Julie Sutton and her Arabian horse, Rugby, compete in 25- and 50-mile trail rides together.

# Horse and Rider Go the Distance

*Endurance riding team places health of horse above finishing time*

**By Craig Reed**

Julie Sutton and Rugby are a team with a long-distance relationship of a different sort.

Julie is a 47-year-old woman who loves to ride. Rugby is an 18-year-old purebred Arabian horse who loves to trot. They have covered hundreds of miles together during the past eight years.

The two are regular participants in endurance horseback rides of 25 and 50 miles.

That's where the long-distance relationship comes in for the close-knit team.

"It's just my horse and me against the distance," Julie says. "It's extremely challenging, but these horses are athletes. They are so well conditioned for these distances. They have to be to be in these endurance events."

Julie is a member of the Pacific Northwest Endurance Riders and the American Endurance Riders Conference.

She and her horse train by getting out of her Melrose-area barn two to four days a week and covering 7 to 22 miles on each ride, depending on Rugby's need for conditioning.

"He's in pretty good shape now," Julie says.

The endurance season in the Pacific Northwest ranges from April to October. Although there is a race most weekends, Julie and Rugby limit their participation to one or sometimes two a month. Julie says one a month gives Rugby plenty of time to recover from the previous outing.

In Oregon, most of the rides are in Eastern Oregon, where events are in the high desert country. The routes are rocky and flat. The higher elevation must be considered for the horses.

In Washington, most of the rides are on the western side of the state in the Mount

**A 25-mile ride takes about three hours. A 50-mile ride takes eight to10 hours.**

Adams area. Those routes include more ups and downs in forested areas.

In Northern California, there are rides through the giant redwoods.

"That is totally cool," Julie says. "The scenery on these rides just can't be beat."

Julie and Rugby generally need about 3 hours to complete the 25-mile courses. It takes eight to 10 hours for 50 miles. Julie says the pace for a 50-mile course is much more conservative.

Jule says her goal is to finish in the top 10 of an event, making Rugby eligible for the best-conditioned horse.

Horses receive a veterinarian check prior to a ride, once during a 25-mile ride, three times during a 50-miler, then a post-ride check. The vet checks the horses for hydration, soundness and overall appearance.

"The vet must feel the horse is fit to continue," Julie says. "Everybody has different goals. Some want to win, some just want to finish. I believe in the endurance motto of, 'To finish is to win.' I truly believe that.

"I would prefer to be 190th and get best conditioned than first and no best conditioned. I don't want to override my horse. I want my horse to complete the ride and to feel good about it."

Julie and Rugby have a few first-place finishes, but they also earned best-conditioned honor for the second day of back-to-back 50-mile rides.

"That's our greatest feat so far," Julie says.

Dave, Julie's husband of 26 years, says his wife uses a common-sense approach to her training, her feeding, her tack, her horse equipment.

He says she rides a lot to condition Rugby and to continually monitor the health of the horse.

"She's a very confident rider who takes the most pride in being the best conditioned," he says. "She wouldn't lower her standards just to win."

Marcy Smaha of Glide is friends with Julie and has been participating in endurance rides the past four years. She says Julie is attentive to her horse's health.

"Rugby is a quick little Arab who has the talent and she brings it out in him," Marcy says. "She's very tuned in with her horse."

Julie was initially a dressage rider. After making an endurance ride in 1994, she gradually transitioned to that sport. She rode Cisco for several years and then A.J. for a few years before buying Rugby eight years ago.

Rugby was an arena horse at that time and had no trail experience. After a lot of slow miles together—many of them accompanied by a veteran trail horse and rider—Rugby became accustomed to following a narrow outdoors trail, walking through water and stepping over logs.

"At first he was terrified of everything, but for most horses, it doesn't take them too long and they figure it out," Julie says.

Eight months after the two became a team, they went on their first endurance ride. They finished with no mishaps.

"He's come along really well," Julie says. "He's a good trail horse now. He's focused when we're at an endurance event. He knows what it is all about.

"He likes to start out fast, but then calms down and I let him choose his own pace."

That's usually a mile-eating trot.

"He doesn't overdo it," she says. "He always has plenty of energy for the top 10."

Marcy says the effort Julie has put into training and conditioning Rugby has been worth it.

"He was not the perfect horse when they brought him home, but Julie put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into his training and he's paid her back," Marcy says. "They are a fantastic team. They just get out there, climb the mountains, cover the course and get it done."

Julie says she hopes and plans to be Rugby's endurance ride teammate for another five years or so. ■


**The wall in Gene Frechette's home office holds memorabilia from his 70-plus years in baseball.**

# A Passion for Pitching

*CEC member's life blends baseball and teaching*

**By Jeff Beaman**

If you happen to see Gene Frechette at a Central Oregon high school baseball game, there's likely a player on the diamond with some pro potential. Slender with wavy white hair, Gene blends in with the rest of the bleacher crowd as he quietly lifts and lowers his radar gun with each pitch, giving a casual glance at the readout with the pop of the catcher's mitt.

Speeds around 80 mph tell him the hurler has the raw power needed to play beyond high school. As important to Gene is the pitcher's balance during his windup and how close his motion brings the ball to home plate as he releases the pitch. The closer the release point, the less time for the batter to see the pitch. Gene also looks for a 90-degree bend in the knee of the teen's trailing leg with the heel firmly pointed skyward.

"That tells me I'm looking at a pitcher, not just a thrower," says Gene.

Before and after the game, he will chat up the coaches. During the game, he speaks with parents. He will ask about the pitcher's work ethic and school grades, hoping for a 3.5 GPA or higher.

"There's a link between doing well in school and being a good ballplayer," says Gene.

This understanding came early in a baseball life that goes back more than 70 years and is interwoven with teaching and education. At age 88, the Eagle Crest resident is mostly retired, but still does some associate scouting, or bird dogging. He shares his knowledge of local talent with a full-time scout for the Milwaukee Brewers who covers the Northwest. Scouting has always been among his skills, but he becomes most animated when talking about teaching baseball.

His love of the game developed while growing up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula,


**Gene proudly wears his 1955 College World Series runner-up ring earned playing with Western Michigan University on his right hand and his 1967 St. Louis Cardinals World Series ring on his left.**

playing on the adult town team at age 15. After his Korean War military service—an experience that continues to fuel his strong patriotism and concern for veterans—Gene enrolled at Western Michigan University in 1953, making the freshman team at age 22.

"They called me Grandpa," Gene recalls.

The next year he made varsity and was on the team that came in second in the 1955 College World Series, contributing a key pitching performance in a come-from-behind victory leading up to the title game.

Life after college began as a teacher at the high school in St. Ignace, Michigan, population about 3,300, where he coached three sports, including baseball. This is where he began building contacts in the professional baseball scouting world.

After three seasons in the wintery U.P., as it's called—where more games were rained or snowed out than were played—Gene and his family headed for the warmth of California.

A teaching and baseball coaching job in Manteca put him close to Modesto, where a farm club for the St. Louis Cardinals played. This led to an associate scouting position with the Cards and put a 1967 World Series ring on his finger.

## The Birth of an Academy

A couple of hours to the west were the Oakland A's, Gene's next stop—then owned by a colorful maverick of an owner who made a practice of stirring things up for major league baseball. Charlie O. Finly pushed a seemingly endless stream of eccentric ideas to liven up the game and put more fans in the stands. Some eventually took hold, others went nowhere.


**A Dusty Baker-autographed bat reads, "Gene, a man couldn't have a better partner and friend. Thanks!"**

One pragmatic idea Finley outright rejected was Gene's proposal to hold youth clinics. Gene took his idea across the bay where a different kind of team owner, Horace Stoneham, made him the San Francisco Giant's youth clinic director in 1973.

In the early 1980s, Gene crossed paths with Dusty Baker, a skilled player who was well into his 19-year major league career. Gene first scouted him in high school. They agreed to team up to form The Dusty Baker International Baseball Academy based in Sacramento. Dusty provided the first star players and Gene ran the school.

From 45 signups in year one, attendance soon grew to 450 players ages 9 to 18. Since the academy opened in 1983, thousands of young players from around the globe have attended.

Baker squeezed in appearances and training sessions while he continued coaching and managing—four teams between 1993 and 2016—while Gene was responsible for academy operations. This is where he found his place.

"I'm a teacher who loves baseball," Gene says. "I like teaching and I like scouting and I like baseball."

This was Gene's main focus through 2017, when he retired from the academy. He still makes an occasional appearance and makes sure some of the players he comes across in Central Oregon know about the academy. He has helped some by arranging scholarships.

The academy gave Gene the forum he loved for 34 years.

"I enjoyed everything about it," he says. "I enjoy everything about baseball. I hope that I can say in some small way that I have the satisfaction that all that time I was an instructor I kept pushing the new biomechanics of using the whole body and not just the arm, and making a player a healthy player by getting proper conditioning." ■

*Gene will hold clinics for young pitchers in Central Oregon for free in exchange for a tax-deductible donation to the Wounded Warrior Project in Topeka, Kansas. He can be reached at (541) 351-5133.*


**"National Lampoon's Animal House" was filmed in Cottage Grove in 1977. The town is hosting a celebration in August to commemorate the event.**

# Celebrating 'Animal House' 40 Years Later

*Cottage Grove was the base for the making of the iconic comedy about Greek life*

**By Craig Reed**

The community of Cottage Grove is gearing up to relive its role in the movie "National Lampoon's Animal House."

Despite early doubts because of several raunchy scenes, the movie became a classic comedy. Set in 1962 on the fictitious Faber College campus, the production wanted to tell a story "about the last good days of America," says Katherine Wilson, who was a location/casting director for the movie.

Now, 40 years later, the Double Secret Society—consisting of leaders from Cottage Grove, the chamber of commerce and area businesses—is planning to relive the town's claim to fame in the movie industry.

Cottage Grove's downtown area was the location for the movie's climatic parade that featured runaway floats, the marching band turning into an alley and coming up against a wall, and the Deathmobile wreaking havoc on the parade and then taking out the grandstand where college and city officials viewed the event.

Many of the fraternity and college scenes were shot at the Delta Tau Chi fraternity and the administration building on the University of Oregon campus. The basement of the Cottage Grove Armory received a makeover and was also used for fraternity scenes.

"We've been planning this reunion and this anniversary for over a year," says Jeff Gowing, Cottage Grove's mayor and a high school junior in the town in 1977, when the movie was filmed.

Cottage Grove "Animal House" Day is August 18. "Louie, Louie" will be the day's official song. A parade featuring floats and a replica of the Deathmobile will stage at 11 a.m. and roll at noon down Main Street.

**Above, Beth Martin and John Ulbricht in tan clothing next to the mailbox in a scene during the parade. Left, Beth and John today.**

To cap off the day, organizers hope to stage the world's biggest toga party in Bohemia Park, starting at 7 p.m. . Besides the effort to attract 5,000 people in togas to reclaim a Guinness Book of World Records mark, the party will include Otis Day and the Knights, the Kingsmen and other regional musical groups in concert. Otis Day and the Knights was a fictional band created for "Animal House," but it later toured as a real band.

"It's going to be a long day," Jeff says. "That movie kind of put Cottage Grove on the map. The movie was like the pioneer for all those National Lampoon comedies."

Travis Palmer, director of the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, said several members of the movie's cast and crew will be at the anniversary celebration.

"I think the community will embrace this event," Travis says. "A lot of the buildings that were the background for the parade look about the same. Businesses around Cottage Grove are jumping on board for this celebration."

Katherine says she read the script for the movie in advance and described it as "awful." But being in her 20s and learning about the film industry as a member of the Oregon Film Factory in Eugene, she accepted the location/casting director job because "it was a paycheck." She lined up the local extras and helped find locations to shoot different scenes.

"The movie was an incredible capture of what was going on in the 1970s even though it was set in 1962," Katherine says. "None of us thought it had potential, but now I take some pride in being part of it."

Beth Martin and John Ulbricht, both of Cottage Grove, were seniors at Cottage Grove High School in 1977 when movie scenes were being shot in their town. They both skipped school and were paid as extras, each receiving around $125. In one scene, the two can be seen on either side of a mailbox. John can also be seen running down the street once the parade is disrupted by the Deathmobile.

"It was a lot of fun, a blast," John says. "I thought the movie was great, and to think we were in a movie that is historic."

"I didn't even have an understanding of what the film was going to be, just a movie," Beth says. "And I felt really excited that I got paid to be in this movie. But if I would have known it was going to become such a big deal, I probably would have framed that check I got from Hollywood."

To help promote the "Animal House" 40th anniversary activities, the Eugene Emeralds baseball team will host Animal House Night at their August 17 game. Otis Day is scheduled to throw out the first pitch.

The Bohemian Film Festival is also the weekend of August 17-19. In addition to "Animal House" being shown on a large screen in an airport hangar, numerous other films will be shown at several other area venues.

Jeff is optimistic all the weekend activities will bring enough people to town to set a new toga party record. At the 25th "Animal House" anniversary in Cottage Grove, a record was set when 2,166 sheet-wearing people packed downtown. That record was broken when two Queensland universities combined for a toga record of 3,700.

"I want to get the record back," Jeff says. "I hope we can destroy the record with 5,000 people in togas, making it real hard to break again."

Katherine is optimistic the anniversary activities will be a hit.

"There are 'Animal House' celebrations everywhere, but people are writing us, saying yours is the coolest," she says. "Nobody else has Otis Day, nobody else has the Kingsmen and nobody is having it where it was shot. Ours is going to be the ultimate."

Tickets for the toga party and concerts are $20. There are discounts for children, seniors and groups of 10 or more. Ticket sales will help confirm the number of people attending in togas to officially qualify for the record.

In the credits at the end of "Animal House," is text that reads, "The producers gratefully acknowledge the generous assistance of the people of Eugene and Cottage Grove, Oregon."

Cottage Grove continues to be proud of its part in the comedy. ■

Oregon Youth Tour students meet with Congressman Greg Walden on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

# Inspired by Thrift Shops and Fortune Cookies

*Elle Russell, Blachly-Lane's Youth Tour representative, brings home big ideas*

**By Pam Spettel**

Elmira High School student Elle Russell put herself in the place of the president of the United States in her 2018 Youth Tour application essay. She took a serious approach as she imagined initiatives she would implement during her term.

As a high school junior, Elle wrote about the need to boost the country's economy by implementing a fairer tax system and re-evaluating the minimum wage. She explored ways to increase the safety of our country in light of increased mass shootings and gun violence. She even outlined a way to address North Korea to ease international tensions.

Elle is not your ordinary 17-year-old.

She says her application essay deepened her interest in writing. Since then, Elle has written op-eds for her school newspaper, expressing her passion for the political environment and caring for the public.

"Teens my age are speaking their minds—breaking boundaries that we can't speak up," says Elle. "Nothing good can come out of suppressing your views. Everyone needs to be heard."

The daughter of Blachly-Lane members Brenda and Kurt Russell, Elle learned about the Youth Tour opportunity through her neighbor about a year ago.

**Elle Russell enjoys an afternoon at a thrift shop. The senior-to-be is poised for a big leadership role at Elmira High School this fall, and is eager to leave a mark on her small community with her big ideas.**

She and 15 other Oregon high school juniors left for Washington, D.C., on June 8, with one week left in the school year.

"I didn't realize how much I was learning in my AP History class until I went to the U.S. Capitol," Elle says. "That and the Library of Congress and the Supreme Court were incredible. The combination of art, architecture and quotes from the founding Americans was awesome.

"The memorials were so interesting and so well done. They each captured the ideas so well. The Martin Luther King Memorial was so calm, and the Lincoln Memorial was so much bigger than I realized. Seeing the Gettysburg Address on one side of him and the Emancipation Proclamation on the other was astounding. There's symbolism everywhere."

Elle is involved with student government at Elmira High School. She will be ASB president in her senior year.

She takes a slate of advanced placement classes, plays piano, and participates in sports and multiple clubs. She and her family hosted two Japanese exchange students this past year. The last two summers she worked for McKenzie River Ranger District Youth Conservation Corps as a youth leader.

Even with all of her activities, Elle takes time to be alone and think. One way she says she does that it is to take herself on a "self-date" to hunt for treasures at thrift stores.

She is particularly fond of mugs with animal designs and interesting T-shirts.

"I've made changes in the last year," says Elle. "I've been self-conscious of how people perceived me and decided to turn things around—negatives into positives. At school, I'm forcing myself to take ownership. I've only got one year left to make a legacy. I hope I'm making little changes that others can build on in the future. I'm following my instinct to address issues and make a positive change in the world.

"I love my community, but have thought that small communities might be a burden. I've got big ideas. During my trip to Washington, D.C., that stigma of small rural communities was completely broken. I see now that co-ops change rural communities through self-ownership and democratic decision-making. There are plenty of opportunities out there for my generation to lead in our communities."

Elle is interested in public speaking, speech writing, political science and journalism. She plans to apply for college scholarships locally, and eventually attend law school. In between, she hopes to fit in a stint as a flight attendant—something she has always been interested in doing.

Asked why Youth Tour is important, Elle answers, "I am so grateful for the chance to learn more about the cooperative business model and reflect the community-based leadership style in my own area. It is an empowering reminder that small communities can make so much positive change through self-governing.

"Youth Tour is important because it is a reminder that people in rural communities are represented and stay connected to the issues that affect all citizens in all styles of life. A rural community cannot anticipate any continual progression of your rural area unless you educate those who will take on the responsibility of maintaining the vision for your community."

Elle has some favorite inspirations she leans on. One she especially likes came from a fortune cookie: "You have executive ability within yourself."

She has certainly taken that to heart. ■

Nina Beckwell, pictured atop Dollar, her 10-year-old American quarter horse, is certifed in human and equine massage therapy.

# Helping Horses With a Calming Touch

*Grangeville resident Nina Beckwell uses massage in her equine therapy*

**By David Rauzi**

If you are looking to feel better, Nina Beckwell has a hands-on approach to improve your physical well-being.

And that goes for your horse, too.

"I actually went into equine massage therapy before human," Nina says. "I knew I didn't want to be a veterinarian. I knew I didn't want be a horse trainer. I wanted to work during the week and have the weekends off to enjoy my own animals and family. So I decided to go into this.

"I've always enjoyed the medicinal side of healing, and I feel this fits along with massage therapy, for both humans and horses."

Nina grew up in the Chicago area where, during high school, she received certification in equine massage therapy. A year later, in 2001, she was certified in human massage. She did both sides of the massage business until she encountered Grangeville outfitter and guide Miles Hatter, now her fiance.

"I bought a horse from his family," Nina says. "That's originally how we met. He's just an all-around good guy."

She moved to the area nearly seven years ago.

Human massage is Nina's day job. She owns her own business, renting a room out of Final Touch Salon in Grangeville. She works 15 to 20 hours a week, anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes per client. The massage is for overall health, helping people with relaxation or issues with stress.

"I work with chiropractors, physical therapists, doctors," Nina says. "They will all refer patients to me if there's something that they feel is musculature. They will refer them to me to work on their everyday health and performance."

Nina's satisfaction is in physically working muscles to reduce tension and stiffness, which provides not only physical comfort, but mental clarity.

"I have a nurturing side," she says. "I like helping people, making them feel better and seeing a difference."

This also applies in her equine therapy. She travels back to Illinois seven days a month for a range of clients.

"I do anything from the weekend horse owner—who rides two times a week—to world champion horses and anything in between," Nina says.

She is part of a team that contributes to a horse's overall well-being.

"The farrier, trainer, riders, chiropractors, dentists—it takes a circle of us to get a horse to its top level," she adds.

Nina starts with a horse that is referred by a state veterinarian. Her examination assesses proper saddle fit—a common problem in the industry that can result in a buildup of scar tissue along muscles, affecting both performance and animal attitude.

She then conducts a full massage. Massages range from 45 minutes to an hour and a half. Nina starts at the "pole" of the horse—behind its neck and ears—and works down to the knees and hocks, then the full neck and body.

She then tells the owner why the horse is experiencing issues and recommends exercises.

Therapy starts at twice a week, backing off to every two and then three weeks, depending on how the horse responds to treatment. If Nina finds areas beyond her expertise, she refers them to a veterinarian.

"I only use my hands," she says. "I use no tools of any kind. I'm just working on the musculature. I'm not moving bone, not giving injections. It's much like human massage. You get in there and really work deep on those muscles if the horse will allow you to.

"You can tell if a horse is enjoying it and it's working for them. You look for quiet eyes. You look at the ears, that it has a comfortable body stance. Licking and chewing are good. These are signs they are enjoying it—that you got that knot out and they are going to relax."

Nina sometimes works with horses that have been abused. They require a lighter, slower touch to get them comfortable again with having hands on them and getting them to relax.

"It's just trying to get that animal's trust back again," she says.

What problems have the owners seen? Are their horse's ears pinned back? Is it trying to reach around and bite you when you put on the saddle? Is it not tracking properly?

Knowing your animal—what it was and what it has become—can be indicators massage therapy is warranted, Nina says.

Nina says she enjoys having owners present and interacting with her while she works so she can show them what they can do between treatments.

"I love educating owners, helping people understand what I'm talking about," she says.

Having them present, Nina can also assess the riders.

"Does that horse have back issues because of how the rider is sitting or standing?" she asks. "Are they heavier on one side or other? I can look at those issues and work with the rider as well."

Nina says therapy is good for any horse as, like humans, they age and suffer from body aches, arthritis and other musculature problems. She says they enjoy the massage for its touch, the physical relief, and its loving and caring ability.

"I'm lucky and I'm fortunate," Nina says. "God has blessed me well. love my jobs, I love my clients and I love hearing their stories." ■

# Making an Economic Sales Pitch

*Ryan Culp helps businesses settle or expand in South Deschutes County*

**By Craig Reed**

Outdoor recreational opportunities in Central Oregon helped entice Ryan Culp to move to the area for a new job.

Now, as director for Economic Development for Central Oregon, Ryan is using those outdoor activities and other factors to attract individuals and corporations to start or relocate their businesses to southern Deschutes County.

Ryan lets people know the communities of La Pine and Sunriver and their surrounding areas are open for business. He is available to help start-up businesses, companies moving to the area, and existing businesses in the area interested in expansion.

"South Deschutes County has some really unique advantages unlike a lot of other areas in the U.S.," Ryan says. "There's the low-cost power rates, the local government that is ready for business, the aggressively priced land and utilities, an excellent school system, the quality workforce, the incredible outdoor activities and a quality of life that can't be found anywhere else."

Ryan started his job with EDCO in June 2017. EDCO is a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to create a diversified local economy and a strong base of middle-class jobs in Central Oregon. While Ryan focuses on South Deschutes County, the organization has two other directors who work with other parts of the county. There are also directors in Crook and Jefferson counties.

EDCO directors work to attract employers to relocate or expand to Central Oregon, and they partner and advocate for growing and expanding companies. The directors provide regional data, incentives and site options, as well as support in gaining access to capital, critical expertise and strategy.

Although only 25 years old, Ryan has several years of experience in business recruitment. A native of Tupelo, Mississippi, he interned with the Community Development Foundation in that city while a student at Mississippi State University. He was on the foundation's staff when a German automotive supplier located its first U.S. facility in Tupelo. He researched and collected data for the German company.

"I got my opportunity to cut my teeth on that project," Ryan says. "It taught me to think through the recruitment process."

Ryan graduated from Mississippi State in 2015 and went to work for the Mississippi Development Authority. In 20 months as a project manager in international business recruitment, he recruited $220 million in land, buildings and equipment, and 1,000 new jobs to the state.

During that time, the Mississippi Development Authority received an award from Area Development—a quarterly publication that covers corporate site selection and relocation. The magazine considers the top 10 projects in each state when determining award winners. Ryan was project manager on four of the 10 projects considered in Mississippi.

Ryan and his wife, Clara, weren't looking for change, but when they saw the posting for the EDCO job in Deschutes County, they were interested. Ryan and his brother Richmond had visited Central Oregon in 2015 to enjoy rock climbing, so Ryan knew of the outdoor recreation options.

Ryan and Clara visited in April 2017. Two months later, he began his new job for EDCO.

"For me at a professional level, I wasn't really looking for a change," Ryan says. "The job posting was just in the right place at the right time. I knew if I was going to make a change, it would have to be to an organization that was aggressively pursuing economic development and to a community that was ready for economic development."

Ryan has been involved in two development projects in his first year with EDCO: construction of the St. Charles La Pine Clinic on the north side of La Pine and relocation of Legend Cider Co. to La Pine from The Dalles.

"Legend Cider is a rapidly growing company with a product that's been very well received in Central Oregon and in all of Oregon," Ryan says. "There were constraints for expansion where it was, so we helped them find space in a mixed-use zone here for a tasting room and a production area."

Jon Stark, senior director for Redmond EDCO, compliments Ryan's efforts in his first year with the company.

"Ryan's background in business development, particularly in national and international recruitment, has served the Sunriver/La Pine area very well," Jon says. "His business contacts, relationships and acumen in economic development are helping local businesses grow and has opened the door to a broad set of opportunities for the south county area. With the sales cycle in economic development often being years, not months, the table is set in South Deschutes County for success, thanks to Ryan's expertise and efforts."

La Pine City Manager Cory Misley was a member of the selection committee that interviewed and hired Ryan. Cory says he was impressed by Ryan's direct economic development experience.

"That was clear in his application materials and in his interview," Cory says. "He works hard at it, and that shows. We had a good pool of applicants and of those, Ryan rose to the top.

"You get the sense he wants to make things happen. He's a key connector, promoting our assets, our quality of life—everything we love about South Deschutes County—to business owners who are interested in locating or growing their businesses here."

Ryan says there are some big projects in the works for South Deschutes County, but he is not able to reveal details until there is confirmation.

"La Pine is open to all manufacturing, both heavy and light industrial," Ryan says. "La Pine is prepared and open to any of those and would be a good fit.

"There are going to be some really exciting things happening in the next 12 months—exciting for EDCO and exciting for the city. There's nothing specific we can mention now, but it'll be exciting when they happen." ■


**Jeralee Jones, far right, and fellow Spartan racers maintain forward momentum on the rings at her first event.**

Photos courtesy of Jeralee Jones

# No Obstacle too Difficult for Spartan Racer

*First-time Spartan racer Jeralee Jones says she is excited for the next one*


**Jeralee Jones looks forward to her next race.**

**By Dianna Troyer**

Jeralee Jones leaps onto her picnic table, lugs a bucket of rocks and climbs a rope in her garage at her home east of Albion. Then she runs down nearby dirt roads and suddenly drops to knock out a few push-ups.

"I'm sure the neighbors thought I was crazy when they first saw me doing this," she says, "but once I told them I was training for a Spartan race, they got used to my routine."

Coaching the girls soccer team at Declo High School, Jeralee, 36, was already physically fit before deciding to try her first Spartan race last summer. Her relatives, who had done races, said they were challenging and entertaining. They persuaded her to enter a race as one of their teammates.

Spartan racers run cross country while navigating numerous obstacles. They slither under barbed wire, climb ropes and leap over flames.

"I wanted a new fitness goal, and registering for a race helps motivate me to stay in good shape," she says.

Jeralee—who is 5 feet, 4 inches tall—estimates she dropped from about 125 pounds to 118 pounds as a result of training.

**Above, Jeralee leaps over the flames as she crosses the finish line. Right, Jeralee gets ready to launch a spear at hay bales. Racers who fail to stick the target receive a 30-burpee penalty.**

Last August, she and two brothers-in-law, a sister-in-law and a friend formed a team. They called themselves "I'm Sore Already." They were among thousands of competitors who entered a Spartan Super Race at Nordic Valley Ski Resort northeast of Ogden, Utah. Along the 10-mile course they navigated 30-plus obstacles.

"I'm glad I did it," Jeralee says. "We finished in about four hours. It's challenging and inspiring to see people of all shapes, sizes and levels of fitness on the course. I encourage people to give it a try. You can do a short race to see how you like it. If you form a team, you can help each other at the obstacles without being penalized."

Although Jeralee had read about the races, she says she was unsure what it would be like.

Spartan obstacle course races are growing in popularity nationwide because they test entrants' physical strength and mental fortitude and "ultimately rip you from your comfort zone," according to Spartan.com.

"If you think you can't do it, you're wrong. Get to the starting line and show yourself what you are capable of," the website proclaims.

Races are organized in categories: a Sprint with about 20 to 23 obstacles in 3 to 5 miles; the Super, with 24 to 29 obstacles in 8 to 10 miles, and the Beast, with more than 30 obstacles in 12 to 14 miles. Competitors register as either an elite racer who is competitive or an open entrant who simply wants to finish.

Jeralee scheduled her training routines around her jobs: coaching, having an in-house salon and managing the Albion Campus Retreat, a center for family reunions and other events.

She says her husband, Scott, a journeyman lineman at Raft River Rural Electric Co-op, and their daughters, Eliett, 8, and Addy, 6, were supportive.

Jeralee designed a regimen that combined cardiovascular workouts and strength training.

"You have to run from one obstacle to the next and usually lift an object or your body weight when you climb a rope or do monkey bars," Jeralee says. "To be ready, I trained intensely from May to July about eight hours a week.

She sprinted a half-mile, jumped, climbed and carried a 5-gallon paint bucket half filled with rocks.Given her training, Jeralee says she felt prepared when the race started.

One of the most arduous obstacles was the barbed-wire crawl.

"The wire was about 2 to 2½ feet high and was about 25 to 50 yards long," Jeralee says. "It was hard because you had to crawl up a hillside of powdery dirt."

After wading through water at another point on the course, she became encrusted in mud.

The inverted wall also challenged the Spartans. About 8 feet tall and 20 feet long, it had rope and chain handholds.

Another obstacle was called the Twister—a monkey bar with handles that rotate back and forth while a person moves forward.

"You had to keep your momentum going while reaching for the handholds," she says.

Jeralee plans to do more Spartan races, although she has not picked her next one.

"It just needs to fit in my schedule," she says. "I'll probably do my next one in Utah. This time I'll know what to expect." ■

# Craftsman Lives for the Past

*Ray Bagby uses vintage tools to build historic coaches and buggies*

**By Dianna Troyer**

**Ray Bagby makes an eye bolt in his blacksmith shop using vintage tools. He has been building vintage horse-drawn vehicles since 1981.**

Ray Bagby says he could have slapped up a piece of plywood for the roof of the 1886 Concord stagecoach replica he built.

"No one would have noticed except me," he says.

But to Ray, taking a shortcut would have dishonored the craftsmen who built coaches more than a century ago.

"I couldn't do it," he says. "It isn't the way they were built. I used what the craftsmen would have used: ½-by-6-inch oak slats. I don't cut corners."

Since 1981, Ray has been building historic coaches, buggies and wagons at his farm near Declo, preserving pioneer heritage for future generations.

The 69-year-old retired from ranching a year ago. Ray says he is grateful to have more time for his historic hobby.

He is willing to teach others the centuries-old crafts he has honed at his blacksmith, wheelwright, harness and carpentry shops.

After working in his spare time on the stagecoach for 11 years, Ray finished it about a year ago.

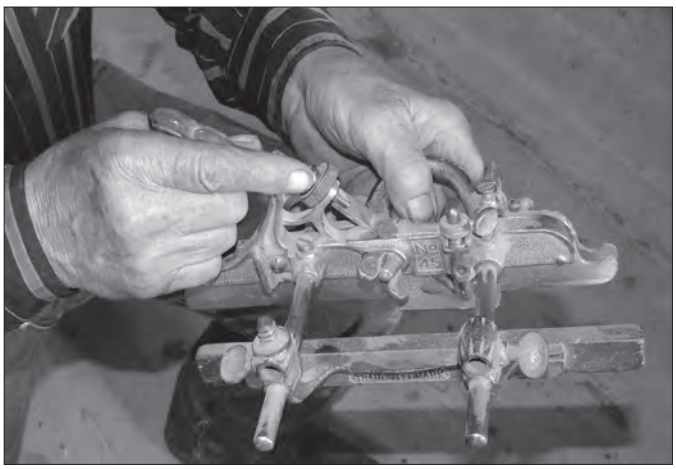
"I'd been building buggies and always wanted a six-passenger stagecoach," he says. "I used building plans in a Smithsonian Institute book about historic coaches, so the dimensions are accurate."

Ray built the entire stagecoach himself from the ash and oak cab to the wheels with sturdy elm hubs and burgundy upholstered interior. The brocade fabric he found "looks almost identical to photos of original stagecoach interiors."

He rents the stagecoach for weddings or reunions, drives it in parades and takes friends for pleasure rides.

"I really like seeing and hearing people's reactions to riding in it," Ray says. "It rides like a Cadillac."

He attributes the comfort to

**Left, the stagecoach is a replica of an 1886 Concord coach. Bottom left, Ray used a vintage Stanley 45 plane to make patterns on the framework of a hearse.**

thoroughbraces—the suspension system used a century ago. Several layers of long pieces of leather are attached to the frame from back to front, cradling the coach.

"You don't feel the bumps," says Lee Jorgensen, 75, of Declo. "You feel like you're floating along, and it rocks you back and forth."

Ray's place is a popular stop during Pioneer Farm Days—an annual tour Lee organizes every May for the public.

"The blacksmith shop is impressive, with dozens of hammers and tongs he has collected," Lee says. "He shows how tools were forged or how a wheel was steamed and shaped and fitted with metal."

Ray's diverse historic skillset and workshops also impress Dale Whipple, president of the foundation that established the National Pioneer Hall of Fame in nearby Burley. The organization strives to preserve pioneer history through exhibits, and educational and recreational activities.

"Being at Ray's, you see and understand how pioneers lived and worked," Dale says. "He's the most talented person I've seen who can do so many pioneer crafts. He's a master blacksmith, wainwright, wheelwright and carpenter. He can do it all."

Dale, 90, says he feels nostalgic while wandering through Ray's workshops.

"It brings back a pioneer romance of days gone by," says Dale, who grew up near Declo. On the family farm, his father drove teams of horses to plow, harrow and harvest crops.

Ray also drove horses for years, preferring them and a sleigh to a truck to feed livestock during winter.

"You can tell from looking around here that I was born 100 years too late," Ray says, grinning. "I've always loved old tools. They're durable and precise, and work just as well today as they did a century ago."

Ray has been buying antique tools at garage, farm and estate sales for about 40 years.

"Sometimes they're at the bottom of a bucket sold as junk items," he says. "Or people hear about what I do and give them to me."

Ray used the antique tools to build his stagecoach.

"It's easier to forge the right-sized drift pins and eye bolts than to try to find replicas," he says.

On the side of the stagecoach, he painted Marshfield Coach Company. The area was originally named Marshfield and changed to Declo, an amalgam of two prominent families' names.

With the stagecoach complete, Ray launched his next project. He plans to finish building a horse-drawn hearse this summer.

"I go to the military funerals in Burley, so I thought families might want to use this one day," he says. "The exterior will be painted black and the interior will be red velvet. I'll put in rollers so a casket can slide in easily."

Ray realizes his replicas are valuable and considered selling the stagecoach.

"I changed my mind and want to keep it for myself," he says. "I put so much time into it, and I really enjoy driving it. I'm happy to give stagecoach rides to whoever wants to take a step back in time." ■


**Kindergarten teacher Gordon Seefried did not plan to teach, but felt called to the classroom after temporarily working at Mackay Elementary School.**

Photos courtesy of Holly Seefried

# Auction Keeps Teacher's Hope Alive

*Mr. Gordon's August auction, hosted by family, benefits the students he loved*

**By Dianna Troyer**

When they least expected it, Holly Seefried and her family have discovered pennies, quarters and other coins in the oddest places: a 5,000-acre pasture, remote campsites, even atop the exit sign at a hotel elevator.

The coins remind her of her son Gordon, a beloved teacher who died from a rare bone cancer seven years ago at age 27.

"There's no logical explanation for these coins being where we've found them," Holly says. "We think Gordy sends them to let us know he is there. It usually happens when we're doing something that he would have liked to do with us."

For a distraction during his cancer treatment, Gordon's parents and brothers collected coins they found at work, on sidewalks or in stores.

"We each had our own jar and competed," Holly says. "Sometimes, we counted to see who had the most coins, the highest dollar amount or the most quarters."

She says she expects the coins to continue appearing, especially with the Mr. Gordon Benefit Auction scheduled August 18 at 11 a.m. at the Mackay High School football field. At a previous auction, one of Gordon's friends was helping with concessions when she found a penny in the grass under her table.

"The auction is our way to honor Gordy's life," his mother says. "He loved the kids. They always called him Mr. Gordon."

All the money raised at the auction is donated to Mackay Elementary School to pay for field trips and school supplies.

"Funding for field trips was dropped while Gordy was an aide at Mackay Elementary," Holly says. "He was very upset about that. That's why we wanted to help pay for them. There has never been enough money for school supplies either."

She says Gordy would be delighted to know how much money has been raised in his name.

The first auction in 2012 raised about $2,500, enabling students to explore Yellowstone National Park on a field trip. Last year, $3,800 was raised. The Mr.

**Volunteers install a playground—named for Gordon—funded with a grant and in-kind labor. Locals donate items for the annual Mr. Gordon Benefit Auction.**

Gordon Benefit Auction has raised more than $26,000 since it started.

Auction items, ranging from antiques to appliances, are donated or consigned.

"Last year, we sold for four hours and still had leftover items," Holly says. "People in this community are so wonderful. We cannot adequately express our gratitude. When I buy school supplies that teachers request, the cash register tape stretches at least 6 feet long. In one day, the UPS driver delivered 20 boxes of supplies."

While organizing the auction, Holly and her family recall their most memorable penny stories.

Gordon's brothers, Patrick and William, found 10 or 12 pennies in a group when they bought gas to come home after completing a 10-day class at the Western College of Auctioneering in Billings.

"Gordy and I made a pact that we'd be auctioneers," Patrick says. "After he passed, my brother William took his place."

The brothers are the auctioneers at the benefit.

Holly says when she and her mother were picking Gordon's headstone, they walked back and forth several times from the office to the area where granite slabs were stocked. The last time, they found two pennies on the sidewalk, even though the pennies had not been there during their previous walks.

Another time, the Seefrieds were working on their residential sprinkling system, using a pipe-pulling machine Gordon had fixed.

"All of us had walked on our sidewalk several times," says his father, Bill. "We didn't have change in our pockets, yet I found a penny that none of us had seen even though we were working in the area."

A niece, Trinity, 14, says the loose change she finds motivates her.

"When we went to a baseball game in Salmon, we stopped at a gas station," Trinity says. "Under a van, I found exactly 26 pennies, his age on that day. For me this is still a personal turning point, a reminder to always push myself to do amazing things because that's what he would have wanted for me."

Two years ago during a family trip to Disneyland, four generations of Seefrieds were waiting for their hotel elevator.

"William was carrying his daughter, Addy, on his shoulders," Holly says. "On top of an exit sign where we were standing, she found a quarter. Gordy would have loved that trip."

Holly says she envisions Gordon smiling whenever they pick up coins.

"He was always grinning about something, whether it was being in a school play, running a 100-yard dash or playing football," she says.

He was happiest teaching in a classroom. After graduating in 2006 from the University of Idaho with a business management degree, Gordon returned home and got a job at his former elementary school.

"He thought he'd work at the school temporarily until he got a job in business," Holly says.

Instead, he found his calling in the classroom and earned his teaching certification through an online program.

In January 2010, he was devastated to be diagnosed with chondroblastic osteosarcoma and was unable to continue teaching, Holly recalls.

A tumor was removed from his left leg, and he began chemotherapy. His colleagues donated their sick leave and vacation time to him so he could have a source of income.

Thinking the cancer was in remission, he started teaching kindergarten in September 2010. He soon learned the cancer had spread to his lungs. During the next year, throughout treatment and surgery to remove tumors, he taught when he could. He even taught his kindergarteners the day before he died.

Having difficulty breathing, he went to the hospital in Pocatello, where he died November 22, 2011.

Holly says the coins they continue to find remind her of Gordon's humor, love and lingering presence in their lives.

"I tell his friends to always look for pennies," Holly says. "I'm sure they'll find some." ■

Brigham and Ginger Edwards offer a variety of activities at North Fork 53 along the Nehalem River.

# Find Calm on the Farm

*North Fork 53 offers food, lodging and relaxation at the homestead inn*

**By Denise Porter**

Located 10 miles from any town on windy Highway 53, the secluded location of North Fork 53 calls for quiet, reflection, a good cup of tea and perhaps some yoga. Innkeepers Brigham and Ginger Edwards invite their guests to cast off their cares and reconnect with a slower pace.

North Fork 53 is available to host private retreats, or rent one of the five rooms for a weekend getaway.

Brigham, 53, knows firsthand what it feels like to need to recharge.

"I was getting real worn down with my lifestyle," he says, of his former life as a semi-professional skateboarder and production welder in Portland.

He longed for something, but wasn't certain what.

"I'm a country kid," Brigham says. "I grew up on a farm. I did 4-H. My mom was a champion barrel racer."

Brigham says he wanted reconnection, a lifestyle that was less frantic, and someone to share that with.

Nearly four years ago, Brigham took a chance with an online dating service, where he found his perfect match. "Farmer Ginger" had an organic vegetable farm, selling through local farmers markets and running a weekly delivery route for clients near Nehalem.

"I was farming," Ginger says, explaining why carving time for a dating life was difficult.

Farming is hard work with long hours. Ginger decided to create an online profile and discovered Brigham.

"We hit it off right away," Ginger says. "We're an

**Brigham is growing tea plants and using his knowledge of herbalism.**

online miracle story."

They took off on a two-month trip to Asia and got married. Brigham moved to the coast and, inspired by Ginger's love of growing foods, began studying herbalism.

In 2015, Ginger sold her business to two friends, and the Edwards bought a historically significant property across the road from her old farm.

The property owners, who were also friends, approached Brigham and Ginger with a vision for the place. They wanted to see the rundown homestead become a place for people to gather and connect.

Brigham and Ginger say the idea struck home with them.

Ginger says leaving her farm was emotionally hard, but also felt great.

"It was a perfect hand off," she says.

The new owners had worked for her for several years.

"They're great farmers and I'm really proud of them," she says.

The new property would have ample garden space for Ginger—2 acres—and it would allow Brigham to put down some roots of his own. He wanted to try his hand putting his herbalism knowledge into practice. He envisioned growing tea plants on the property—something he says is new to the coast.

Ginger stands in the middle of the home's kitchen and marvels at the transformation.

"This was the old homestead piece of the Nehalem Valley," she says, looking out the kitchen window at the Nehalem River.

The kitchen used to be a milking area for cattle. Ginger says the milk was put into metal cans and onto a boat. They were floated down the North Fork to the Tillamook creamery to be made into cheese.

The property used to be hundreds of acres and was slowly sold and portioned off over time. Today, Ginger focuses on the 2 acres of farmland remaining on the original North Fork 53. She grows much of the food served to the home's guests.

The couple named the place North Fork 53 because its location is on the North Fork of the Nehalem River on Highway 53, and because of the food connotations the word fork brings to mind.

Thinking back, the couple recall that the very first hurdle was to raise capital to renovate the building. They called on friends in the community and hosted a large fundraiser dinner to share their vision. In a single evening, they generated the $45,000 needed to renovate. Friends worked for hundreds of hours to help revive the building.

"It was six months of intensive work," Brigham says. "We had work parties every three weeks. It felt like a modern-day barn raising."

"It was a big remodel," Ginger adds. "We tried to keep it eco-friendly. We used a lot of recycled pieces around the house."

**A wood-fired sauna offers guest a relaxing way to reduce stress.**

Local artist friends donated pieces for the space, too.

Ginger says the spirit of the residents of the North Tillamook Coast is what she loves most.

"This is a place where people come to work together," she says.

Halloween 2015, the Edwards opened the doors to their first guest. Nearly three years later, Brigham says he understands what his heart was longing for: connection with people, with the earth and with himself.

"Here, we engage with people," he says. "It's really exciting to see them come and connect with their brain and heart." ■

*North Fork 53 is at 77282 OR-53, Nehalem, Oregon. Reservations can be made at www.northfork53.com.*

**Photographer Molly Morrow's photo of PRCA bull rider Chase Robbins at the Ram Columbia River Circuit Finals was featured in the 'Pro Rodeo Sports News' Best of 2017.**
Photo by Molly Morrow Photography

# Capturing Rodeo One Frame at a Time

*Molly Morrow's imagery depicts the people, places and traditions of the West*

**By Cris Ellingson**

Rodeo photographer Molly Morrow rarely travels without a camera. She says she does not want to miss a chance to capture a special moment or tell a story.

"I am not sure if I have favorite subjects to photograph," Molly says, "but I think the most important part of photography is to try to be relevant in what you are photographing and to do it in an interesting way. When I am at art shows or talking to folks about my work, I find myself saying, 'There is a story behind this photograph.'"

One story Molly continues to share through her photography is rodeo.

"Capturing the moment is what it's all about," she says. "In a fleeting second, the opportunity is gone. My job is to save that moment for all to see and share."

One of Molly's photos is featured on the 2018 Ellensburg Rodeo poster. It



**Molly's images have been featured in a variety of professional rodeo publications and event posters,**

shows three Yakama Nation members in full regalia riding on horseback. The riders are Destiny Buck, Patricia Heemsah and Aeriel Speedis.

Molly's images have been featured on five major event posters in 2018: Big Sky Pro Rodeo in Great Falls, The Daily Record Bares and Broncs, Ellensburg Rodeo, Cle Elum Roundup and the Spirit of the West Cowboy Gathering.

The 2017 image of Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association bull rider Chase Robbins getting hooked on Flying '5' Rodeo's, Sammy's Fine Line at the Columbia River Circuit Finals was featured in Pro Rodeo Sports News' Best of 2017. Molly says she also is proud of the 2015 August issue of Pro Rodeo Sports News cover. The image shoot took of PRCA bareback rider Tanner Aus was taken at the Cheyenne Frontier Days.

Molly shoots throughout the West. Locally, that includes the Ellensburg Rodeo, Cle Elum Roundup, and the Bares and Broncs Futurity.

Although Molly is well known and accomplished now, she did not always plan to be a professional photographer.

"My first two years at Central Washington University I spent doing pottery and sculpture," Molly says. "I have always liked taking photos, and my dad did quite a bit of darkroom work, developing his own film and printing his own prints. My mom would say 'Oh, isn't that beautiful.' So somewhere in between those two, I have landed with my camera."

Molly and her husband, Joe, met while attending CWU and working at the Ellensburg Dairy Queen. She worked the counter and Joe handled deliveries. When the owner offered Joe the chance to lease the ice cream shop with an option to buy, the couple jumped at the opportunity. They now own two Dairy Queens in Ellensburg

Molly graduated in 1974 with a degree in art eduction. After teaching art for a few years, she became coordinator of the City of Ellensburg Senior Center. While there, Molly says she met some of the seniors of the Kittitas Valley who had roads named after them and were from pioneering families that helped shape Ellensburg history.

Molly became pregnant with daughter Annie during her time at the senior center. After Annie was born, Molly left the senior center and stopped using her potter's wheel and kiln. She replaced it with her camera and photographed the valley with her daughter in tow.

Her work can be found in print and online, in commercial advertising, art galleries, homes, offices and now even on scarves.

Molly says her photographs will continue to be of the people, places and traditions of the West. ■

# What it Means to be a Cooperative Member

## *It's a Matter of Principles*

**1. The Power of Membership**

You may know the history of the electric cooperative movement—how, more than eight decades ago, rural residents banded together to bring the conveniences of electricity to their communities when investor-owned utilities would not extend service. The associations they formed, on the same democratic principles as our great nation, are as strong and relevant today as they were then.

The seven principles upon which electric co-ops were founded—"Voluntary and Open Membership," "Democratic Member Control" and "Members' Economic Participation," among others—are as meaningful today as they were when electric co-ops began in the 1930s.

These days, Americans from all walks of life have come to recognize the co-op approach of working together to achieve price and service benefits. Not only are co-ops locally owned and controlled by you, our member-owners, they are locally run to serve your needs.

While many consumers pay power bills to companies that answer to faraway stockholders who demand a healthy profit every quarter, local members call the shots at electric co-ops such as Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative.

Co-ops try to keep your bill as low as possible while providing high-quality service. They invest money in excess of operating costs back into the business locally or return the excess—known as margins—to you as capital credits.

Unlike the boards of directors of investor-owned utilities who keep an eye on generating profits for people living far away, your co-op's directors—fellow members—have only two things in mind: safely and reliably keeping lights on and keeping costs affordable. That is why you elected them.

OTEC leadership shares the same concerns as our members. We are

accessible. You can call or email us and know someone here is listening. Visit with us in person at our annual meeting in May and share insights on how you want your business operated.

In these days of economic turmoil, folks who receive electricity from co-ops are lucky. As locally owned and operated businesses, electric co-ops understand the people they serve. Co-op directors and employees share the same values and have the same pride of place as you do because it is our community, too.

We act like neighbors because we are neighbors. That is the cooperative difference.

**2. Our Future Rests in Your Hands**

For folks new to OTEC—and for those old hands who might need a reminder—the second cooperative principle, "Democratic Member Control," is one of seven guidelines that governs cooperative operations. That means you, as a member-owner of OTEC, ultimately select who represents you on the co-op's board of directors, who determines the strategic direction of your local, not-for-profit business.

One of the main duties of directors involves hiring a general manager. The general manager oversees the day-to-day affairs of running OTEC and ensures you receive a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power.

Hiring the general manager is not where the directors' duties end. Your directors must constantly consider policies affecting the co-op. For example, how much must we spend on maintenance? If we need a new substation, how will we build it? How will we finance it? How often do we update our technologies and facilities to stay efficient?

It is not an easy task. Responsibilities stack up, and time commitments are considerable. Besides attending hours of meetings every month, each director must stay up-to-date on the complex business of electricity production and distribution. Directors spend much of their free time brushing up on the intricacies of strategic planning and financial decision-making.

The learning does not end there. Numerous classes and seminars cover topics that must be part of each director's pool of knowledge.

After all of that education, sorting through difficult choices remains.

Like any successful democracy, this decision-making process does not operate in the dark. OTEC keeps you informed about the financial condition of the co-op, tells you when situations arise that could affect your bill or service, and educates you about the issues involved.

We do this through Ruralite, press releases sent out via local media outlets, in letters or other communication included with your bills and, most importantly, during face-to-face conversations, whether at our annual meeting, other events or even just a conversation in a local supermarket.

In a democracy, member participation is crucial. That is why it is important for you, if you care how your co-op operates, to attend meetings and let us know when issues arise that need our attention. Consider giving your time, whether in service on the board or on committees.

Co-ops are different than other forms of businesses because of you, our members, and because of the way decisions are made. We welcome and encourage your involvement.

After all, it is YOUR co-op. That is the cooperative difference.

**3. Your Money Stays at Home**

Ever wonder who owns your power company? If you get electricity from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, the answer is easy. Just look in the mirror.

You and other folks who receive electricity from OTEC are the owners. Of course, being an owner does not mean you can drive to a substation and take home a transformer or borrow a spool of wire. Those assets are owned collectively by everyone who has signed up for electric service.

A portion of the electric bill you pay each month goes into building distribution infrastructure—poles, wires, and substations—that bring you a steady supply of power.

The third cooperative principle, "Members' Economic Participation," requires all of us to chip in a bit on our monthly bill to keep the cooperative in good shape. Your co-op conducts business locally. Investments we make in infrastructure do not profit someone far away. Benefits stay right here in our community.

Paying your monthly bill does more than build lines, buy equipment and purchase wholesale electricity. You also pay the salaries of our hardworking employees, who live right here in the community. They, in turn, buy goods at local businesses in the OTEC service area, boosting our local economy.

Here is another membership perk: You get money back. We are a not-for-profit, so any funds left over after bills have been paid, infrastructure built and an emergency fund established go into a capital credits account for each co-op member. When your board of directors determines the co-op is in good financial shape, this capital is returned to you, either as a check or bill credit. How much money you get back depends on how much electricity you used.

Capital credit retirements are to you what dividends are to stockholders at for-profit companies, except we do not aim to make a profit. Our goal is to provide you with electricity at a price

*Continues on page 28*

## A Matter of Principles

*Continued from page 5*

that is as close to cost as possible. That way, more of your money stays in your pocket up front.

In short, you receive a vital resource—electricity—from a business owned and operated by you, your friends and neighbors. Working together, we provide you with the highest level of service we can while striving to keep your electric bills affordable.

That is the cooperative difference.

### 4. The Power of Local Control

At OTEC, we are not alone in our mission to deliver a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power to rural residents. There are 18 electric distribution cooperatives like us in Oregon and more than 900 nationwide.

Despite our obvious similarities, each cooperative is different, first and foremost because the areas we serve are unique. Each co-op boasts its own history and serves a distinct mix of residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural consumer-members. All make their own business decisions independently, as described in the fourth cooperative principle, "Autonomy and Independence." It is another of the seven unique guidelines that govern cooperative operations.

Electric cooperatives are generally subject to less oversight by federal and state utility regulators because of the way our members regulate us. This independence, enshrined in the laws of most states, rests on our historic commitment to the communities we serve.

Remaining autonomous and independent allows OTEC to best serve your needs. That is because what might be a sound decision for a co-op with a relatively small number of member-owners spread out over an extremely rural area might not work for another with a larger number of members in a more urban setting. Local service and attention to your unique needs is why local control is best for each locally owned and governed electric co-op.

Although OTEC sails its own ship, so to speak, we are not sailing alone. Our co-op belongs to a statewide association, the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association—the Arlington, Virginia-based national service organization representing more than 900 member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, public power districts and public utility districts in the United States. These umbrella groups provide support and products as well as valuable safety courses for our employees.

ORECA and NRECA advocate for us with lawmakers in Salem and Washington, D.C., keeping public officials aware of how their votes affect our electric bills.

Despite our connection with these organizations, neither tells us what to do. Decisions about how to deliver your electricity at the lowest possible cost are left to our employees and our board of directors, who are elected by our members.

While we enter into any agreement—whether it's regarding financing or buying materials, or contracting with a company to perform line work for us—with a great deal of deliberation, no deal gives a third-party control of our operations.

Co-op leaders, who are also members like you, know this area and its needs well. Our ability to make our own decisions allows us to serve you in the most efficient way possible.

That is the cooperative difference.

### 5. Electric Education

By reading this article, you help OTEC fulfill the fifth cooperative principle, "Education, Training and Information."

In fact, right now you are holding one of your co-op's primary conduits of education and information: Ruralite. Through these pages, we communicate directly with you on important cooperative business such as bylaw changes and director elections. We also share energy tips to save you money, and safety information that could save your life.

But we do not stop there. We sponsor programs to educate youth in our service areas with safety demonstrations.

We also support student education by sending high school students to Washington, D.C., for a week every summer as part of the nationally organized Rural Electric Youth Tour. Youth Tour students receive an all-expenses-paid trip to visit historic sites, see important governmental buildings, meet lawmakers and learn how our system of government works.

Using unclaimed capital credits, we provide scholarships for high school seniors and returning college students, plus trade school scholarships and scholarships for those interested in pursuing a career as a lineman.

Our education efforts extend to our employees as well. We encourage and support them in taking courses to improve on-the-job skills. We believe well-trained employees are more valuable to the cooperative and can provide you, our members, with the high quality of service you expect.

We also sponsor safety seminars for our linemen, field workers and office personnel. This education is vital to keeping our workforce safe and reduces costs involved with lost-time accidents.

Keeping you informed—so you can vote for directors, learn to manage your energy use or understand how your co-op employees are working to better serve you—is one of our most important responsibilities.

That is the cooperative difference.

**6. Cooperative Strength**

You have probably heard the saying, "There's power in numbers." OTEC agrees. Cooperation is a key word for electric cooperatives, and a concept vital to our form of business.

The sixth cooperative principle governing member-owned co-ops such as OTEC is "Cooperation Among Cooperatives." In short, electric cooperatives serve their members best while strengthening the overall co-op movement by working together.

At the most basic level, electric cooperatives support one another in times of crisis. If a storm or other disaster hits a sister cooperative, we offer whatever help we can to ensure service is restored as quickly as possible. If we need help, our electric co-op "family" is there for us.

When it comes to local and statewide issues, electric co-ops in Oregon combine forces through ORECA, our statewide association.

Results show that when small organizations such as electric co-ops use the power of aggregation, we grow in clout, efficiency and economy. By working together, good things happen.

The power of numbers gives us a louder voice at the state capitol when legislators make decisions that affect us.

We share training resources and expertise.

We save money through our membership in other cooperative organizations from which we buy poles and equipment. We lower printing and production costs of this publication through economies of scale by working through Ruralite Services, which is also a cooperative.

Nationally, we collaborate with other electric co-ops through NRECA, which presents a unified consumer voice. Not only does the organization have the ears of Washington, D.C., decision-makers, it represents cooperative interests before federal regulatory bodies.

Through NRECA's Cooperative Research Network, we receive information about new technologies that can help us control costs, improve productivity and deliver superior service to you.

We are also a member of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives—an alliance of more than 700 electric cooperatives nationwide. Our membership in this national marketing and trade group for electric cooperatives provides us with communications and advertising support and tools such as an online energy calculator. Our participation in Touchstone Energy delivers greater value to you, our member.

Even if we were in this alone, OTEC still would provide you with the best service at the lowest price possible. But when we pool our resources—work cooperatively—we offer you better value.

By adding our voice to a grand chorus of fellow cooperatives, our message is heard loud and clear by legislators.

That is the cooperative difference.

**7. Home is Where Our Heart is**

Directors and employees at OTEC want to see the communities we serve succeed. Why? Because live here, too.

Local people working for the local good is the essence of the seventh cooperative principle, "Concern for Community," the last of the seven unique guidelines governing cooperative operations.

First and foremost, OTEC strengthens our communities by doing what we do best: providing a safe and reliable supply of electricity at an affordable cost.

It is easy to see why strengthening the local economy makes sound business sense. Your board of directors and staff support policies and projects that are good for the communities we serve because what is good for our community is good for the cooperative.

We have strong community roots. OTEC has been in business for 30 years. We are not going anywhere. Our business was founded here by member-owners just like you. We are not going to pull up stakes to pursue greener pastures.

We pay our employees fair wages because that helps strengthen the economy when they spend that money here. By providing good-paying jobs, we keep our towns healthy because employees and their families do not have to move away to make a decent living. The more people we retain here paying taxes and contributing to their communities, the more vibrant our communities.

The benefits our communities reap from our presence are not only financial. We open doors for our young people with programs like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, college and trade school scholarships, and the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. We teach children safety through programs in schools. We help members identify ways to save money by performing home and business energy audits and offering energy efficiency rebates.

Touchstone Energy's Together We Save campaign helps our members learn to manage energy use. The togetherwesave.com website helps you learn how the little changes add up to big savings on your monthly electric bill.

We also strengthen our communities by supporting local charities.

Your co-op was formed locally, and is still managed by your friends and neighbors. Our employees go out of their way to serve by coaching youth sports teams, volunteering on school committees, participating in church activities and serving on various boards, such as Rotary or the United Way of Northeast Oregon. Many are co-op members like you and, like you, want to make their communities stronger.

When it comes to OTEC, community comes first.

That is the cooperative difference. ■

# A Groundbreaking Effort

Photos by Steve Meyers

**In two project phases, the Port of Morrow at Boardman aims to address nitrate contamination challenges of the Lower Columbia Basin.**

**By Marika Sitz**

In a scrubby lot next to the Columbia River, Miff Devin turns his back to the tall, humming factories at the Port of Morrow and gestures to one of the Port's newest undertakings.

Devin, the Water Quality Supervisor for the Port, points to the future home of a shallow trench where pipes will soon deposit water and leave it to sink, undisturbed, into the ground. The plan Devin is outlining aims to address one of the trickiest challenges in the Lower Umatilla Basin: alleviating high nitrate levels in the groundwater.

In 1990, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality designated 352,000 acres in Umatilla and Morrow counties as a "Groundwater Management Area," indicating elevated nitrate concentrations in the groundwater. More than two decades later, a committee of local stakeholders and state agencies continues to work on addressing the problem. But where a committee lacks the ability to work directly on the ground, the Port of Morrow can construct infrastructure and secure water rights, thus introducing the potential to accelerate the solutions-finding process through implementation of a trial project.

The sparse territory in the northern section of the Port will be home to the "Phase I" project, the first of two new planned recharge projects. Phase I, and the accompanying Phase II, will take place at different locations at the Port but share the same principle concept. While recharge projects typically involve some element of depositing water and later recovering it from the aquifer, the Phase I and II projects do not include a plan to directly recover water. Devin wryly notes that some have joked the Phase I project is essentially "throwing water away."

But that characterization doesn't quite hold. Devin points out that while most recharge projects are focused on water quantity, this one is centered on water quality, and careful monitoring of the results is a critical component of the project.

A glimpse into the Port offices reveals a precise and measured approach to its water management system. In one room, a large screen displays the various pump systems at the Port operating in real time. The colorful, cartoonish images of pipes and pumps bely the complexity of the system. Monitors onsite

*By infiltrating Columbia River into the groundwater, the Port of Morrow hopes to alleviate nitrate levels*

at each pump station collect data and intricate codes and extensive programming commands enable the Port's systems to "talk" to each other. Despite the inherent complexity of the Port's algorithms and technology, Devin is able to very simply state the goal of the Phase I project: to lower groundwater nitrate concentrations in the project vicinity.

The impacts of Phase I recharge will be tracked by measuring changes in nitrate concentrations in three wells lined up along the banks of the Columbia River, directly adjacent to the project site. Samples from the wells will lend insight as to how the addition of clean water impacts nitrate concentrations in each well. The three wells, and the water they draw up, will the best way for the Port to make above-ground observations on the below-ground impacts of its recharge project.

**Miff Devin, Port Water Quality Supervisor**

The well dynamics themselves characterize the difficulties in addressing groundwater nitrate issues. They are separated by no more than 50 feet of distance, but even in such close proximity, the nitrate concentrations between the wells have a perplexing variability. One well is considered potable for the entirety of the year, based on its nitrate concentrations. Using the same nitrate level measurement, another well is designated as potable for about half the year and the third never meets standards for being potable.

Devin surmises that a caliche layer between the wells might play a role in holding nitrogen molecules in a certain area and allowing them to pool up. But ultimately, the reasons behind the variability aren't entirely clear.

While a great deal of information about the basalt layers—their formation, their age, their characteristics—is known, it is very difficult determine exactly what's going on beneath our feet. Faults, basalt ridges, caliche layers, and the influence of adjacent rivers are all possible factors affecting the complex system that water (and nitrate) molecules move through.

Amidst the inevitable unknowns, the Port moved ahead on securing water rights from the Columbia River for the Phase I and Phase II projects. The process to secure the rights was lengthy and required a large number of agencies around the table to ensure proper permits for water rights and for the project overall. In the end, the Port was granted the amount of water needed for the full build-out of Phase I and Phase II.

The water will be diverted and conveyed to the location during the irrigation offseason from November to April. It's a promising sign for the early stage project.

Devin hopes to have water flowing through new pipes and into the ground by next winter to kick-off Phase I. In a matter of months, the impacts of allowing water to percolate down through the trench and into the ground should become evident in the water quality tests of the three local wells.

Phase I is framed as a "proof of concept" for Phase II efforts, so he'll be keeping an eye out for improvements to introduce in the second phase. Phase II, slated to begin in the winter of 2020, will face more difficult technical challenges to transport water into the underlying aquifer due to the proximity to active crop circles and a highway. The infrastructure for Phase II will likely be underground, recharging the underlying aquifer through a perforated pipe.

It's unlikely that a single silver bullet will be the answer to the groundwater challenges of the Lower Umatilla Basin. However, in the best-case scenario, the Phase I and Phase II projects could serve as a template and a tool for the Lower Umatilla Basin to address groundwater nitrate contamination. Although towering process plants are easily the most visible indicators of the Port of Morrow's regional significance, their efforts underneath the surface may prove to be a less noticeable but equally valuable asset to the Basin. ■

*Marika Sitz of Pendleton is Coordinator of the Oregon Water Coalition.*

# Built by Bob

*Tygh Valley volunteer turns problems into possibilities*

**By Drew Myron**


**All-around handyman Bob Gustafson has built 20 bird nest platforms for Wasco Electic Cooperative. The platforms are attached to utility poles to divert osprey from power sources.**

At 80, a life of hard work has taken a toll on Bob Gustafson. He sports two titanium knees, a new heart valve and a set of surgically repaired shoulders. But he's not about to stop.

"You gotta patch up to keep going," he says. "Every morning you wake up and you never know what's going to happen."

Bob has served the Tygh Valley community for more than 50 years. He's a can-do man with the attitude and aptitude to move from pig farmer to cement finisher to house builder to furniture maker. He is also an active volunteer with 4-H Club and community groups.

Bob's latest project is building bird platforms for Wasco Electric Cooperative. Partnering with the cooperative, he has crafted 20 wood structures where osprey can build their nests. The platforms are attached to utility poles in an attempt to divert the birds from power equipment.

"Every spring, we fight the birds and have outages due to osprey nesting," says Frank Roeder, Maupin's line foreman. "The bird population is growing, and it moves up and down the river. The platforms have really made our system reliable."

Frank and Bob worked together to create the optimum nesting platform. They designed a bird rest that measures 4 feet by 4 feet, is 6 inches deep and extends beyond the power pole. At Bob's urging, the platforms are all-natural and made from cedar. The finished pieces have been placed along the Deschutes River, John Day and Warm Springs.

"All the osprey platforms are occupied," Frank reports.

Bird interference is a common challenge, according to Operations Manager Casey McCleary, who has worked at Wasco Electric for 34 years.

While many rural power companies grapple with the issue, not all have a customer who can lend a hand. Not only is Bob an experienced carpenter, but he refuses payment for his work. He insists money be donated to South Wasco County School's high school wood shop.

"Bob has always been so community-oriented," Casey says. "He's such a humble, nice guy."

It's a common refrain.

"He's a giving individual," Frank says, noting Bob's volunteer work with the 4-H youth programs and the Wasco County Fair in Tygh.

For years, Bob has served as swine superintendent, mentoring and managing up to 30 kids and 60 pigs a year.

"I've been in swinery for 49 years," he says. "I'm going to try to get to 50."

"Every year, every meeting, Bob is there helping out with

everything that has to do with pigs and kids," Frank says. "He's always been so generous, giving and kind."

Born in Portland in 1938, Bob grew up in Troutdale, where the hard work started early. At age 11, he milked cows. By high school he was raising pigs—an endeavor that turned into a career spanning nearly 40 years. At the apex, he tended more than 600 pigs.

Bob and his wife, Marge, married in 1959 and moved to Tygh Valley in 1962. Moving from wet Western Oregon to the dry east side was an easy decision, Bob says.

"We came for the lower taxes, more sun, less rain and a good place to raise kids," he says.

For years, he raised pigs—and two girls. His daughter Lisa Chastain works as a secretary at Maupin Grade School. Daughter Teresa Stratton is a retired teacher who lives in Union.

After raising pigs, Bob started working with wood. Then he operated a concrete mixer and mastered the cement trade. At age 50, he secured his contractor's license and started a career building homes and industrial shops.

"I just wanted to stay on the job longer," he says.

Though he had no formal training, Bob learned by trial and triumph. He built more than 25 web-steel farm buildings, numerous houses and outbuildings, and repaired bridges and portions of the Dufur Historical Society's Living History Museum.

Bob's home is a display of his own creations: tables, chairs, elaborate tile bathrooms, and even wall art made of broken tile.

"I try a lot of different things," he says.

Lately, he's been busy making marker trees. Designed for youngsters, with his great-grandchildren as his test audience, the trees are crafted from limbs of locust and oak, with individual holes to hold markers. The Marker Tree earned a blue ribbon at the Wasco County Fair. He has made more than 80 and given them all away.

His range of skill is unusual, but Bob is a practical man, self-taught and self-started. Making things was "just a necessity," he says.

When Bob and Marge were young and newly married, he built their house.

"We were broke and we didn't know it," he says with a laugh.

Their house on the hill offers beautiful valley views but a treacherous drive. Two years ago, during a brutal winter, their truck slipped and slid again and again.

"That winter, it was just like a hula hoop," Bob says. "There was no end to it."

The couple is moving down the hill and into a single-level home on flat land. What was once their pig pen is now the couple's new single-level home, built by—you guessed it—Bob.

"I had some help on this one," he says, "but I keep my hand in it." ■

**Osprey nests can create power outages. Platforms, such as this one along the Deschutes River near Maupin, help keep the system reliable.**

Photo by Frank Roeder


**Bob's home is a display of his own creations: handcrafted tables, chairs, tile art and marker trees for children.**