects on healthcare, businesses and education
- Sandy Valley getting high speed broadband after a nearly two-year delay.
- VCA expanding digital services to include high speed broadband, digital TV and digital phone
- VEA community solar project going online, becoming the largest active community solar project. ■

Barbershop Chorus Strikes a Chord

A capella music enthusiasts bring classic American music to modern-day audiences

By Cris Ellingson

A pitch pipe sounds out a "C" as members tune their voices. Singing Hills Barbershop Chorus Director Dan Shissler prepares to lead the group.

The day's songs include "Wild Irish Rose," "Bury Me Out on the Lone Prairie," "Irish Blessing," "I'll Admit That I Am Sentimental," "Love Me and the World Is Mine," "Beautiful Dreamer" and "Doggone Cat."

Impromptu mini concerts have become somewhat of a tradition in town.

Valentine's Day is especially busy for the singers. Decked in red vests, these local a capella crooners visit nearly 20 homes and businesses around town.

While no performance is more important than another, some are more memorable.

"Singing for special-needs children at Gallery One this year, I could tell all were touched by the songs," says Doug Brower, Singing Hills secretary. "Last year, we sang for an auto mechanic who clearly was very embarrassed by the whole ordeal. We made sure to sing with great love in our hearts for him."

The weather can often leave a lasting impression, but does not stop the group.

"Last year, we made our rounds from 8 a.m. until 8

Valley Vision employee Kathryn Bruener receives her Valentine's Day serenade by the Singing Hills Barbershop Chorus.

Pita Pit Manager Alicia Wagner was a Singing Hills valentine recipient.

p.m. in subfreezing weather," says Doug. "Rain or shine, warm or cold, our valentines must go out."

Doug joined Singing Hills in February 2016. He was part of a barbershop group in Philadelphia during the 1990s.

"We sang all around the region I lived in and even spent a summer singing at a Six Flags theme park when I was in high school," Doug says. "Upon high school graduation, I became busy in life. In February 2016, I learned about the Singing Hills Chorus and their singing valentines. I was looking for a way to become more involved in the community, and have been signing with them ever since."

Delivering a valentine greeting to a tough, burly fellow can be fun to watch, says member John Moser.

John was born and raised in the Ellensburg area, and retired in 2007 after running Moser's Clothing for many years.

He says barbershop chorus is an example of America's original music, created during the times of vaudeville.

"People did not have television or cellphones then, but many had pianos," John says. "We are helping with the restoration and preservation of old songs."

John is an original member of the group, which started making its musical rounds in the early 1970s. In its early days, the group filled quickly.

"We began in 1972 when Bud Weir, a real spark plug, recruited people for the barbershop chorus," says John, 80. "Back then, there were about 45 members, including the college band leader, two music teachers, junior high teachers and other community members. We were able to meet at the junior high, each section practicing in rooms and then coming together to sing."

As the years wore on, membership declined. But hat does not stop today's members from performing or recruiting new members.

"We are looking for leads and tenors," Dan says. "We have had women sing with us a lot."

He has sung with Singing Hills since 1965.

"Before that, I sang in other towns across the Northwest," Dan says. "Actually did some barbershop in college a long time ago. I'm basically the default director. We are looking for someone for that, too. I'd rather just sing." ■

For tickets, additional information or membership inquiries, email douglas.brower@gmail.com, call (509) 962-5650 or go to the Adult Activity Center in Ellensburg at 506 S Pine St. Tuesdays between 7:30 and 9 p.m.

Upcoming Shows

The chorus is most known for its individualized performances. In April, however, there are two combined shows with the Yakima Barbershop Chorus. Shows are Saturday, April 21, in Yakima and Saturday, April 28, at the Methodist Church in Ellensburg. ■

Apayo Moore stands next to her salmon mural that is displayed on the side of a popular Dillingham convenience store.

Happiness and the Art of the Salmon Life

Artist and fisherman Apayo Moore explains why she loves salmon so much

By Lee House

"I don't think I could ever fully explain what art and salmon are to me, " says Apayo Moore, "but I'll try."

It's 11 p.m. under the gold-soaked sky of Dillingham's summer solstice. Apayo and her fishing partner, Chris Strub, are parked in the lot of the local boat ramp listening to the late-night KDLG broadcast. Listeners call in to tell jokes, profess love and send best wishes to the fishing fleet throughout Bristol Bay.

Tonight, Apayo and Chris are getting in on those good wishes. They wait for the tide to lap high enough to push their skiff into the salmon-laden waters of the Wood River.

These long hours of the summer solstice are a time for Alaskans to rejoice in the productivity of light, life and the abundance of the season.

As a mother, artist and subsistence fisherman, filling the day to the brim is just life as usual for Apayo.

By midnight, Apayo and Chris reach their fishing grounds and are quick to motor their net into the rushing river. Apayo calls out in Yup'ik, singing the word for red salmon, "Sayak, sayak, sayak," greeting the tails that begin to flutter in the net.

Apayo and Chris set into a rhythm, plucking reds—and a single prized king—from the net and resetting it. On shore, they gut and clean the fish as the night melts into the mantel of mountains to the west. It is constant work punctuated only by wistful gazes across the grasslands and a 2 a.m. pause to don a headlamp.

At one point, enamored by the beauty, Apayo joyously calls out, "I love this place!"

That passion is the first thing you notice about the Bristol Bay-inspired artist: She is bursting with endless love for the land she calls home.

It shows in her full embrace of fishing, and also in her artwork.

As a painter, Apayo does not hesitate to brush her love for Bristol Bay across any blank surface she can find.

Above, art prints of Apayo's Bristol Bay-inspired paintings. Top, Apayo cleans her catch on the grassy shore of the Wood River.

From the sides of buildings to plywood sheets to the countless canvases in her basement, Apayo churns out constant reminders of the beauty, grace and power of this land.

"I want everyone to know how amazing it is here—to be proud—to know how important salmon are to our lives and our history," says Apayo.

Apayo's own history is rich with childhood memories of commercial fishing in the bay with her dad, learning the values of hard work and high-sea adventures. Looking back, she longs to have participated with her mom in more subsistence and traditional fishing practices. After giving birth to her children, Kaya and Bode, Apayo's profound desire to provide for her family was solidified. She asked her mom to come live with her for a season to teach her how to put up fish.

"That was a hard summer," she says. "I'll forever be grateful for it. It felt like I was truly making a transition to being a woman."

Last summer, Apayo only needed her mom's instructions over the phone. This year, she has barely needed any guidance at all. She has even begun teaching cousins and friends who want to join in and help.

"But I still have so much to learn," Apayo says as she moves her ulu with poise through the glistening flesh of her catch. "If you let the fear of imperfection into your head, you won't get anywhere. It's just like my art. If I had quit at the first bad brush stroke, I wouldn't be a painter."

Apayo holds space for this learning process at her home outside of Dillingham. Perched atop a hill in the village of Aleknagik, Apayo has aptly named her home "Happy Hill," where art projects brush shoulders with children's toys, salmon projects stand alongside piles of firewood, and the days are full of fish scales, alder smoke and hollering children.

"It's like a crazy little fish camp up here," Apayo says with a laugh.

There is always something to be done with fish at her home, and she recognizes the importance of that.

"Our people have worked for generations to set up this schedule for us to keep our state of mind on track," she says. "If a person thinks there is no purpose in life, they could start with a salmon and a tide book."

For Apayo, this is where her art comes in: to inspire her people to get involved in the beauty and wonders of subsistence lifestyles.

Apayo weaves positive energy into her paintings with the flow of sea life and the smiles of people harvesting.

"I want their faces to say we are the real people," she says. "We live subsistence and flourish when we are generous, genuine and humble."

Apayo gets the community involved in her art, too, helping others make their own connections. In recent mural projects, community members were prompted to share what they love about the land and Bristol Bay on 12-inch-by-12-inch squares and wooden salmon cutouts. The results are gridded walls of tiles and huge, undulating patterns of wooden salmon, all individually painted, each with a unique expression of what it means to call Bristol Bay home.

"Life as a Yup'ik person is just so different than what we have in the rest of the United States," Apayo says. "Salmon are our mental wellbeing. They get us out of the house. They offer space to have personal interactions and give us goals to accomplish."

Apayo knows the love she pours into her art, the love she champions for salmon and the love she has for her family above all else. That love is the truth.

She recalls her recent painting titled "Our Way of Life." It sums up the essence of all of her love:

"There is a woman pulling in the net with all these red salmon," Apayo says. "Her family's in the back with all the positive things of what that moment could be. Everyone's in high spirits. Everyone's being everything in that moment. In a setting that's absolutely unreal. Mountains. Blue sky. Birds flying above you. Nothing could go wrong. Nothing, at least for that moment." ■

Playing in the Snow

Rick Jensen, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative manager of safety and loss control, left, examines paperwork as Linecrew Foreman Tony Hellbusch looks on.

Unusual conditions play large role in OTEC employee training

By Andrew Cutler

OTEC employees listen as Safety One International Senior Instructor Steve Andreas, in red, reviews different aspects of the company's 1990 Tucker Sno-Cat during training at the Catherine Creek Summit SnoPark outside Union.

Eight Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative employees from Baker City and John Day spent a few February days playing in the snow.

It wasn't an ordinary snow day from work, and they were not playing hooky. Instead, the group was undergoing training at the Catherine Creek Summit SnoPark outside Union. As part of the training, the employees traversed the area in the company's 1990 Tucker Sno-Cat.

"I think everyone really took to the training and really enjoyed it a lot more than training we've done in years past," says Jay Tanzey, OTEC manager of GIS/staking and regulatory compliance.

The time at Catherine Creek was the culmination of four days of training, which also included two days in a classroom at OTEC headquarters in Baker City.

Classroom time focused on winter survival training, including hypothermia and frostbite awareness, proper clothing, shelter construction and avalanche awareness.

During the two days at Catherine Creek, the group put some of the classroom training to work, building snow shelters and trying to start warming fires in less-than-ideal field conditions. It was all part of a well-rounded four days of training.

"It was really good," says Tony Hellbusch, a linecrew foreman. "The nice thing is, it covered a lot of stuff we can use in our personal lives."

Safety One International Senior Instructor Steve Andreas conducted the training. The Colorado-based company specializes in safety and rescue training services.

"I think you can take a lot of this experience and utilize it with the family on camping trips," says Rich Eskew, a linecrew foreman. "For the most part, classrooms aren't in (a lineman's) makeup to sit there for eight hours a day in continuous situations. Steve kept it entertaining and informative."

During the first day in the snow, Andreas led the crew around the Sno-Cat conducting a maintenance check and pointing out different aspects of the machine. The employees also simulated a broken track, fixing it with chain to close the loop so the Sno-Cat could once again be mobile.

Andreas says being familiar with the machine and knowing how to solve problems—whether mechanical or weather related—are important.

Once the inspection was completed, the group took off in the Tucker, an OTEC-owned Polaris Ranger and a pair of snowmobiles toward the Taylor Green Warming Shelter.

"We own the Sno-Cat, and we utilize the Sno-Cat to get to power lines in the wintertime when we have issues or we have outages," says Rick Jensen, OTEC manager of safety and loss control. "The purpose of the training was to make sure all of us understand the safe operation of the Sno-Cat and to make sure we know how to make field repairs if it breaks down."

When the OTEC Board of Directors authorized the purchase of the Sno-Cat about four years ago, it was with the idea that beyond outage restoration, the machine could be used to aid local search and rescue agencies when the need arose. While the need to use the Sno-Cat has been rare, it is important for OTEC's Sno-Cat operators to remain proficient in the machine's use.

"To help with an emergency situation, we need to make sure we have people that are knowledgeable and trained and have the skills to help, if necessary," Rick says. ■

Nick Mendiguren, left, and Clinton Millman practice their skiing skills at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

Athletes Strive For Victory and Bravery

Special Olympics Oregon cancels winter games, but Eastern Oregon athletes continue to train

By Susan Parrish

On a groomed Nordic trail at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, a group of cross-country skiers takes turns gliding down a gentle slope. Placing their skis in a reverse wedge, the group duck-walks back up the hill.

Nick Mendiguren expertly chugs to the top. He is not just an excellent cross-country skier, but an accomplished Special Olympics athlete who was tested at the pinnacle of competition last year.

After winning three gold medals at the 2017 Special Olympics Oregon Winter Games, Nick and his teammate, downhill skier Mandi Durfee, were selected to represent Oregon and Team USA at the Special Olympics World Games in Austria last year. Although Nick did not medal, he competed against athletes from around the world.

"It's not the medals, but the competition that I like," says Nick, 34. "I'm still proud of those medals."

Special Olympians have been coming to the ski hill at Anthony Lakes for about 20 years to practice downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowboarding. They typically spend eight Saturdays training to prepare for the state's winter games at Mount Bachelor near Bend.

On the same groomed trail, Eric Boss, 37, and Allen Strom, 21, walk on snowshoes accompanied by coach Greg Gross. When an athlete falls and sprawls into deep powder, Greg offers him encouragement and instruction on how to pull himself up.

"Get your feet underneath you," Greg says. "Push up. That's it."

Minutes later, they are on their way again.

At lunchtime, the snowshoers join their teammates and hundreds of other winter sports enthusiasts in the crowded lodge, which reverberates with animated chatter.

Nearby, a skier looks at photos on a Special Olympics bulletin board. In the center of the board is the Special Olympics motto: "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Although Nick and Mandi were lucky enough to represent Oregon and Team USA at the world games in Austria, being chosen to compete at that level is a rare honor. The commonly shared

experience is that athletes learn to push themselves physically, improve their skills and experience camaraderie with other athletes, coaches and volunteers.

"Even though our athletes have a disability, they're just like everyone else," says Doug Trice, program coordinator for Special Olympics in Union County. "We want our athletes to train hard, like any athlete. We want them to excel."

Athletes can participate in Special Olympics beginning at age 6 and can start competing at age 8.

Although most of the Union County athletes in the winter program are adults, many started participating as youth.

Downhill skier Remy Spangler, 26, has participated in Special Olympics since he was 13. His mother, Ellie, has brought him to the ski hill for 13 years.

"Special Olympics was the primary catalyst for helping Remy open up and make friendships," Ellie says. "Remy is an excellent example of what Special Olympics does. He didn't have any friends. He was very shy. Now he feels so comfortable. He's made friends he hangs out with. The autism doesn't show up in a place like this."

Volunteer Spirit

Union County Special Olympics, like its counterparts across the state, has dedicated, longtime volunteers.

Ellie has volunteered for 13 years since she started bringing Remy to the ski hill. Both Doug and Greg became Special Olympics volunteers years ago when their sons, now adults, joined the program.

Head cross-country skiing coach Tina Bowen has volunteered for 11 years, although she does not have a child in the program. She works with special-needs children at Greenwood Elementary School in La Grande.

"It takes perseverance, patience, friendship and understanding," Tina says. "The people up here are pretty generous. I donate a lot of my time so the athletes can have the time of their lives."

Downhill ski coach Stephanie Tweit says the coaches get as much from the athletes as the athletes do from the coaches.

"We get so much from these athletes," she says. "They are so tough and so loving. It's a fun day for all of us. It's always worth it."

Stephanie's husband, Bryan, has been coaching downhill skiing for Special Olympics for 27 years.

"Skiing is a sport that's an ultimate equalizer," Bryan says. "When people are skiing, they don't know they're being passed on the hill by Special Olympics athletes. It's a safe place on the mountain."

State's Games Canceled

This year, Special Olympics Oregon canceled its annual winter games to trim $175,000 from its budget. The organization is playing catch-up after 15 years of rapid growth from serving 1,200 athletes statewide to its current 14,000 athletes. Donations have not kept pace with enrollment numbers.

In another cost-saving measure, Special Olympics Oregon reduced practice sessions at ski resorts from eight to only two this year.

Chelsea Judy, marketing director at Anthony Lakes, heard about the program's reduced funding, so the nonprofit resort offered to provide three days of equipment rental, lift tickets and day ski passes for Special Olympics athletes in Baker, Union and Umatilla counties.

"We think Special Olympics is a great program," Judy says. "We love having them up here. It's something we want to see continue."

Union County Special Olympics shortened its practices at Anthony Lakes to four weeks.

Instead of a short ski season, Baker County Special Olympics has offered two hours of gym time every week since October, thanks to Baker County YMCA. As many as 20 athletes have gathered on Sundays to play volleyball and basketball.

Paula Moe, Baker County program coordinator, says more athletes have participated in gym time than went up to the ski resort in previous years.

"I'm sad they don't get to go play in the snow, but I feel that I've had a more inclusive year than ever before," she says. ■

Special Olympics Oregon

See county-specific information below, or go to www.soor.org.

Baker County

- Sports: bowling, swimming and basketball in fall; cross-country and downhill skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing in winter; track and field and golf in spring/summer
- Call Program Coordinator Paula Moe at (541) 910-0591
- Send donations to: Special Olympics Baker County, P.O. Box 508, Baker City, OR 97814

Grant County

- Sports: bowling and soccer in fall; basketball in winter; track and field and golf in summer
- Call Program Coordinators Deronda Lallatin at (541) 620-4295 or Kathy Gill at (541) 620-2186
- Send donations to: Grant County Special Olympics, 777 E. Main, John Day, OR 97845

Harney County

- Sports: track and field in summer
- Call Program Coordinator Carol Sawyer at (541) 573-6886
- Send donations to: Harney County Special Olympics, 283 S. Diamond Ave., Burns, OR 97720

Union County

- Sports: bowling, swimming and basketball in fall; cross-country and downhill skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing in winter; track and field and golf in spring/summer
- Call Program Coordinator Doug Trice at (541) 962-7536
- Send donations to: Special Olympics Union County, 802 Crook Avenue, La Grande, OR 97850