Three generations of Lehnes, from left, are Colleen and Nathan, Cinda and Norm, Glen and Wendy. In the tree are Timothy and Noelle. Kneeling are Kylie, left, and Ashlynn.

Farming is the Family Business

The fourth generation of Lehne children is learning the ropes

By Craig Reed

The Lehne family farm tradition is well entrenched in its third generation, with the fourth generation gradually becoming involved in the farming lifestyle.

"Farming is what we do," says Norm Lehne, who is 69 and has been farming full time since returning to help his parents in the family business at age 25.

The tradition was started by Myron and Helen Lehne, who bought 10 acres of land in the Garden Valley area in the 1940s and established a nursery business.

After a four-year hitch in the U.S. Air Force and one year working for a communications company in Roseburg, Norm returned home in the mid-1970s. He helped his parents transition out of the nursery business and into a vegetable and fruit operation. They planted a vegetable garden and apple, pear and peach trees on 5 acres. A U-pick business was established.

In the early 1980s, Norm and his wife, Cinda, added a 5-acre hazelnut orchard.

Following in the footsteps of their father, Norma's grown children, Glen and Colleen, have returned to Garden Valley and farming in recent years after extended careers in the Air Force. Glen retired in May 2014 after a 6-month deployment to Afghanistan and a 20-year career. Colleen served 8 years of active duty and has been in the Air Force Reserves since 2004.

Glen and his wife, Wendy, and Colleen and her husband, Nathan, each bought properties near their parents' farm and are growing their own crops and orchards. They are carrying on the family's hazelnut

Glen Lehne and his daughter Kylie help a customer at their booth at the Umpqua Valley Farmers Market.

tradition. Glen and Wendy planted 5 acres in hazelnuts. Colleen and Nathan have an 8-acre orchard with plans to add another 10 acres in the future. Norm and Cinda have increased their hazelnut orchard to 22 acres.

The fourth generation is working in the hazelnut orchards and in the vegetable crops with Glen and Wendy's teenage daughters, Ashlynn and Kylie. Colleen and Nathan's grade-school son, Timothy, and daughter, Noelle, help.

Norm does not mind letting the next generations tend to the fruits, vegetables and nuts. He loves seeing his grandchildren in the garden and the orchard.

"They are willing," Colleen says. "They know they are part of the farming family. The work develops good character."

Ashlynn, while sprinkling water on vegetable seedlings in a greenhouse, says she prefers working outdoors compared to sitting at a desk.

"I enjoy this and I know where our food comes from," the 17-year-old says. "You can't learn about this if you're living in a city."

Wendy describes farming as "a huge learning environment" for her daughters. She says the farm gives the younger generation the opportunity to learn good work habits.

Farmers Market

In addition to providing U-pick opportunities for customers in its gardens and fruit orchards, a Community Supported Agriculture program for its members and selling hazelnuts to Northwest Hazelnut in Hubbard, the Lehnes also sell their crops at the weekly Umpqua Valley Farmers Market and the farmers market in Coos Bay. The Lehnes have been members of the Umpqua Valley market in Roseburg for 13 years.

That year-round market has 65 vendor members with an average of 40 to 45 attending on any given Saturday through the summer. The market is at the First Methodist Church off W. Harvard Avenue in Roseburg.

Market Manager Amanda Pastoria estimates the market attracts an average of about 1,200 visitors during the summer harvest.

"Having a farmers market in your community helps people who live and work in your community," Amanda says. "You know the people who are providing food for you, and they know you. You know the food is more nutritious, more fresh. You know it is food that is homemade with love and with no chemicals or preservatives.

"Farmers like the Lehnes are definitely the anchors of your market. We're lucky in Douglas County that those farmers can grow food year-round because we have such a mild climate here."

The market plays host to a 10-week Food Hero program geared toward children. The program, scheduled for June 2 to August 4, encourages kids to try new foods and vegetables in hopes of changing their eating habits to a more healthy diet. Each child gets a $2 voucher to spend at the market. The kids can also ride the blender bike at the market and taste the resulting drink.

The program attracted 80 kids a week last summer. Craft activities, such as planting a sunflower, are also provided for kids each week.

"Teaching kids how to eat better, how to shop better and to learn about health and wellness are our goals," Amanda says. "The market will support anything it can that helps touch the community in a positive way." ■

The annual market membership fee is $60, and the weekly booth fee is $20. Vendors must grow or make the products they sell.

Umpqua Valley Farmers Market

Location: First Methodist Church
1771 W. Harvard Ave., Roseburg
Summer hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., April through September
Winter hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., October through March
Website: www.uvfarmersmarket.org
Phone: (541) 530-6200

Inspiring Young Minds to Read

Friends of the Lake County Library bring Dolly Parton's book program to area children

By Toni Bailie

"The Little Engine That Could" inspired 2-year-old Collin van Bell of Lake County to rediscover the toy train he had forgotten all about.

It also may pay dividends when he heads to kindergarten in a few years.

Thanks to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Collin and his siblings received their own copy of the book that tells the story of optimism, hard work and perseverance.

Youngsters in the Lake County area will have easy access to books—and, hopefully, a head start in gaining the reading skills that are critical to early school success.

Parents in Lake County can sign up children from birth to 5 years of age to receive a free classic children's book in the mail each month, thanks to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and the registration efforts of volunteers with Friends of the Lake County Library.

Since January, members of the Lake County library group have been promoting registration.

In this sparsely populated rural area, most library branches are open only two days a week. Many residents must drive a considerable distance to reach a library. With the high cost of gas, many parents choose to forego using library resources.

Friends of the Library manages enrollment, publicity and fundraising for the Imagination Library.

Sharon Hiatt, who monitors registrations for Lake County, is enthusiastic about the effort.

"It's a fabulous program," she says. "I'm glad it's available for us. When my granddaughter comes here to live, I'm going to sign her up."

Research shows that when parents read frequently to their children, youngsters arrive at school eager to read and ready to learn.

Teachers have measured an increase in kindergarten readiness skills in children who participate in the program.

The Dollywood Foundation—the parent organization of Dolly's philanthropic efforts—lowers the per-child annual program cost to $25.

Families are never charged for the books. A grant from an Oregon family foundation will underwrite the first three years in Lake County.

Friends of Lake County Library's Margot Dodds has been seeking contributions to supplement the grant.

"Donors see it as a gift to children in the community to build toward their lifelong success," Margot says.

After a presentation at the American Association of University Women, the members asked Margot to read them one of the books. She chose her favorite about Ferdinand, the bull who didn't fit in with the others.

Contributions have come from Rotary, Lions, Soroptimist and Volunteers in Paisley. Marci Wade of KROV radio station broadcasted public service announcements. She and her sales team contacted local businesses for donations. Lake County Commissioners and Cornerstone Minerals both donated $1,000.

Country music icon Dolly Parton started the Imagination Library project in 1995 in Sevier County, Tennessee, where she grew up.

Her intention was to inspire a love of reading and learning from a young age.

"Inspiring kids to love to read became my mission," Dolly says. "In the beginning, my hope was simply to inspire the children in my home county, but here we are today with a worldwide program that gives a book a month to well over 1 million children."

It began as a tribute to her father, Lee.

"He was the smartest man I've known," Dolly says, "but I know in my heart his inability to read probably kept him from fulfilling all of his dreams."

Lee worked hard in the Tennessee mountains to provide for his wife and 12 children.

"Before he passed away, Daddy told me the Imagination Library was the most important thing I've done," Dolly says. "I can't tell you how much that meant to me.

"The real heroes of our story are the thousands of local organizations who have embraced my dream and made it their own. They raise millions of dollars each year and wake up every day with a passion to make sure their kids have every opportunity to succeed."

As of May 2018, more than 104 million books have been mailed to children around the world.

Above, Alexa van Bell reads "The Little Engine That Could" to her children, from left, Carter, Collin and Claira. Right, Friends of the Lake County Library volunteers Sharon Hiatt, left, and Margot Dodd, right, with head librarian Amy Hutchinson.

At an Oregon Library Association conference, head librarian Amy Hutchinson reported that 50 percent of the 326 children in Lake County had been enrolled in the first four months.

"Education is such a value in Lake County," Amy says. "We have the highest rate in Oregon of high school graduates and students going on to college."

Regional Dollywood Foundation Director Pam Hunsaker is impressed by the enrollment numbers.

As part of South Central Early Learning Services, local agencies that make home visits have enrolled children in the program.

Lindsay Durant-Romero of Paisley says she is a book fanatic and wants to pass on the love of reading to her children, Brynn, 5, and Fisher, 3.

Their first mailing included reading tips for parents when sharing a book with a child: point out and name pictures, ask questions about the story and use pictures to teach new words. There was also a link to download a free song from Dolly Parton's new CD, "I Believe in You."

Alexa van Bell says her daughter, Claira, 5, is a great reader and enjoys sharing books with her younger brothers Carter, 3, and Collin, 2.

"I'm impressed at the quality of the books and excited about the program," Alexa says.

As an employee at Paisley School, she knows how much elementary teachers stress reading skills. ■

To enroll a child, pick up a form at the local library or go to www.imaginationlibrary.com. Books start arriving within eight weeks. Parents are never asked or expected to make a contribution. However, community supporters can make tax-deductible donations by sending a check to Friends of Lake County Library, 26 South G St., Lakeview, OR 97630. Please note "Dolly Parton Imagination Library" in the memo line. For more information, contact Margot Dodds at (541) 219-0707 or Sharon Hiatt at (541) 417-0298.

Artist Chris Foltz is one of 13 featured artists at the McKinzie Chainsaw Festival, which raises money to support the local track.

Let the Chips Fly!

Chairsaw artists show off their skills at the McKinzie Chainsaw Festival

By Craig Reed

A dozen chainsaws buzzed as their metal teeth cut into the wood.

But nobody yelled, "Timber!"

Instead, there were numerous "oohs" and "ahs" from visitors at the McKenzie Chainsaw Festival. They watched round chunks of wood gradually evolve into intricate designs such as bears, eagles, Indian chiefs, dragons, mountain men and sasquatch.

The chainsaws were operated by artists, not timber fallers.

This year's McKenzie Chainsaw Festival, held July 20-22, features 13 artists. The fifth annual event is at the McKenzie Community Track and Field in Blue River, just off the McKenzie River Highway about 42 miles east of Eugene. The festival raises funds to maintain the track.

"It's fascinating to watch a carving artist take a log and turn it into a beautiful heron or bear or whatever else they might see in that log," says Peggy Pantel, a festival coordinator. "It's amazing what they do see in that log. As you watch, you're guessing what they might be designing and then when you see it come together, it is just fascinating. The carvers are very talented, and it's fun to see them in this environment."

The carvers are all residents of Oregon or Washington.

"There are some outstanding carvers at the McKenzie festival," says James Lukinich of Willamina.

James has been a chainsaw artist for 25 years and is making his fourth trip to McKenzie.

"Every time I go there, I

Above, festival Coordinator Peggy Pantel says it takes a lot volunteer effort to put on the festival. These are a few of the logs that will eventually be carved. Left, detail from a carving by James Lukinich.

learn something from another carver," he says. "This is a more relaxed, fun, let-it-loose type of event that's not so competitive."

Carver Bob King of Edgewood, Washington, will make his third trip to the festival this year.

"The site is a beautiful setting," he says. "It's exciting to get to do what we do, and there's a lot of excitement in that community for the festival. To take a raw piece of wood and carve some design from it while people are standing there watching is fun."

Chris Foltz of Coos Bay is making his fourth appearance. He says the event draws some great artists.

"The organizers have done a great job setting up the show to attract talented artists," Chris says. "There is some really great work done there that raises money for the track and makes some money for us. It's hard to say anything bad about that festival."

A new carver to the festival this year is Linda Chavez of Klamath Falls. She is the festival's first official female carver. Women in the chainsaw carving profession are rare.

In addition to the carvers who create artwork for several hours during each of the three days, about 25 vendor booths will offer food, beverages and crafts.

"I'm not an expert, but whether they're doing a small carving or a large one, from animals to totems to cars, what those carvers do is pretty impressive," says Ray Blair, executive director of the McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce.

Last year's festival attracted about 1,600 visitors.

The festival was established because the McKenzie Community Track and Field needed maintenance funds after it was built on donated land. The site, about a quarter mile east of McKenzie High School, was previously a Seneca Lumber mill pond. Abandoned for many years, Seneca owners, Aaron and Marie Jones donated it for the track.

"The Joneses, along with other businesses and individuals, made this project happen with their financial donations, their labor and their equipment," Peggy says.

The community took ownership and made the track a nonprofit facility. Then it was a matter of raising money for its upkeep.

The chainsaw festival came about when Jeff Sherman, the McKenzie High School woodshop teacher and the president of the track's board of directors at that time, was visiting with Kevin Strauslin, a chainsaw artist. Jeff mentioned the track was looking for ways to fundraise. Kevin suggested having a chainsaw festival.

Jeff brought the idea to the track's board, for discussion. The first festival was in 2013.

Peggy says 10 volunteers are active in organizing the event each year. Different people in the area donate the logs. Most of the wood is cedar.

"It's a good way to repurpose dead or diseased trees," James says.

Local volunteers Brad McNutt, Zack Nastasiuk, Monty Wilson and Tod Lowry do the heavy lifting. They use their equipment to haul the wood to the track and move it around when the carvers need it.

"Without those guys we couldn't have this festival," Peggy says.

During the festival, the carvers do two quick carves—1½ to 2 hours each—a day. Those pieces are auctioned off at the end of each day. The proceeds are split between the track and the carvers. The carvers also work on a larger main project each day, which is auctioned off on the final day.

"There is some great work done there that helps the community track," Chris says.

"Folks coming out to the festival should plan on spending a wonderful day, plan on being entertained and plan on visiting with the artists," Bob says.

"I just love taking a piece of raw wood and creating something people would want," James says. "I love people's expression as they watch and when they look at my work. Their smiles are appreciated." ■

Festival hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, July 20, and Saturday, July 21, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, July 22. Admission is $5 per person. Children 12 and younger are free.

Morna Lustig, co-owner of Baa Ram Ewe Farms Inc., looks on as her son, James, and nephew,Branch, feed a Valais blacknose sheep.

Sisters Take on Sheep-Raising Challenge

Morna Lustig and Colleen Bennett are excited for the future of their new family operation

By David Rauzi

The combination of family and commerce can be a strain for some siblings. That is not the case for Morna Lustig and Colleen Bennett, who earlier this spring smiled and laughed through a conversation about their family's joint agriculture adventure: introducing the Valais blacknose sheep into the domestic market via Baa Ram Ewe Farms Inc.

"The idea was to be a significant part of bringing up this breed and having been part of bringing this breed back into the U.S.," Colleen says.

For Colleen and Morna, raised on a Camas Prairie farm, they enjoy the challenge of something new and unique, of working through several cycles of the breeding program to achieve sheep with full-bred status. Morna gladly credits Colleen for the idea to attempt this, saying she has another objective, too.

"I'm super excited," Morna says. "I really want to own one. They're super cute and really fun to have."

The Walliser Schwarznasenschaf—Valais blacknose—is a breed of domestic sheep that originated in its namesake region in Switzerland. It is marked with black on its nose, eyes, ears, knees, hocks and feet, and has a light woolly coat. Both sexes have spiral or helical shaped horns. Its history can be traced to the 15th century. The sheep are believed to be the ancestors of other multicolored breeds. It was recognized as a separate breed in 1962. Its purpose, however, was for more than just its meat and wool. They are a hardy breed, and good at navigating steep, rocky slopes.

"Specifically, it was bred for the mountainous terrain where the pasture was sparse and grazed by other breeds of animals," Colleen says.

Valais have been predominantly located in Switzerland. Their breeding elsewhere in the world—particularly in the U.S.—was hampered due to an outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in the UK and other European countries. The U.S. responded to this outbreak by stopping importation of live cattle in the 1980s. In 1997, the U.S.

Colleen, Morna, Branch and James enjoy working and playing around the farm. Valai blacknose sheep originated in Switzerland. The animals recently were allowed to be bred in the states.

stopped importation of all products of ruminant origin. Colleen says it has been within the past two years this restriction has begun to ease.

The Valais is a unique addition to the Camas Prairie, where the Hampshire is the commonly raised sheep. But the "unique" is not uncommon to Colleen and Morna.

"Our parents raised ostriches when we were growing up," Colleen says. "It was the craze then. So we just grew up around this."

The Valais caught her attention from videos she watched about this historic European breed. After researching the animal, Colleen says she was excited to learn they could be raised in the states.

"We wanted to get the breed back up in the U.S.," Morna says. "And it was also something very much we wanted to do for the fun of it."

How does it all work? Getting the genetics of this down to layman's terms, it started with using Scottish blackface, which is a comparable breed as far as marking and other physical characteristics. Colleen and Morna bought seven ewes and leased another eight, along with a Valais ram for breeding, from an Oregon Scottish blackface producer last October. Students from the Washington State University veterinary school helped artificially inseminating the seven ewes they leased. Unlike cows, the insemination process is more difficult for sheep and must be done laproscopically.

Of those ewes artificially inseminated last fall, only two were successfully bred. That litter was due in June, and those sheep will be considered F1, a 50/50 cross. Colleen says it will be at least another five years to achieve a purebred Valais. A 97 percent Valais and a 3 percent Scottish blackface is considered full-bred by U.S. standards.

Even though they grew up on a farm that raised cattle, "the learning curve on what this takes is steep," Colleen says.

Right at the start, the pair explains, they were behind on their program due to a delay in available semen for artificial insemination, which led them to leasing a ram. The breeding itself is not as simple as just introducing the sheep to each other; rather, it involves knowing factors from ovulating cycles to ensuring adequate forage. And then, it's largely Mother Nature's luck of the draw.

"It's not as an exact science as you want it to be," Colleen says.

The pair is open to helping others who are starting their own Valais programs as part of the business plan, from finding foundation ewes to guidance on breeding.

For their future, Baa Ram Ewe Farms Inc. looks to be a domestic provider for Valais sheep and breeding-related services. Meanwhile, they have their day jobs: Morna is a software engineer through her company, Code Essentials. Her husband, Don, owns City Electric in Cottonwood. Colleen is lab manager for St. Mary's Hospital and Clinics in Cottonwood, and Tony manages the farm's day-to-day business. Both couples' young children are eagerly involved in helping with raising—and running around with—the sheep.

What do the neighbors think about the venture?

"Well, we're in cattle country, and they think we're crazy," Colleen says. ■

Fruit, Wine and Wonder

Unique bike tours open eyes to the bounty of the Hood River Valley

By Drew Myron

Christie Reed wakes early to open the family winery, where she welcomes a dozen cyclists eager to spend the day rolling through vineyards, snacking at fruit stands, sipping wine and absorbing the bounty of the Hood River Valley.

"People love to see the orchards, the fields, the barns," Christie says.

She and her husband, Dick, own and operates Wy'East Vineyards on Highway 35 near Pine Grove.

"This is a working farm and a family business," Christie says. "It isn't Disneyland."

Area farmers work together to support agritourism—an activity that combines food, recreation and travel.

Thanks to MountNbarrel—the area's first guided wine country bike tour—business is booming.

MountNbarrel brings together two of the area's popular pursuits: cycling and wineries. Launched in 2015 by Ali McLaughlin, the guide service provides private tours through quiet, out-of-the-way farm roads, orchards and trails on hybrid cruiser bikes and e-bikes.

Tours include bikes, helmets, a trained guide, complimentary tastings of wines and ciders, a farm-to-foodtruck lunch and a meander through U-pick farms, all along private roads and paths.

Tours run 4½ hours. A shuttle service is available for pick-up, drop-off and rests. Cyclists can meet winery owners and operators, and enjoy an inside peek at the winemaking process, learn vineyard history, explore grape varieties and more.

Tours are available on Hood River's west side (Oak Grove), east side (Pine Grove) and Lyle, Washington.

Blending nature and recreation with foodie pleasures, wine country tours by bicycle fill a growing need for hands-on experiences.

Photos courtesy of MountNbarrel

The west side tour features Phelps Creek Vineyards, Marchesi Vineyards, Viento Wines, Hood Crest Winery and Cathedral Ridge Winery.

The east side tour features Mt. Hood Winery, The Gorge White House and Wy'East Vineyards.

From revved to relaxed, cyclists come in all shapes and abilities.

"We have fit to not-so-fit," Ali says. "You have to be able to ride a bike, that's all. I like to show people that even though Hood River is known for its extreme sports, you can experience Hood River in a leisurely way."

The tours fill a growing need. In 2017,

Hood River was named a top-10 wine travel destination by Wine Enthusiast magazine. Ali says bike tours offer a fresh way to experience the wine country.

But it's not just tourists enjoying the ride. Local companies take tours as a team-building activity. Local folks celebrate birthdays, weddings and other special occasions.

"We live in a beautiful place, but too often we just look at the beauty instead of seeing and savoring it," says Anne Gehrig, who lives in Pine Grove and teaches fifth grade at Westside Elementary.

Although she's lived in Hood River for 40 years, an excursion with a group of Westside teachers helped her enjoy her hometown in a new way.

"The bike tour was the perfect chance to slow down and really experience the beauty that surrounds us," Anne says. "The best part for me was in the stories, which helped connect the dots between people and places.

"At Phelps Creek, we stood in the vineyard and sipped the wine that the vines had produced. Although I'd met the owner years ago, and taught his son, I never knew the story behind the vineyard, the wines and even the wine labels. It was an unforgettable experience."

By joining with ag-based businesses, MountNbarrel offers one-of-a-kind adventures that benefit a broad reach of growers, bikers, tourists and locals.

"When they take home a bottle of wine, they get something special, that is of the place," says Christie of Wy'East. "People can get wine anywhere. We can't compete with Safeway or other big markets. We're selling a boutique winery experience."

Ali and her husband, Matt, moved from Bend to Hood River in 2015. For Ali, who grew up in Troutdale and then lived in a variety of cities throughout the U.S., returning to the Gorge is a sort of homecoming. A wine enthusiast who enjoys a leisurely stroll on her cruiser bike, she was delighted to discover a multitude of wineries.

"When we moved here, I found one place, then another, then another," Ali says with a laugh. "I had a dream that one day bike-riding and wine-tasting would come together to form the ultimate Hood River experience. I think it's important to be mindful of your community and to build partnerships." ■

Ali McLaughlin, left, founder of MountNbarrel, meets with Christie Reed of Wy'East Vineyards. The winery is one of a dozen local businesses MountNbarrel showcases in its wine country bike tours.

MountNbarrel tours offer backroad excursions through fields, farms, barns and vines.

MountNbarrel operates bike tours from May to October, and offers discounts to local residents. For more information, go to www.mountnbarrel.com, email MountNbarrel@gmail.com or call (541) 490-TOUR (8687).

A Hand-Me-Down Skill in Silver

Frenchglen artist crafts metal into wearable art

By Lauren Brown

While in college getting a degree in exercise science, Nevada Miller helped put herself through school by creating silver jewelry on a 6-foot work bench.

Now she has a full-fledged workshop and has made silversmithing a career as she works out of the little town of Frenchglen in southeastern Oregon.

Nevada refers to herself as a "maker," which seems an apt description for someone who transforms strips of metal and stone into wearable works of art.

Eight years ago, as a junior in high school, Nevada learned to engrave silver from her father, Jeremiah Watt—a well-known maker who creates saddles, bits, spurs and other silver work.

With parents in the business of saddles and silversmithing, Nevada was immersed in the business at a young age as she was homeschooled and traveled the world with her family. They attended nine to 12 trade shows a year.

Even so, Nevada says she never felt pressured to follow in their footsteps. In fact, her father was adamant that she attend college. In the end, after college at Montana State University, she decided she was going to be a full-time maker. Her parents were fully supportive.

Nevada's graduation present from her parents was her workshop, which is a construction trailer that sits behind her house in Frenchglen. Benches run the length of the trailer on both sides, and her tools line the walls.

"We created a job that I can do in a town of six people," Nevada says. "It brings me joy."

Nevada's style is eclectic and functional.

Nevada Miller works to incorporate a stone into a bracelet design.
Photo by Lauren Brown

"I make things that I would want to wear every day," she says.

Nevada grew up in California, and says her childhood travels to China, Australia, New Zealand and Europe influenced her designs. Her parents were intent on traveling and seeing other cultures and then bringing that back to the Western lifestyle. Nevada has taken that on as well.

"I do love getting certain designs from other cultures," she says.

Currently, she finds inspiration in Moroccan culture.

Nevada says what she likes most about her silver work is that she creates pieces from start to finish. While engraving was the first thing she learned, she has become an accomplished maker with complete control of her designs, from the initial concept to the fabrication, which includes sawing, filing, shaping, soldering and engraving.

Nevada ended up in Frenchglen because that is where her husband, Levi, grew up. Nevada will be moving her workshop to the ranch.

"I've always enjoyed being in the middle of nowhere," she says.

For Nevada, part of being a maker is sharing her skills with other people. She has put her college business classes to use and recently offered a maker's marketing class at the Pendleton Cattle Barons Weekend celebration in May.

Growing up in the business, Nevada realized a lot of makers cannot support themselves on their craft alone. She says that pricing, packaging and communicating with customers can make all the difference when it comes to making a living as a maker.

"My dad was always really strong about getting paid for what you do," she says. "People need to hear that you need to get paid for what you do or you can't keep doing it. This is a business and you have to treat it like one."

Another recent workshop found her at the Double O Elementary School working with kindergarten through fourth-grade students on stamping jewelry. She spent the morning teaching the kids how to stamp their names on zipper pulls and to create their own designs for earrings and necklaces.

As a maker, Nevada says it is important to develop a following. She does that by networking with other makers at trade shows and by maintaining a social media presence on Instagram, Facebook and her website.

Ninety-five percent of her business is done online. She finds that those who follow her on Facebook tend to be people who have known her since she was young, while her Instagram followers are younger and more her own age. On Instagram, she also posts photos of her everyday life in Frenchglen. She finds people seem to like that down-to-earth aspect of her business.

Nevada creates pieces that she herself would wear because that's what fuels her passion.

"If you're excited about it, other people will be excited about it, too," she says. ■

Nevada's work pulls from the Western tradition of silversmithing, but she also pulls inspiration from other cultures for her designs.

Photos courtesy of Nevada Miller

To see more of Nevada's work, check out her website, nevadawatt.com, or follow her on Instagram.

Ralph Williams valued family and the lifelong friendships he made through work and hobbies.

Photo by Carli Hobson

A Driving Force at United Electric

Ralph Williams leaves a legacy for his family and the electric industry

By Dianna Troyer

To the late Ralph Williams, retired general manager of United Electric Co-op, the most cherished aspect of his life was his family. Yet his influence extended far beyond his household to the close-knit community of electric industry executives throughout the Northwest, where he left a legacy.

"He was a great dad and granddad," says his widow, Virginia.

They raised three children—Mamie, Wade and Drew—and spent time with their five grandchildren.

"He grew up as an only child, so family was everything to him as an adult," Virginia says. "He also valued the lifelong friendships he made through work and his hobbies of roping and golfing."

The couple would have celebrated their 50th wedding July 6, but Ralph died from a heart attack February 19 at their winter home in Mesquite, Nevada. He was 72 and had been retired for seven years.

"His circle of life touched so many people," Virginia says. "At his memorial service, it was humbling to see the outpouring of friendship and to listen to what people remembered most about him."

Friends told her they knew they could count on Ralph if they ever needed help.

"People said he was a genuine, down-to-earth man who lived his life with integrity," Virginia says. "Wherever he worked and whatever his job was—from lineman to manager—he treated people

Above, one of Ralph's hobbies in retirement was weaving baskets and vases from worn-out rope. Right, Virginia says Ralph was a down-to-earth man who lived his life with integrity.

with respect. He cared about employees and co-op members equally, and kept everyone working together toward a common goal."

His son Wade, 42, a working line foreman at United Electric, described him as a visionary in the industry.

"The policies Dad suggested and organizations he was involved with are still benefiting co-op members," Wade says.

He and his father always shared a joke.

"I teased him that I was the one with seniority at work," Wade says, "but it never did me any good."

In May 1995, Wade was hired as a lineman at Unity Light and Power in Burley.

"Grant Saxton, the manager, hired me," Wade says. "After he passed away from a heart attack a few months later, Dad replaced him."

In 1998, Unity merged with Rural Electric Co. to form United Electric Co-op. The Rupert company's manager, Larry Burbank, had died from cancer in 1997, so Ralph was hired as the new co-op's manager—a position he held until he retired in 2011.

"It took Dad's special touch and personality to put these two co-ops together and make the merger go smoothly," Wade says.

Jo Elg, who replaced Ralph as general manager when he retired, says he was instrumental in the merger.

"It was not a simple task to merge the two utilities," Jo says. "Ralph's perseverance and diplomacy were contributing factors to the successful venture. The members of United Electric Co-op benefit from that foresight today."

Wade attributes his career choice to seeing his father work as a lineman for Raft River Rural Electric Co-op.

"When I was a boy, I watched him and his crew setting poles and stringing wire," Wade says. "I thought it was the coolest thing I'd ever seen. He told me he was proud of what I've done at work."

After retiring, Ralph and Virginia spent the winters in Mesquite, where they could golf.

About four years ago, Ralph launched a new hobby.

"I told him I liked the vases and baskets made from ropers' worn-out ropes," Virginia says, "so he figured out how to make them. He made about 100."

He configured a jig for the base and used a soldering tool to melt the nylon exterior of the rope, so it would take shape and stay together.

"He could build anything," Virginia says.

Like Ralph, his family loves doing things together and with friends.

"He really liked to interact with people," Wade says. "Last summer, we started playing Mexican horseshoes and having a potluck with a group in his neighborhood. We have about 20 people getting together. It's a lot of fun."

Summing up Ralph's legacy in their lives, Virginia and Wade point out the last sentence of his obituary: "We will miss him dearly, and his unconditional love will forever be with his family." ■

A Legacy of Power

Electric consumers in the Northwest benefit from visionary programs involving Ralph Williams.

"Whatever he did, he was never interested in getting credit for it," says his widow, Virginia.

Ralph's career in the electric industry spanned 43 years. In 1968, he started working as a heavy equipment operator for Raft River Rural Electric Cooperative. Eventually, he became a lineman and general manager at United Electric Co-op.

A few highlights of his legacy follow.

- He was a founding member of the Idaho Energy Authority. Instead of utilities maintaining separate inventories, they pooled their backup equipment.
- He worked to get the best rates for co-ops and other entities through his involvement with the Northwest Requirements Utilities Association and Northwest Irrigation Utilities.
- He helped found the Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association's annual summer Youth Rally. The weeklong program teaches teens about electrical issues and develops their leadership skills.
- United established a scholarship in his name and awarded the first one in May.

Raise, Release, Repeat

Students' small-scale project has a big impact

By Dianna Troyer

Mackay agriculture and natural resources students continue a pioneering aquaculture project launched three years ago.

In May, the students stocked Lower Cedar Creek with 325 golden trout they raised in the aquaculture lab at Mackay High School. The fish—prized for their intense color and elusiveness—were first introduced in the creek in 2015 as an experiment. They did so well students released more.

"As far as I know, this is the first time golden trout have been successfully introduced into a stream in Idaho," says Bart Gamett, a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Forest Service in Mackay. "Usually, they're stocked in high mountain lakes."

After the trout were carefully packed in six plastic bags at the high school's lab, students carried them in backpacks and hiked up the creek about a mile. Choosing several suitable sites, they held each bag in the water until the temperature inside the bag matched that of the creek. Next, they punctured the bag and watched the fish swim around their new home.

"What you did is a big deal," Bart told them after the fish were released. "You've taken an active role to manage our natural resources by providing fishing opportunities for several years."

Bart estimates golden trout in the wild have a lifespan of about six years. He hopes the fish will breed and establish a population in the creek.

Kase Hainline, left, and Rylen Wilkie pack up trout to release in Lower Cedar Creek.
Photo by Trent Van Leuven

Bart's daughter, Kali, raised and released 146 golden trout in the creek for her ag science project three years ago.

"We weren't sure how they would do," Bart says. "They did so well that the Idaho Department of Fish and Game gave approval to release more."

Kali, now 19 and a student at Brigham Young University-Idaho, returned to her alma mater in May to help release the golden trout.

Lower Cedar Creek was an ideal spot because no other trout were there.

"At one time, brook trout were in the creek, but survival was poor and they eventually disappeared," Bart says.

Golden trout evolved to stay where they are released.

"They're native to the headwaters of the Kern River drainage in northern California," Bart says. "There was a

Left, Kali Gamett cradles her record-setting golden trout before releasing it last summer. Above, biologist Bart Gamett works with Mackay agriculture students to release golden trout at Lower Cedar Creek.

Left photo courtesy of Bart Gamett

waterfall downstream, so a fish that went over the falls was eliminated from the gene pool. As a result, they tend to stay in the same general area where they are stocked."

Bart says his admiration of golden trout guided his career.

"Golden trout are a big reason I became a fish biologist," he says.

Growing up on a farm near Moore, he first heard about the trout from his father.

"For some reason, they mesmerized and captivated me," Bart says. "I still remember catching my first one. It was August 1988 in a small unnamed lake in the West Fork of Morgan Creek north of Challis."

He says he even named Kali after the trout, with her name being a shortened version of California golden trout.

Kali set a record of her own when she caught and released a 10.75-inch-long golden trout July 3, 2017, at Lower Cedar Creek.

"In the two years since I released them, the fish had grown from about 3 inches to about 10 inches," says Kali.

It was the first golden trout listed in a state record book for catch-and-release fish. Although her record has since been broken, she said it was still a gratifying experience.

Mackay ag science students plan to continue raising golden trout, hopefully in a new aquaculture lab. Ag science teacher Trent Van Leuven hopes to build a state-of-the-art lab. He has raised about $45,000 through donations and grants. He estimates $65,000 is needed.

"Aquaculture businesses are a growth industry in our area and elsewhere in rural southeastern Idaho," Trent says. "How many small, rural high schools can prepare students for well-paid careers found in their home areas? This is the real driving force for what we are doing."

Besides several species of trout, students raise Arctic grayling and sturgeon from fry or eggs provided by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's hatchery north of town and the College of Southern Idaho. Once the fish are large enough, the students coordinate with the department to stock them in the valley's creeks and lakes.

Students Kooper Hainline, a freshman this fall, and his brother Kase, a sophomore, were so enthusiastic about the aquaculture classes they each made a donation to the new lab.

"This class is so different from others because it's hands-on," Kooper says. "It's our responsibility to take care of the fish. In spring, we repopulate some creeks with the golden and rainbow trout we've raised."

Their mother, Angie, says, "They each gave $500 for the new lab because they said it was a great cause. They have their own money from 4-H and summer jobs, so it was their decision." ■

A youth knitting class meets at the Latimer Quilt and Textile Center, which once was the Maple Leaf School.

Area History is Bound by Small Stitches

Latimer Quilt and Textile Center is a school, a store and a repository of artifacts

By Denise Porter

If nostalgia, textiles and local history draw your interest, Tillamook's Latimer Quilt and Textile Center will delight you.

If you want to take a class and learn a textile skill, you can do that, too.

Known by locals as the Latimer Center, the building is a museum, gift store, instructional center and repository that archives and stores hundreds of antique textiles.

"A lot of people walk through the door and they say it feels so good in here," says Carol Weber, president of the center's board of directors. The center wraps itself around people and holds them close, she explains. "There's a feeling of camaraderie here."

Carol says the Latimer Center has always been a space where questions are encouraged and skills are taught for the joy of learning.

More than a century ago, young scholars gathered in the building to learn sums, writing and history. Then it was the Maple Leaf School.

Carol says the center is still at its heart a school. Its purpose is education.

The Latimer Center is also a museum open to the public. Anyone can pay the $4 admission and see the rotating textile exhibits. Some of those exhibits are local history pieces, while others are on loan from areas near and far.

Kim Schauss, one of the center's two associate managers, says tour buses stop often, along with visitors to the Tillamook Coast. Often, visitors who tour the museum become members. They return time and again.

"We get thank you letters in the mail all the time," Kim says.

The center also boasts hands-on classes taught by talented instructors. It's common for both local and regional museum members to take a class and end up staying for hours to help with other classes, or to volunteer.

The center offers classes for both youth and for adults. One ongoing knitting class has several adults paired with youth who want to learn to knit.

It is common to see spinners and weavers, tatters and quilters, knitters and all sorts of artisans gather to work and learn. Museumgoers are often astounded and delighted to

Top, Carol Brown shows one of the historical quilts on display at the Latimer Center. Above and left, wares on display at the Latimer Center

see weavers working on vintage looms.

The Latimer Center is also a store. The building teems with the color and whimsy of items for sale.

On the walls and along the walkways are quilts, baskets, rugs, doilies and dolls for sale. Artists are invited to inquire about selling their wares. Space is limited, and the pieces are evaluated for quality before the board agrees to display them.

The center is also a repository. The repository, says Carol, is an invaluable piece to the center's community importance because it archives historically significant textiles.

Built in 1995 and climate controlled, the repository houses more than 400 quilts and 300 textile artifacts. Volunteers catalog the items. A team from the center travels to quilt shows and artisan fairs to showcase the center's artifacts.

The oldest piece on display at the center is a hand-sewn quilt dating to 1878.

Kim says people from across the country who visit the center ask if they can send an old quilt or other piece to the museum for preservation. They can. The Latimer Center gives families a way to celebrate great-grandma's quilted treasures, she says.

Donated quilts sometimes get deposited on the center's front doorstep, says Carol, but this practice is discouraged. Volunteers like to ask questions about the piece and learn about its history.

In some instances, loved ones have brought a piece to the center and after donating it, have left with tears in their eyes, Carol says. She says she understands the emotional heirlooms.

Visitors are welcome to tour the repository, Carol adds, but they need to call and arrange a time prior to their trip. ■

More information about the Latimer Quilt and Textile Center can be found at www.latimerquiltandtextile.com, or call (503) 842-8622.

Take a Drive on the Quilt Trail

It's a quest, a treasure hunt and a history lesson all in one—and it draws in those who love quilt patterns.

Today, the Tillamook County Quilt Trail boasts 104 quilt blocks and murals, and stretches across the entire Tillamook Coast. The Latimer Quilt and Textile Center is just one of the highlights of the trail.

Popular on the East Coast, quilt trails feature quilt patterns painted onto 8-foot-by-8-foot wooden blocks and hung on the sides of barns and buildings. They are colorful and creative and add beauty to the area. Visitors follow a guide and drive along the trail, searching for each quilt block.

The Tillamook County Quilt Trail began in 2009. To date, more than 100,000 brochures have been printed.

The quilt trail is a free way to explore the Tillamook Coast backroads. It takes travelers through country roads and to scenes along the coastline. It is divided into four sections, including one walking trail in the heart of downtown Tillamook. Those quilt blocks are painted onto smaller 4-foot-by-4-foot blocks.

Pick up a trail brochure while visiting the Latimer Quilt and Textile Center, or check out the interactive map at www.tillamookquilttrail.org. Both give detailed history about the highlighted building and the quilt pattern in each location.

Kim Reamer is jubilant as she comes off a steep trail at Hidden Falls Park in Sloan Canyon near Henderson, Nevada, finishing the half-marathon in March.

Photos courtesy of Kim Reamer

Staying Strong, Steady and Fast

Desert trails and lake keep ultra-runner and triathlete primed for summer season

By Dianna Troyer

"Strong is steady, and steady is fast."

Ultra-runner and triathlete Kim Reamer of West Wendover recites the motto while training for and competing in ultra races, Spartan contests and triathlons, including several Ironman competitions.

"When things get tough—and they always do in endurance events—I repeat that phrase to myself," says the 48-year-old. "As long as I'm moving forward, I know I'll finish. Relentless forward progress is my goal."

Kim began running 22 years ago. Nine years ago, she started racing in triathlons, which combine running, swimming and biking.

Kim is covered in mud after a Spartan race in Midway, Utah.

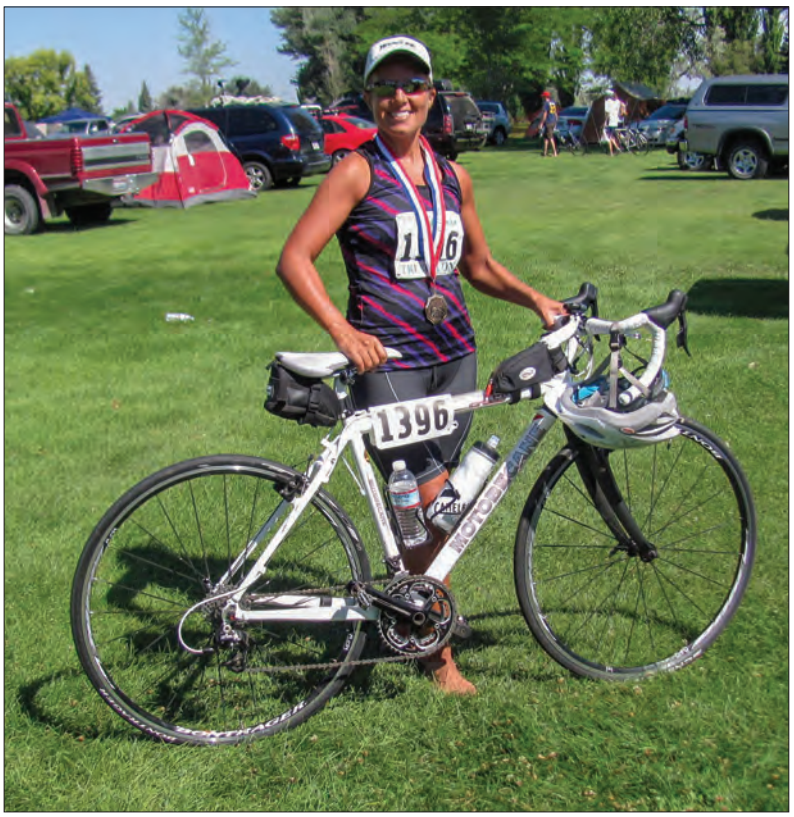
She says her training philosophy about moving forward applies to any goal in life and is an attitude she hopes to instill in her students at West Wendover High School, where she teaches English, coaches cross country and is yearbook adviser.

"When I'm outdoors running, biking or swimming, I'm in my happy place," Kim says. "As a teacher, I'm constantly surrounded by people so I need my alone time to decompress, destress and just enjoy moving outside."

Kim encourages people to exercise and try a moderate race.

"Anyone can do what I do," she says. "I have no running talent. I wasn't an athlete in high school. I simply have discipline and drive and willingness to suffer a little bit to get the reward of meeting my goals. Start with a 5K. If you put your mind to it, you can do it."

Kim competes year-round, scheduling more races during summer when she has time off work. In early June, she finished a 50-kilometer (31-mile) ultramarathon in Bryce Canyon, Utah. At the end of the month, she did a 30-kilometer (18.6-mile) trail run near San Francisco.



At left, Kim will compete again in the Burley Spudman Olympic Triathlon in Idaho. Above, Kim's medals from contests hang in her classroom at West Wendover High School to inspire students.

All those miles helped prepare her for the Burley Spudman Olympic Triathlon, scheduled July 28 in southern Idaho.

"After the 50K in June, I got back on the bike and in the pool to get ready for the Spudman," she says.

Kim's training regimen varies, depending on the type of competition she enters. Generally, she exercises 8 to 10 hours a week and runs 18 to 30 miles a week.

"When I'm getting ready for a triathlon, I'll swim a few hours a week just to get the endurance down," she says.

In summer, she swims at the city pool. To train for triathlons during winter and spring, she drives to Blue Lake 25 miles south of town.

"It's fed naturally by a spring, so the water temperature stays a constant 68 degrees," she says. "It's cold getting in and out, but once I'm in the water in my wetsuit, it's great."

She bikes 20 to 60 miles a week, mostly on her trainer during colder weather and on a mountain bike in summer.

During the school year, Kim starts her day at 4:30 a.m. in her workout room.

"I'm a total morning person and love the quiet hours I have to myself before the day gets going," she says.

Whatever her schedule, Kim relies on an extensive network of trails around town.

"I've found gorgeous places all around the area that many people probably don't know exist," she says.

In 1996, Kim began exploring the trails after she and her husband, Jerome, moved from North Dakota to teach in the local schools.

"I started walking just to get some exercise, then running a few miles," she says. "When I was able to run 5 miles, I began thinking about training for a half marathon. I've never looked back."

Running eventually evolved into competing in triathlons. While training friends to run their first half marathon in the spring of 2009, one of them mentioned she planned to do a triathlon.

"I immediately thought, 'If she can do one, I can, too,'" Kim says. "I trained that summer and completed my first sprint triathlon in August 2009. I was hooked. My next triathlon was Ironman Boise 70.3 in June of 2010."

Since then, Kim has completed four more Ironman triathlons, the most recent last year in St. George, Utah.

Her family is supportive. When she started competing years ago, Jerome brought their daughters, Sydney and Olivia, to every race.

"I had the easy job of just racing," Kim says. "He had to park, figure out timing, get pictures and be at the finish. Several years ago, I realized my family members don't need to be there for any of them anymore, unless they want to be. Sydney and Olivia have each done one triathlon with me and said the same thing at the finish: 'Never again!'"

The finale of Kim's summer season is August 4 at Crazy Bob's Bair Gutsman Trail Half Marathon in northern Utah. The course up Bair Canyon and down Farmington Canyon has no trail. Organizers describe it as "a bushwhack into the jaws of death." Kim will end the month with a more mellow race near home, the Ruby Mountain Timberline Trail Relay, August 25 southwest of Wells.

"I'll run whatever else should come up over the summer," she says, grinning. ■

ENERGIZING THE FUTURE

Each of these students from Union, Grant, Harney and Baker counties has been awarded a $5,000 Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative scholarship.

Satori Young: A 2018 graduate of La Grande High School. She plans to study psychology and human physiology at the University of Oregon.

Kate Jesenko: A 2018 graduate of Eagle Cap Innovative High School. She plans to study psychology and Spanish at Eastern Oregon University.

Gretchen Daugherty: A 2006 graduate of Baker High School. She is a graduate student studying for a masters of art in elementary education at Eastern Oregon University.

Maggie Justice: A 2018 graduate of Grant Union High School. She plans to study rangeland science at Eastern Oregon University.

Ashlie Chastain: A 2018 graduate of Baker High School. She plans to study music at Brigham Young University.

Mason Tomac: A 2018 graduate of Baker High School.He plans to study mechanical engineering at the University of Wyoming.

Brieanne Bain: A 2007 graduate of Redmond High School. She is a sophomore studying nursing at Oregon Health and Science University.

Jamie Waltenburg: A 2016 graduate of Dayville High School. She is a junior studying ecological biology at Eastern Oregon University.

Kaeli Flanagan: A 2018 graduate of Baker High School. She plans to study math at Whitworth University.

Noah Woodward: A 2018 graduate of Baker High School. He plans to study structural fire science and emergency medical services at Central Oregon Community College.

Reagan Shelley: A 2018 graduate of Grant Union High School. She plans to study elementary education at Western Oregon University.

James Clay Johnson: A 2017 graduate of Rimrock Christian Academy. He is a sophomore studying physical education at Eastern Oregon University.

Isabella Evans: A 2018 graduate of Baker High School. She plans to study computer science at Eastern Oregon University.

Bonny Daggett: A 2018 graduate of Imbler Charter School. She plans to study nursing at Eastern Oregon University.

Elizabeth Clark: A 2018 graduate of Union High School. She plans to study psychology at Crown College.

Sadie McIver: A 2013 graduate of La Grande High School. She is a junior studying pre-med at Eastern Oregon University.

Parker Landon: A 2018 graduate of Burns High School. She plans to study software and computer engineering at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Cade Reed: A 2018 graduate of La Grande High School. He plans to study biology at Grand Canyon University.

Cody Dubray: A 2018 graduate of La Grande High School. He plans to study mechanical engineering at Oregon Institute of Technology.

Kelsi Reyes: A 2010 graduate of Grant Union High School. She is a sophomore studying nursing at Oregon Health and Science University.

Madison Winn: A 2014 graduate of Burns High School. She is a junior studying nursing at Brigham Young University.

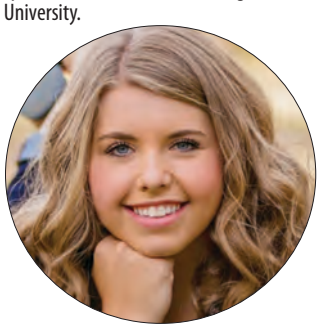
Reata Youngblood: A 2018 graduate of Powder Valley High School. She plans to study to become a medical assistant at Flathead Community College.

Kyla Gomes: A 2016 graduate of La Grande High School. She is a sophomore studying biology with a medical specialization at Central Washington University.

Daniel DeVore: A 2018 homeschool graduate. He plans to study at Northwest Lineman College to be a journeyman lineman.

Marissa Modey: A 2017 graduate of Burns High School. She is a sophomore studying nursing at Oregon Health and Science University.

Dalton Nutter: A 2018 graduate of Burns High School. He plans to enroll at Chemeketa Community College to be a journeyman electrician.



Kortnee Marriott: A 2017 graduate of Union High School. She is a freshman studying bio/health sciences at Oregon State University.

Joseph Bailey: A 2018 graduate of Burns High School. He plans to enroll at Lazy Q Lineman School to study to be a journeyman lineman.

Rich Haynes sits inside his Tesla Model 3 at the Tesla Supercharger station at Sunridge Inn just off Interstate 84 in Baker City. From his home in Baker City to Portland, his Tesla uses about 90 kilowatt-hours, which costs about $6.30 for the drive.

Photo by Nini Valerio

The Rise of Technology

OTEC supports electric vehicle innovation

By Susan Parrish

Rich Haynes stops his Tesla Model 3 at the Tesla Supercharger station at Sunridge Inn just off Interstate 84 in Baker City for a charge. His electric vehicle travels 300 miles on a charge. That is roughly the distance from Baker City to Portland.

When Rich drives that route, his car uses about 90 kilowatt-hours, which costs about $6.30.

With gas at $3.19 per gallon, it would cost $68.38 in gas to drive the same distance in a 2018 Toyota Tundra four-wheel drive pickup with a gas-combustion engine. It would cost $30 to drive a 2018 Subaru Forester with a gas-combustion engine.

As gas prices climb, electric vehicles are becoming more attractive to many consumers.

OTEC Territory Electric Car-Charging Stations

Search for electric car-charging locations nationwide at www.Plugshare.com.

▸ **Baker County**

Baker City: Best Western Sunridge Inn (eight Tesla supercharging stations), Baker Truck Corral, Mountain View RV Park; Sumpter: Pines RV Park, Vale RV Park

▸ **Grant County**

John Day: Clyde Holliday State Recreation Area, Grant County Fairgrounds RV Park; Dayville: Fish House Inn and RV Park; Prairie City: Historic Hotel Prairie

▸ **Harney County**

Burns: Burns RV Park, Crystal Crane Hot Springs; Frenchglen: Steens Mountain Wilderness Resort

▸ **Union County**

La Grande: Eastern Oregon University, H Avenue (need $2 EOU parking permit), Goss Chevrolet

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is looking to the not-too-distant future when sales of electric vehicles will rival gas-powered vehicles.

Bloomberg New Energy Finance predicts that in two decades, 54 percent of all new car sales will be electric.

"OTEC sees that a market transition to electric vehicles as fairly likely at some point," says OTEC Systems Engineer Charlie Tracy. "We'll be here for our customers and their electric vehicles in the future."

While traversing the wide-open spaces of Eastern Oregon, Rich has never run out of a charge. He does plan where to plug in his vehicle.

When he bought his first Tesla in

2013, gas was $4 a gallon. At the time, there were no charging stations between Baker City and Portland. He stayed in a motel in Boardman that allowed him to plug in his car all night.

"It was cheaper to buy the motel room and charge the Tesla than to buy gas," Rich says.

Charging Stations

Electric vehicles vary in the number of miles they can go on a full charge: from 58 miles for the Daimler Smart ForTwo to 315 miles for the Tesla Model S. Most EVs go about 100 miles a charge.

EV drivers planning a trip can check for charging stations at www.Plugshare.com.

More corporations and utilities around the nation are working to install a network of EV charging stations along interstate routes.

There are Tesla Superchargers along Interstate 84 in Boise, Baker City, Pendleton and The Dalles. Most Tesla fast-charging stations take at least 24 minutes to charge a 60-kWh battery, but Tesla plans to install faster stations that charge an EV in 10 minutes.

Walmart, which has charging stations at about 100 stores nationwide, plans to create a national grid of EV charging stations for interstate travelers.

Through a partnership with Electrify America, the corporation plans to add another 100 charging stations by year's end, including five in Oregon. The La Grande/Island City Walmart is a potential candidate, says Micah Ragland, Walmart's corporate director of sustainability communications in Arkansas.

Dropping Prices and Rebates

Electric vehicles are becoming more affordable. Several 2018 EVs—including the Ford Focus Electric, Hyundai Ioniq EV, Nissan Leaf, Volkswagen e-Golf, Kia Soul EV, Tesla Model 3 and Chevy Bolt EV—cost from $29,000 to $37,500.

Eastern Oregon auto dealerships say they do not have the population base to sell all-electric vehicles, although some sell hybrids that run on a combination of a gas-combustion motor and an electric battery. MJ Goss Motor Co. in La Grande keeps a hybrid Chevrolet Volt on the lot and sells two or three a year, according to Sales Manager Pat Goss.

In contrast, Smolich Nissan in Bend increased its electric vehicle sales elevenfold in just one year. In 2016, the dealership sold six Nissan Leafs. When Jason Bradley, an electric vehicle advocate and Leaf driver, became the dealership's general sales manager, the number jumped to 67.

Consumers who buy electric vehicles receive a $7,500 federal tax credit. Oregonians who buy EVs are eligible for a new $2,500 state rebate. That adds up to $10,000 off the purchase price.

"If you do the math of all the available credits and rebates, lack of cost of maintenance and fuel, it makes a lot of sense to own an electric car," Jason says. "With the credits and rebates, that $30,000 price is down to $20,000."

Jason says the cost of a replacement Leaf battery was about $15,000 four years ago, but is down to $5,500. He has driven 30,000 miles on his four-year-old Leaf, and the battery still tests at 100 percent.

In 2017, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed a pair of executive orders aimed at getting more electric vehicles on the road. Her first mandate stipulated that by October 2022, all parking structures for new homes and commercial buildings must be wired for at least one electric vehicle charger.

The governor's second executive order set a goal of at least 50,000 registered electric vehicles in the state by 2020, a huge increase from the 16,000 currently registered.

Electric vehicles are predicted to continue gaining in popularity as gas prices increase, EV sticker prices decrease and EVs cover more miles on a full charge.

"OTEC is always looking for ways to bring value to our membership," Charlie says. "We see electric vehicles as an opportunity to do that, especially with all the infrastructure we already have in place. Customers can charge at home with their existing electric service instead of going to a charging station."

Electric vehicles can be plugged into any outlet, but they charge slowly. An EV plugged into a standard outlet in a garage would charge overnight. To charge an EV faster, it takes a 240-volt outlet—the same required for an electric range or clothes dryer.

"A lot of homes have that capacity already, but some homes might be using all their capacity," Charlie says. "Talk with OTEC about upgrading your electric service." ■

By the Numbers

A selection of 2018 all-electric vehicles (arranged by highest to lowest battery range)

- Tesla Model S
  Battery range: 315 miles
  MSRP: From $74,500
- Chevy Bolt EV Hatchback LT
  Battery range: 238 miles
  MSRP: From $37,495
- Tesla Model 3
  Battery range: 220 miles
  MSRP: From $35,000
- Nissan Leaf
  Battery range: 150 miles
  MSRP: From $30,875
- Volkswagen e-Golf
  Battery range: 125 miles
  MSRP: From $31,345
- Hyundai Ioniq EV
  Battery range: 124 miles
  MSRP: From $29,500
- Ford Focus Electric
  Battery range: 115 miles
  MSRP: From $29,120
- BMW i3
  Battery range: 114 miles
  MSRP: From $44,450
- Kia Soul EV
  Battery range: 111 miles
  MSRP: From $33,950
- Daimler Smart ForTwo
  Battery range: 58 miles
  MSRP: From $24,250

Source: www.cleantechnica.com

From left, Eatonville High School students Olivia Crueger, Brooke Miles, Ashley Stone and Janelle Thirtyacre perform at the Louder Than a Bomb poetry slam.
Photo by Johnny Schuler

Aspiring Poets Unleash Emotion

'Louder Than a Bomb' poetry slam ignites change in young writers

By Mary Morrison

Say the word "poetry." If old poems with stuffy words and hard-to-understand phrases come to mind, you probably haven't been to a poetry slam.

At a poetry slam, writers not only present their work in front of others, but use it as a platform to express themselves.

Writers unleash feelings and emotions as they share personal stories and opinions

When a team of students from Eatonville High School entered the "Louder Than a Bomb" teen poetry slam in April 2017, winning was not necessarily the goal for the team's coach, English teacher Rachel Wiley.

"My motivation is due to a genuine belief in the power of sharing our stories to build connections and understand more about ourselves," Rachel says.

Though many of the students showed previous appreciation for poetry in the classroom, at the school's creative writing club and at the annual Poetry Out Loud competition, Louder Than a Bomb was a new activity.

Write253, a literacy arts organization serving Tacoma youth, organizes the event each year at Tacoma Community College for schools and teams throughout Pierce County. Teams face off against each other through rounds of competition called bouts. Winners of each bout move on to face other winners before the final teams compete.

Olivia and Donald Davis perform together at the poetry slam.

Photo by Johnny Schuler

Staying true to the event's original purpose, judges must look beyond the writing in each entry.

"We do our best to de-emphasize the competition as much as possible," says Write253 Executive Director Michael Haeflinger. "We don't give the judges a formal rubric. Instead, we ask them to be consistent to themselves and to strive to balance performance and writing when applying a score. Our primary goal is to showcase students' voices and provide them a space to share stories and build community."

Even though the students knew it wasn't all about competition, they say it did little to ease their nerves.

"I was absolutely terrified," says senior Janelle Thirtyacre. "You're plastering your vulnerability out there for everyone to absorb!"

Janelle, who considers herself opinionated, wrote a poem about how her generation can make a difference in the world if given the opportunity. She says she does not like to talk politics and was worried people would not like her piece. She says she felt her poem was a safe place to let her true feelings out—a sentiment Rachel endorsed from the beginning.

"I told them that writing authentic pieces is often the most important part of sharing," Rachel says. "It allows us to connect with others in a meaningful way and can make the most impact on the audience."

Seniors Olivia Crueger and Donald Davis performed together.

"I had a lot of hesitation about sharing my personal information," Olivia says about their poem, which describes some of the personal traumas and anguish the two students experienced at different stages of their lives. "But I had confidence in Donald."

Donald didn't scare easily.

"I like high-energy poetry on serious subjects like LGBT issues, politics and gun control," Donald says, "things that affect me on the daily. This helps me figure out how I feel about them.

"It's usually all recitation. But here, it's not just what you say, but how you say it."

In keeping with the serious theme, first-year student Dylan Cook chose an issue close to his heart.

"I had different emotions all three rounds," says Dylan, who performed a love poem about a relationship strained with issues.

The first round went well. In the second, Dylan says he freaked out and had to look at the poem again. The third was a rollercoaster with ups and downs.

Senior Brooke Miles became part of a four-person group that included Eatonville High School student Ashley Stone to perform a poem that encourages girls through tough issues.

"Mrs. Wiley came to me and encouraged me to join the group," Brooke says. "She saw my interest in poetry. I felt I couldn't pass up the opportunity to do this in my senior year."

All of the Eatonville individual and group performers wrote new pieces for the competition. Hard work in the form of rehearsals, rewrites and memorization followed.

"You really learn what it means to work with someone," Donald says.

Their hard work paid off. The Eatonville students won each of their three bouts, beating out seven other schools from more populated districts.

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Above, the Eatonville High School Louder Than a Bomb poetry slam team was led by coach and English teacher Rachel Wiley, right. Above right, Brooke enjoys time with the team. Right, Dylan Cook performs.

Top photos by Brooke Miles, right photo by Mary Morrison

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More than the high of winning, the experience led to changes in and discoveries about themselves, Rachel says.

"They are more confident writers and believe in the power of their voices more than ever," she explains. "It's truly an incredible feeling for me as their teacher to see them gain that confidence and experience."

Donald, who plans to be an English teacher, says it opened up a different pathway for him.

"You could throw a rock just about anywhere in Tacoma or Seattle and hit a poetry slam," he says. "My friends and family were very impressed. They were happy that I found something I was able to do and was good at."

For Olivia—who practiced literary arts and drama throughout high school—the arts will take a back seat to plans for a career in mechanical engineering technology.

"The arts are for relaxation," says Olivia. "But the creative skills I learned will serve me well in this field."

The experience offered emotional stability for Dylan.

"It really helped me sort out my emotions and deal with them," he says.

Dylan hopes to live in New York and become a school band director.

Brooke, who wants to be a dental hygienist, says she was surprised how much she enjoyed the activity and the ease she felt in opening up to her teammates.

"This whole experience with the group has been like a family—a family that enjoys doing the same things," Brooke says. "Being from a small town and a small group, to do so well brought me confidence and pride."

Janelle, who plans to become a middle school English teacher, also felt more confident.

"I didn't have confidence," she says, noting the experience helped her believe in herself.

"It helped me learn how to talk confidently on a stage and speak to people," Janelle says. "It changed my outlook on life."

Their coach is pleased with the students' performance and outlook.

"The competition is not really about winning," Rachel says. "It's about sharing our poetry and providing youth the opportunity to speak up and out about things that matter to them."

"I knew that they had the talent to win, and it was that belief in them that I hope helped them believe in their own ability to win." ■

Learn more about the Tacoma Louder Than a Bomb poetry slam and other local writing opportunities at www.Write253.com.