



Sensei Amber Jade and Chris Krueger observe Sei Shin Ryu student Gretchen Fiedler throw Kawika Namahoe in “ippon seionage.”

# Empowering Mind, Body and Spirit

*Sei Shin Ryu martial arts Sensei Amber Jade works to inspire confidence, self awareness*

By Lori Mai

One starfish at a time. That is the mantra Sensei Amber Jade of Troy holds steadfast as she trains students in the Sei Shin Ryu—pronounced SAY SHIN ROO—discipline of martial arts. The concept, she says, is that when starfish wash up on shore, they will die unless they’re put back into the ocean, stronger than they were before.

Likewise, she wants to arm her karate and jujitsu students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to go out in the world and face any situation, whether it’s avoiding a nuisance or a life threatening attack.

Sensei Jade knows this truth from personal experience. Forty years ago,

her sister, Susan Lynette, was a successful business owner in Oregon. Susan was alone in her business one evening when five men brutally assaulted her. She never recovered mentally from the ordeal and later died.

“That was a life destroyed,” Sensei Jade says. “It was not only the loss of my sister and a member of our family, but it was also the loss of a lovely, generous, creative person. It was a forever loss, and you don’t want anyone else to have to go through that.”

A new mother at the time, Sensei Jade was dealing not only with her own grief but with feelings of helplessness as she held her newborn son and realized she was the first line of defense for herself and her baby.

As Sensei Jade grappled with this awareness, a subsequent violent attack happened to a child in her hometown.

“It was heartbreaking,” she says. “I decided the only way to stop this was by personal defense. Not competition, not ring sparring, not a game, not a sport, but real self-defense.”

Sensei Jade discovered a Sei Shin Ryu program in Connecticut that supported this ideal.

The guiding philosophy of Sei Shin Ryu is based on the ancient Samurai Bushido code of ethics that includes loyalty, honor, justice, wisdom, courage, perseverance, respect, courtesy, self-control, benevolence, veracity, peace and mind-body-spirit integration.

“Samurai were incredible warriors



**Clockwise from bottom left, Sensei Jade explains “seitoshi” while Chris demonstrates the throw with Daniel Namahoe. Sensei Jade teaches students of all ages and skill levels in the same class. Mason Tyler gets ready to throw Kawika Namahoe in an over-the-shoulder throw called “ippon seionage.”**

with a high moral standard,” Sensei Jade says. “Techniques were passed down verbally—some 1,000 years old—and highly guarded because they helped train the Samurai for battle.”

Two important distinctions between Sei Shin Ryu and other martial arts forms are that there is no sparring, competition, prizes or points, and students work cooperatively to help each other.

“Sei Shin Ryu means truth and honesty in the system,” Sensei Jade explains. “It’s not about power or ego, it’s that you can depend on the techniques to work when they’re implemented.”

Despite living in Moscow at the time,

Sensei Jade commuted to the East Coast for three years of intense training. She rose through the Sei Shin Ryu ranks to become a fifth-degree black belt in both karate and jujitsu.

Sensei Jade says it was destiny that she discovered Sei Shin Ryu and the man who was her sensei. He was a black belt and a World War II veteran. She has tremendous respect for him and the way he adhered to Samurai traditions.

When he encouraged her to become a sensei herself, she was honored because it is customary for a sensei to choose only the most dedicated pupils.

“He said with your (petite) body size, conviction and ability to do the techniques, you could pass those on to other people,” she says. “So that is what I’ve been doing.”

For nearly 40 years, Sensei Jade has been one of few women instructors in the country who trains students in Sei Shin Ryu, which includes karate and jujitsu.

Karate emphasizes katas, which are moving forms of self defense against an invisible attacker. It teaches timing, balance and coordination through a series of kicks, strikes, blocks and an ability to move around the attacker.

Jujitsu is a throwing art, where every self-defense technique ends in a throw.

“Jujitsu is wonderful self-defense,” Sensei Jade says, “because all the different throws—whether it’s a hip throw, a leg throw or a wrist technique that takes the opponent down to the ground—you are now controlling the opponent. Attackers don’t want to mess with somebody who has that confidence and ability.”

Sensei Jade says the program is designed to progress each student slowly and confidently through the ranks so they can handle information and attackers with competence.

Sensei Jade’s students range in age from 4 to older than 70. They attend the same class together in the dojo at Troy Elementary School, which allows students of all ages and levels to work cooperatively.

“I don’t do age because if I lock in on that, I exclude their ability,” she says. “That also goes for male or female, tall, short, heavy or thin. Once you start limiting, you limit the spirit. You limit the mind. You limit the body. Let’s see what students can do.”

*Continues on page 8*



Jujitsu class formally bows at the Japanese command “rae” to show respect and courtesy for everyone they will be working with.

*Continued from page 5*

Nancy Heward, a grandmother of 13, is a green belt in both karate and jujitsu. She has been studying with Sensei Jade for about 2½ years.

Chris Krueger, a double third-degree black belt, began studying with Sensei Jade as a 9-year-old in 1997 when his father was looking for an activity that was compatible with their family value of character integrity. Along with several other black belts, he helps Sensei Jade lead classes while continuing to work on his skills. He appreciates that Sei Shin Ryu does not teach aggression, but confidence and mastery of skills.

“It builds me up on a bunch of different levels,” Chris says. “There’s a presence of mind that comes from this sort of training that’s beneficial in everyday life.”

Kawika Namahoe, a teenage green belt in karate who also plays rugby, has noticed that skills he has learned in karate transfer to his sport, specifically stances that help with tackling.

He says the mental discipline is very intense.

“It really beats your spirit into shape, and also teaches all of these super helpful techniques,” Kawika says. “We come here to practice, but it gets ingrained in our minds, so whenever something happens, we kind of just know what to do.”

Francie and Aaron Tyler were looking for a local activity for their three young sons, Mason, Eli and Aiden.

“It quickly became apparent they were participating in more than a physical activity,” Francie says. “They were also gaining a lot of self-awareness and confidence.”

That is what Sensei Jade hoped to accomplish long ago by taking something as devastating as the death of her sister and turning it into something positive. She wanted not only to learn to defend herself, but to train others to take care of themselves and go out in the world empowered, prepared and aware by strengthening the mind, body and spirit—one starfish at a time. ■

*For more information on Sei Shin Ryu Martial Arts classes or seminars, please contact Sensei Jade at seishinryusensei@outlook.com or call 208-310-4595*

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Paul Rhyno listens intently while Librarian Cathy Goldsmith shares a story with him as part of the Ready to Read Program at the Fossil Library.

## The Biggest Little Library in Eastern Oregon

*Good things happen at Fossil Public Library*

By Jody Foss

Librarian Cathy Goldsmith of the Fossil Public Library settles in to her favorite upholstered chair to read a book with 4-year-old Paul Rhyno, who climbs onto the chair next to her. She opens the book, and he listens intently.

“We are most excited to have children in the library again,” Cathy says. “The Ready to Read program is up and running for the babies to 4-year-olds and their mothers.”

The program was funded for 2019 through Oregon State Libraries. The grant also funds the library’s summer reading program.

Cathy enjoys the children’s responses to the new program.

“A 2-year-old walked in on the first day and stood there and looked around and said, ‘Books!’” she says. “He was very enthusiastic and just amazed that there were these two whole rooms full of books. He was beside himself.”

One woman came in with a 4-year-old and an infant.

“That baby was in her mother’s arms just watching me as I read the entire time,” Cathy says. “Her eyes were just on me. They learn that books are exciting—that when you open them, these good things happen.”

Cathy says the program is not only for children. It helps parents ensure their children are ready to discover the magic of books. Helping children learn to recognize letters and how to rhyme, sing

and spell are things parents can do every day to prepare them for reading.

In addition to the library’s two rooms of books across from Fossil City Hall, any book in the Sage online catalog is available through the Libraries of Eastern Oregon. Patrons order a book online and, when available, it is delivered by courier service to Fossil.

The library also has a program called Library 2 Go, which allows readers to download a large selection of books. A large selection of audiobooks is available, and the library has movies on loan.

“I love it that we are so small that we can accommodate everyone’s needs,” Cathy says.

The Fossil Public Library is funded by the city of Fossil.

“Without that support, we would not exist,” Cathy says.

Cathy has been librarian since January 1, 2018, following Sylvia Ankeny's retirement. She says she is an avid reader, although from first to third grades she was a non-reader.

"I kind of faked it and didn't read," Cathy says. "Then a very wise teacher kept me back in third grade. I was at the top of the class and became an avid reader. I remember riding my bike to the library in Redwood City, California. I picked out a book on dogs, checked it out and read it cover to cover. I retained everything I read about the dogs in that book."

That was a turning point for Cathy. "I felt good about it, because I was interested in dogs, and I read it and it stayed with me," she says. "From that time on, I spent my summers reading."

Cathy's background is in education. She got her master's degree from George Fox University in 2001 and has taught in Olex and Condon. She and her husband, John, a retired house painting contractor, have lived in Fossil for 30 years.

"I feel it is a very important thing to read, especially in the age of e-books," Cathy says. "There is a lot of research that says it's just better to read a real book and to introduce them to children from the beginning of their young lives."

Terri Hunt is president of the library board. She moved back to Fossil three years ago after retiring from teaching elementary school in Dallas, Oregon.

"Growing up, we always used the library," she says. "It has always been a part of my life. I learned to read from my mom checking out Dr. Seuss books."

After joining the library board, Terri realized the Friends of the Library group needed to be revitalized. Last month, the group met for the first time since 2012, and its nonprofit status was reinstated.

The board elected officers: Ben Massey, vice president; Amy Derby, treasurer, Julie Know-Lyon, secretary; and Ann Mitchell, membership chairwoman. Members have a list of



long- and short-term goals.

"In 2004, the Friends of the Library facilitated the expansion of the library," Terri says. "I would like to see that happen again. We could use more room."

"Cathy has done a really good job getting young mothers and their little kids in for story time. Some days, she has four or five moms with their children. We are getting the word out." ■

**Above, Cathy stands next to the library book return box in front of the library. "It was a well-received addition to the library services," she says.**

**Top, Paul's mom, Toney, returns a book both of her children loved. Toney keeps track of how many books Paul has read on a sticker chart Cathy gave them.**

*The library is open Tuesday through Friday from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. For more information, email [libraryfossil46@gmail.com](mailto:libraryfossil46@gmail.com).*



# An Aria in Her Heart

Opera mezzo-soprano Anna Viemeister, who grew up in The Dalles, returned from New York City to perform April 6 at Sunshine Mill.

## Anna Viemeister combines song and service for results in the Gorge and in Manhattan

By Kathy Ursprung

As a teenager planning to be a band teacher, Anna Viemeister couldn't have imagined that a key piece of her future would be determined while singing opera at a karaoke sushi bar in New York City.

"You sing for your supper, which is really good sushi," Anna says.

But the sushi wasn't the best part of the evening.

"I ended up meeting the founder and artistic director of a nonprofit opera company, a big Bulgarian bass who was working at the Metropolitan Opera until he was hit by a car," she says.

Valentin Peytchinov founded Vocal Productions New York City.

"I've been working with that company ever since," Anna says.

Since then, she has played Senta in the "The Flying Dutchman," Nedda in "I Pagliacci" and Princess Eboli in Verdi's "Don Carlo"—one of the most difficult works in the mezzo-soprano repertoire.

"Eboli was my favorite," Anna says. "Mozart is sublime, but Verdi is just sumptuous."

The part was not only a musical challenge, but an athletic one as well, Anna says. Originally, the part was double cast, but the other Eboli injured her wrist. Anna took on all of the performances.

"Singing operatically—singing classically—you have to use your entire body to produce sound," she says. "It's an acoustic art form. You have two little strips of flesh in your vocal chords. You must use your technique to align your body and be in a healthy state."

Anna develops her critical core muscles by working with kettlebells and doing dead lifts.

Planning her future while attending The Dalles High School, Anna expected to become a band teacher like her father before her. Paul Viemeister directed band at the high school until his retirement last year.

"I ended up getting sucked into choir and musical theater," Anna says.

She earned her bachelor's degree in vocal performance at Portland State University.

"Then the concrete jungle called," she says, and she moved to New York.

Anna earned her master's degree at Manhattan School of Music.

"I had a great college career," she says. "I ended up starring in three or four shows while I was in the opera program. Then I had the choice to either move back to Oregon or remain in New York. I thought, 'If you're going to start something, you may as well start it here.'"

Since her graduation in 2011, Anna has been pursuing her career in New York.

"It is and it isn't everything I expected," she says. "New York is nothing like anywhere I've ever been. That's one of the best things about it. There's no simple way to put it. It's not easy to live here. That's kind of why it's so great, because it caused me to get smart fast, grow up fast and learn new skills."

About two-thirds of Anna's income is from music. She fills in the rest with office work and other side jobs.

She says performers are good at these kinds of jobs.

"We're very good at showing up and very good at learning whatever skills we need," she says.

Her husband, Jeremy Griffin, is an operatic baritone. They make ends meet in New York by sharing their home with two roommates.

The couple met at Portland State and were study buddies throughout their undergraduate careers.

"Fatefully, we had to fall in love in a show," Anna says.

While Anna earned her master's in New York, Jeremy earned his at British Columbia University. Afterward, they had the choice of New York or returning to Oregon. It wasn't an easy choice.

"New York I could leave any time," Anna says. "When I'm back in The Dalles, I feel the pull to stay and build."

Anna has begun bringing her talent—and those of her talented friends—back to The Dalles. Last year, she did a Christmas concert at The Dalles Civic Auditorium.

"I'm able to bring certain acts of talent from New York to perform," she says. "We also have local talent—cowboy poets, the Cascade Singers—come put on a show. We might have some Trans-Siberian Orchestra action this year."

Anna is raising money for a trip to Bulgaria June 10 through July 15 alongside Valentin, who will be teaching a five-week master's course. The trip is an opportunity to audition for European houses, conduct an operatic tour of the Black Sea, sing on an international stage and help in the development of 15 vocal students.

"Normally, when it comes to trips, I reach into my own personal support, but this is one of those very strategically important trips," she says. "I need to see if I can up that income number from two-thirds to three-quarters."

From there, Anna has the opportunity to sing for a master class in Reno, Nevada, taught by Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Delora Zajick.

"When New York came knocking, I answered," Anna says. "Europe came knocking, and I'm answering. When the people from the Metropolitan come knocking, I feel like I have to answer."

Anna hopes to develop connections and clout that she can bring back to her communities, both in New York City and The Dalles.

"In my opinion, it's all based in service," she says. "Whenever I base my work in service, great things happen." ■

*Anna Viemeister is raising money for her tour on a GoFundMe page called "Project Opera Globetrotter!"*

# Stories From the Field



**Javin Lackey works in rough terrain to restore power after a January 2017 snowstorm.**

## By Craig Reed

Javin Lackey doesn't mind giving some of the credit to his parents for where he is now as a 40-year-old journeyman lineman.

He grew up hunting and fishing with his father, Kerry, developing an appreciation for the outdoors along the way. It was his mother, Teresa, a Midstate Electric Cooperative employee in La Pine, who suggested that being an electrical lineman would allow him to work outdoors and make a good living.

With that background, Javin has been in the electrical industry for 21 years, the last 14 with Consumers Power. He was promoted from line foreman to general foreman last September, giving him management responsibilities for three crews and their 17 linemen, whose job is to keep the power flowing to the co-op's 22,000-plus meters.

The recent February snowstorm resulted in outages in the mountain areas of CPI's service territory, but Javin and the crews accepted the challenges, put in long hours and had the power restored to members within 48 hours.

Javin and a couple of crews then headed south to work in the Lane Electric Cooperative service territory east of Eugene for 10 days, helping restore power in areas with extended outages.

"I think every lineman gets excited about storms," Javin says. "Linemen like to push themselves, to see what they're made of in situations like these, working to get power restored to the members as quickly and safely as possible."

While there might be an adrenalin rush during storms and outages, co-op crews emphasize safety over speed.

Javin is proud to say in his 14 years at CPI, there has been only one major injury. The co-op recently celebrated four straight years without a lost-time accident.

Javin says 15 to 20 years ago, CPI averaged a lost time accident about every 18 months. A commitment to detail and safety has greatly reduced accidents.

"It takes a lot of dedication, a lot of commitment to yourself and to the guys you work with," Javin says. "You definitely have to be on the same page all the time. From journeyman linemen to foremen to anybody else involved, we have vowed to do everything we can to not have another lost-time accident.

"It's a great feeling to show up at a job and to see every hazard has already been addressed by the crew and the foreman. Safety is a culture here."

Teresa credits her husband for instilling safety values in their son. She says when Kerry and Javin were working or recreating outside, Kerry emphasized safety precautions.

Early in his career, Javin was exposed to risky situations with little margin for error. After he graduated from Bend High School in 1996 and lineman trade school through Boise State University in 1998, he worked for a company that worked on power lines from helicopters.

The work took Javin to projects in New York, Tennessee, Florida, Colorado, Utah, Arizona and a few other stops in between. The projects included work on concrete poles stretched out across water in Florida, installing giant marker balls on cables across canyons in New York and stringing fiber optic cables in numerous locations.

"We worked off the (helicopter) skid," Javin says. "There was usually one man who stepped off the skid and worked on the structure and another man on the skid. There was always an inherent risk working from a helicopter. There was constant communication with the pilot. At the time, I never felt at risk."

He knew in the back of his mind, however, that there was risk because the day before he started with the company, a helicopter had crashed, killing both the pilot and a lineman.

No longer in his 20s, Javin has a different view of that work now.

"Would I do it now for a career? Absolutely not," he says with a smile. "But at the time, I never felt in danger."

Javin married Casey, also a Bend High

graduate, in 1999. They traveled together to the different jobs for three years.

While driving through Utah in 2001, they were in a traffic accident. Javin suffered a broken shoulder and Casey had arm lacerations.

"It was gut check time," Javin says. "We decided it was time to settle down and to travel less."

His mother once again came through with a suggestion. She let her son know there was a lineman opening at Columbia Power Cooperative in Monument. He applied and was hired.

He admits his new job of patrolling lines was a definite change of pace from the adventurous, high-wire work he had previously done. But the Columbia Power job provided him with "an outdoorsman's dream, being right there on the John Day River and close to great hunting."

Javin spent four years with Columbia Power before accepting a lineman job at Consumers Power—the state's third-largest cooperative—in 2005.

Although Javin and Casey once figured they would eventually return to Central Oregon where they spent their youth and where they continue to visit and to hunt and fish, they are no longer anticipating such a move.

Javin is settled in at CPI and enjoys the work he does for the co-op and its members. Casey is a hair stylist in Albany. The couple have three daughters: Kylie, 15; Kenna, 13; and Kolby, 7.

"I love this family here," Javin says. "The camaraderie, the efficiency, how everybody works together, it's pretty impressive. The employees we have here, the supervisors, the CEO, we're a unique family here that I appreciate being part of."

Billy Terry, CPI's director of operations, has worked with and alongside Javin the past 14 years.

"Javin is a very dedicated, loyal employee," Billy says. "His commitment to the co-op is evident every day. He has the respect of all his co-workers. He's a good person and an excellent leader." ■

Outdoor adventure is a family affair for fishing guides Mia and Marty Sheppard and their daughter, Tegan. The trio lives in Maupin, overlooking the Deschutes River.



## Go Outside!

*A Maupin fly-fishing couple champions outdoor fun*

**By Drew Myron**

Bundled in a baby-sized life jacket with the John Day River rushing beneath her, Tegan Sheppard was just 6 months old when she traveled her first Oregon river snuggled next to her parents.

“It’s important to get outside so that your brain doesn’t rot,” Tegan says now, 11 years later. “I like fresh air.”

It’s a message her parents, Mia and Marty, have advocated personally and professionally all their lives. The couple own and operate Little Creek Outfitters, a fly-fishing guide service based in Maupin. They lead day trips and camping adventures on the Deschutes, John Day, Grande Ronde, Owyhee and Sandy rivers.

“Fishing is our main objective,” says Mia, “but really, that’s just an excuse to be outdoors.”

Marty agrees.

“Our focus is to get into the wilderness,” he says.

While river guides are plentiful in Oregon, Mia and Marty are one of a few husband-and-wife guides.

Mia is a three-time world champion spey-caster. Named after the River Spey in Scotland, the fly-fishing technique is traced to the mid-1800s and has been called “easy to pick up and difficult to master.”

Female fly-fishers are also unusual, and Mia is a rarity: She is a mother, fishing guide and entrepreneur, who is also approaching 50.

“She’s an overachiever,” Marty jokes.

“It’s very challenging,” Mia says. “I hear from women who say, ‘How do you do it? It’s an inspiration that you can live an outdoor life of recreation, with children.’”

She emphasizes the importance of getting outside.

“There’s a lot of disconnection to nature,” she says.

“Kids are connecting to technology instead. Growing up, I spent a lot of time outdoors with my mom and sisters. That relationship to the outdoors is so important to our resources. If you start to love a place, you want to take care and protect that place.”

“When you put kids and adults outdoors, they ask questions,” Marty says. “It’s how they learn.”

To enhance outdoor opportunities for women and youth, Mia created Juniper River Adventures. She leads fishing, rafting, yoga and paddleboard camps designed to “connect kids to the outdoors in genuine and real ways,” she says.

Mia recently was appointed to the Oregon Tourism Commission, a committee of nine members who help direct policy for the state’s tourism operations.

“I’m honored to be a voice for outdoor recreation and rural communities,” she says.

Mia has long been a model of outdoor recreation. She grew up in Tennessee, where she spent her childhood trout fishing and hiking the Great Smoky Mountains. As an adult, she became an accomplished snowboarder. For more than a dozen years she traveled the nation in search of good snow. She later got hooked on fly-fishing, and was soon casting both a single- and double-hand rod.

A committed conservationist, Mia is a river steward for the Native Fish Society, conservation chairwoman of the International Women’s Fly Fishers, and a supporter of numerous organizations, including the Deschutes River Alliance, Trout Unlimited and Casting for Recovery.

Marty is a third-generation Oregonian who grew up on the banks of the Sandy River. Under his father’s tutelage, Marty landed his first steelhead at 5 years old. He says he and his father fished together endlessly, and instilled in Marty an instinct and zeal for the pursuit of steelhead.

In 2001, Marty went to work for Little Creek Outfitters, then headed by John Ecklund. Two years later, Marty and Mia bought the company.

“Mia and Matt are the best husband-and-wife fishing duo in the state,” says Don Jacklin, a longtime Maupin outdoorsman who founded All Star Rafting in 1993. “They have an excellent reputation.”

The story of Mia and Marty began long before their fishing days. The two met in the early 1990s, when both were deep into the new sport of snowboarding. They worked on Mount Hood in an assortment of jobs—bartending, lessons and events—that would support their snow sports.

The two forged a friendship. Even as Mia—a self-proclaimed nomad—pursued snowboarding adventures in other states, the two kept in touch. In 2006, they were married at the Imperial Hotel in Maupin.

Throughout the years and through many sports, the couple remain rooted in an appreciation for the



**Above, the Sheppards’ workshop is packed with tools of their trade: rods, reels, line and other fishing gear.**

**Left, Marty says Little Creek Outfitters’ focus is to get into the wilderness. He and Mia are one of the few husband-and-wife fishing guides in Oregon.**

Photo courtesy of Little Creek Outfitters

Oregon outdoors.

Whether the activity is snow sports or fishing, “it’s a tool that gets you out in beautiful places,” Mia says. ■

*To learn more about Little Creek Outfitters, call 503-819-4035 or go to <http://littlecreekoutfitters.net>. To learn more about Juniper River Adventures, call 541-419-2105 or go to <http://juniperriveradventures.com>.*



Stairs to nowhere in the Paradise, California, area are a haunting reminder of the devastation caused by the fire last year. Photos courtesy of Al Jenkins

# Dedicated to Helping

*Melrose man delivers donated money and goods to California fire victims*

**By Craig Reed**

In a time of need for himself, Al Jenkins has maintained his focus on helping those in Northern California who have suffered devastating losses to wildfires.

A heavy snowfall in late February knocked the power out to Al's Melrose area home for three weeks, and water leakage damaged a room and its contents.

But those unexpected events hardly slowed the 55-year-old Roseburg native from continuing to collect money and donations for another trip to Paradise, California, where the Camp Fire last November covered 240 square miles, resulting in 85 deaths, 18,804 destroyed structures and \$16.5 billion in damage.

Al made his seventh trip south with another pickup and trailer load of donated goods in late March. With help from family, friends, neighbors and strangers, he has delivered about \$15,000 in cash and gift cards and about \$35,000 in products such as bedding, camping gear and tools.

"They lost everything," Al says of Paradise, a town of 28,000 residents. "They don't exist anymore. I just wanted to be able to help anybody who needed it. I'm blessed to be able to do that. We have to take care of each other. It doesn't matter what your opinion is, what your religion is. It has to start at the grassroots level to create positive change. It starts here with us. We have to be responsible

as individuals. To live the life you want to live, to be the person you want to be, it is important to help others."

Al describes his recent storm damage as a minor inconvenience that can be fixed.

"Going without power for a month is not the worst thing that can happen to somebody," Al says. "There are far worse things that can happen in life, like what has happened to those people in Paradise."

Al works as a mental health therapist, so he's heard firsthand about people's problems through his professional career. One of the counselors he used to work with had family in Paradise. They barely escaped the flames, and lost two houses.

Hearing about that family and other devastating situations from friends and



**Allen Guse, left, and Al Jenkins shop for supplies to deliver to fire victims in California.**

media reports inspired Al to do what he could to help. He posted a notice on Facebook that he was collecting financial and product donations to take south to the fire victims. He expected a couple hundred dollars, but ended up with about \$500 in cash and numerous camping items.

He visited people living in the fairgrounds parking lot in Chico, California, and in the Walmart lot.

"I asked people what they needed and handed out 50, 60 or 100 bucks, sleeping bags, blankets, other camping gear and food," Al says. "I've found out every working person down there lost everything, so I've made getting tools to donate a priority."

Marilyn and Greg Jenkins, Al's parents, are proud of their son and his mission to help others.

They are not surprised by his efforts.

"He's always worked with at-risk kids, teenagers, people who have problems his whole career," Greg says. "This is just the type of person he is."

Al's efforts to help fire victims has inspired a handful of others to get involved sorting donations, loading them and making the trip to distribute them.

Allen Guse, Al's cousin, has made five trips with Al. Allen is retired from the U.S. Army. He was deployed to foreign locations and saw much devastation.

"I'm pretty touched by people's needs," Allen says.

He says that being involved with Al has helped him reunite with society after his military experiences and being holed up in his Coast Range home west of Eugene.

Allen says many situations have tugged

at his emotions. One involved a woman who had a debit card, but with no internet service the convenience store couldn't take the card when she tried to buy food.

"She was at her rope's end," Allen says. "She was hungry. She had no food. She started crying as she came out of the store. She was hurting bad. We were at the end of our trip, but we pulled what money we had in our pockets and gave it to her. She grabbed hold of Al, started sobbing on his chest, 'God is good, God is good.' That's just one story. The stories go on and on and on."

Al chokes up as he recalls the situation that woman faced.

"She told me she was ready to end it, she was done," Al says. "I know we saved her life."

Dick Kreger of Glide heard about what Al was doing through the local media. The retired U.S. Forest Service wildland firefighter made three trips for the cause.

He remembers talking to a man who was looking to fix a chain saw so he could start helping with the cleanup. When Dick said he could have one of the saws and a gas can they brought from Oregon, the man was practically speechless.

"To give people like that what they need, to look into their eyes, to know you just made their day, it's very rewarding," Dick says.

While the American Red Cross and other agencies have left the Paradise area, the fire victims still have needs, Al says. He plans to continue to accept financial and product donations and to make frequent trips to help those people. He's emphasizing the need for tools, gift and gas cards, food and bedding.

"I'm absolutely grateful for the friends and neighbors and strangers who have given to help those folks," Al says.

He has established the Grateful Hands Disaster Relief Fund and applied for non-profit status.

"Al is such a giving-type person," Dick says. "We need more people like Al Jenkins." ■

# Happy Birthday, WOEC!

*Co-op celebrates 75 years of service  
Part 2: A Changing World*

By Scott Laird

2019 marks the 75th anniversary of West Oregon Electric Cooperative's formation and the introduction of electric power to WOEC's corner of rural Oregon.

Access to electricity transformed life for Oregon's farming and logging families, changing the way they worked and lived. While new conveniences made life easier for folks used to a simple life, the more modern world was changing quickly around them.

WOEC was formed as a regional cooperative in 1944, with Guy Thomas as the first general manager. The region was one of the last rural areas in Oregon and Washington to seek financing from the Rural Electrification Administration to extend power lines to rural and unserved citizens in the Vernonia, Mist and Birkenfeld areas, and later Timber and west toward the coast, along with territory in Washington County.

In 1947, direct power from the Bonneville Power Administration was initiated to WOEC.

Early articles in the Northwest Rural Electric News—which changed its name to Ruralite in December 1954—introduced co-op members to the modern conveniences of electricity, touting the benefits of electric irrigation, milking machines and pumps for wells. Articles introduced modern appliances such as electric ovens, ranges, washers, dryers, refrigerators and freezers. The publication regularly discussed political issues of the day. Featured columns provided mechanical tips for living in a modern world.

As the 1950s ended, times were changing—and so was the content of Ruralite.

An article in the February 1959 issue looked to the future and asked if electric cars were on the horizon for America's drivers. Instead of focusing on informing readers about the benefits of electricity, the publication shifted its content to articles that discussed the changing culture and lifestyle of the Pacific Northwest.

Features in the 1960s discussed family camping vacations, planning for retirement, whitewater boating on the McKenzie River, automobile insurance and building modern schools.



Environmental concerns were featured in an article about Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, a resident of the Pacific Northwest and a noted hiker, naturalist, environmentalist and author.

Ruralite remained dedicated to rural issues and features. An article in November 1960 featured mint farming in Madras. In August 1961, the publication discussed the expansion of the tribally owned Kah-Nee-ta Resort in Central Oregon.

In the 1960s, a new column was added. Teen Time featured questions important to teens. The column had regional teens provide their opinion about the proper age to start driving, if it

was OK for girls to telephone boys, should students quit school to get married, who should clean up after parties—the hosts or the guests—and types of literature teens should be reading.

Another new column, Survival Kit, grew in popularity. There were up to six full pages of consumer tips about such things as home fire extinguishers, radial and belted tires, and lightbulbs.

In the 1970s, readers could search through five pages of classified ads that included farm machinery, livestock and pets; plants and gardening supplies; property for sale; cars, trucks, boats and trailers; help-wanted ads; wanted-to-buy ads; and an assortment of other items for sale.

On the WOEC pages, the co-op continued to push the benefits of electric heat. A page listed operating statistics, including the co-op's total revenue, total kilowatt hours sold and average KWh per customer.

In 1968, WOEC sold 2.4 million kWh for an average of 1,094 kWh annually per member. By 1971, those numbers had jumped to 4.2 million kWh sold, for an average of 1,814 kWh per customer.

In May 1971, three transformers were installed at the Jewell-Elsie Substation, serving the expanding load growth in the Lower Nehalem Valley area.

Ruralite began regular local features in the 1970s that included articles about the Vernonia Melodrama and the Vernonia Senior Center. An article in January 1975 explained how the Vernonia community, with the help of state and county officials, had turned a community eyesore—the old mill pond—into a new recreational asset: Vernonia Lake.

In November 1973, Manager Guy Thomas published a long letter updating WOEC members on the status of the co-op. Less than a year later, after three decades of service to his community, Guy died after a lengthy illness. The October 1974 Ruralite featured a long tribute to Guy, noting his kindness, honesty, generosity and compassion.

George L. Smith was named the new general manager.

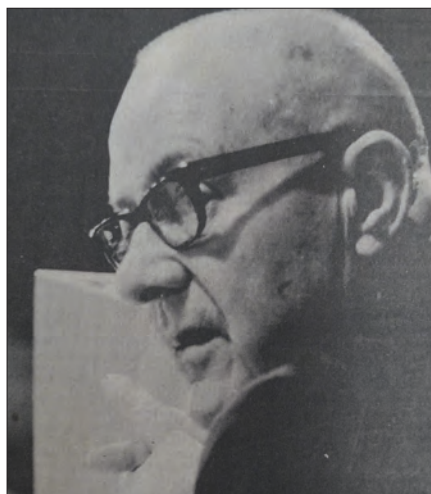
The January 1976 issue of Ruralite featured an article on Vernonia policeman Ace Lolley, who was labeled “the man who tamed Vernonia.” The article noted, “Vernonia, when the logging camps were running, was known as a rough town among all the tough towns along the coast,” and mentioned Saturday nights as exceptionally action packed because loggers, “... after working hard all week ... had a lot of spirit saved up for the weekend.”

The article said Ace took the attitude that “everyone was OK if given a chance,” and would reason with the tough guys, with surprising success.

“Saturday night in Vernonia became a family event, and if you wanted action you had to leave town to find it,” the author said.

In the 1980s, WOEC began publishing minutes from its monthly board of directors meetings.

As another sign of the changing times, Ruralite added a personals column to help people across the Northwest find love.



**Left, original WOEC General Manager Guy Thomas served the co-op membership for three decades. He died in 1974.**

**Opposite page, the new lodge at The Flying M Ranch near Yamhill was featured in the August 1985 issue of Ruralite.**

In March 1980, Ruralite featured a story about the Busch family—Fred and his sons, Mark and Mike—and their family enterprise, BCH Logging Co. in Mist.

Other articles in the '80s featured the Vernonia Health Clinic, the Flying M Ranch near Yamhill, Vernonia Cares and its community-assistance programs, and Vernonians Ken and Penny Smejkal, who opened a self-storage business named Storage Too.

While times were changing, many things remained the same in the co-op business. In March 1970, WOEC asked members to keep an eye out for thieves stealing copper wire.

In 1982, Manager George Smith informed the members there would be a rate increase of 1.2 cents per kWh to cover the costs of operations.

In 1985, board minutes mentioned negotiations on the union contract. It was also noted Community Action Team was taking applications for its fuel-assistance program.

In 1986, the board discussed whether it should retire capital credits. The same year, current board member Robert Van Natta joined the board.

In 1988, a new general manager, Martin Baughman took over operations of the co-op.

In 1989, the board discussed clearing brush and dangerous trees along lines, noting inspection help from Jerry Keenon. The board also discussed the \$3,000 a month lease for the co-op's new computer system.

A report from the 1989 annual meeting quoted guest speaker Mark Glaess, general manager of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

“There is no cooperative in Oregon with a tougher service area than West Oregon,” Mark said, during a discussion about problems caused by fast-growing brush and trees. ■

*Next month: WOEC today*



From left, Alesong's Matt Van Wyk, Doug Coombs and Brian Coombs collaborate to create unique beers.

## Lorane's Alesong Does Beer Differently

*Brewery finds home in the heart of wine country*

By Aliya Hall

When Alesong Brewing and Blending was founded in 2015 by brothers Brian and Doug Coombs and veteran brewer Matt Van Wyk, the goal was to create something “a little different” in the Pacific Northwest.

Since then, the brewery has won 24 awards and honors for its beer, most recently taking home one gold and two silvers at Oregon Beer Awards 2019, as well as two golds and one silver at the Best of Craft Beer Awards.

It appears something different has found a welcoming home.

Nestled in wine country outside Eugene, Alesong is a brewery and tasting room next to King Estate winery

in Lorane. The artisan brewery crafts small-batch beers with a focus on oak aging and Belgian-inspired techniques. The beers age anywhere from three months to three years.

Due to that slow production process, there isn't a flagship Alesong beer regularly available to customers. However, the unique, small-batch brews give beer lovers something new and interesting to look forward to.

“We have this beer that not

many people are doing,” Brian says. “The fact we're 100% aged in oak and we're doing sour beers and bourbon-aged beers, it's really something people in the industry aren't doing a lot of.”

Brian, a formally trained professional chemist, transitioned into brewing when Matt brought him in to lead the quality program at Oakshire Brewing. With more than a decade of experience, Matt started a barrel-aged



Some of the winning entries in the Best of Craft Beer Awards.

program as Oakshire's brewmaster. It was there that Brian fell in love with making and drinking barrel-aged beers.

Before Alesong, Brian worked in production at King Estate. His experience there helped inspire one of Alesong's award winning concoctions: beer-wine hybrids.

"One of the takeaways for us, and what we want people to be aware of, is the emerging trend in the beer industry of beer-wine hybrids," Brian says. "It's something we're really excited about, and it feels that we can be at the front end of this new craft beer development."

Alesong's hybrids are known as the Terroir Series, with the pinot noir and pinot gris grapes and barrels coming from local wineries King Estate and Benton-Lane.

Their first two hybrids were awarded silver medals at the 2018 Great American Beer Festival.

"There's no longer this invisible line that separates beer and wine lovers," Brian

says. "In fact, it's more common that we find people enjoy and appreciate both, and that's what we try to bring to life with these hybrid beers."

Doug brings a wine background to the business. He has helped craft a tasting room and customer experience that is more akin to the neighboring wineries than a traditional brewery.

Alesong holds quarterly releases to introduce its new beers to club members and then the public. At the club-only release parties, each tasting is paired with a small bite of food to bring out the specific flavors of the beer.

"We're really passionate about how beer goes with food," Doug says. "We often think beer gets overlooked as a pairing medium compared to wine. We want to break the tradition of going over to your in-laws for dinner and bringing a nice bottle of wine. A nice bottle of beer will do the same thing, if not better."

Alesong's winter release in February introduced four new

beers: two of the wild and sour category aged in second-use wine barrels, and two aged in spirits barrels.

The wild and sour beers are fermented with "a slew of microbes" to make them dry and acidic, Brian says. All of the fruit Alesong uses comes from local producers in the Willamette Valley. Brian says it is important to partner with as many people in the community as possible.

"In May, we are releasing three more projects that utilized fruits from our local area," Brian says. "Kind of Blue is a sour beer refermented on biodynamic blueberries grown by our neighbors at King Estate. Terroir: Chardonnay was refermented on fresh-pressed chardonnay juice from Iris Vineyards just down the road, and Common Nectar used nectarines from Detering Orchards in Harrisburg."

Alesong has also used honey from Queen's Bounty, which is in the neighboring area, too.

Brian's favorite of the February release is Kriek, which was inspired by Belgian lambic brewing styles. The name Kriek is the Flemish word for cherry. That sour beer was refermented with cherries from Detering Orchards and nearby Hentze Farms.

Community collaboration continues with Alesong's spirits-barrel aged beers. Mocha Rhino Suit is fermented in bourbon barrels, aged with chocolate from Chocolate Alchemy and coffee from Slightly Coffee Roasters, both

of Eugene.

Asked how he feels once beers are released, Brian says, "It's really cool, but I'm always my harshest critic. I always take notes and always try to perfect our beers and perfect the art. But it's really exciting, too, because I've tasted it and worked on it for an average of 18 months. It's such a long process, and it's fun to finally release it to our club members and have people be excited about it."

Along with the brews, the tasting room brings something new to the Lorane community. Brian says there aren't a lot of meeting spaces like it in the area, especially because the tasting room is both family and dog friendly and offers live music in the summertime. In addition to member events, the tasting room is open seven days a week for anyone to belly up at the bar or perch on the patio and enjoy the views.

"It's community we have out here," Brian says. "It's been really fun. The town of Lorane has been good to us, too. People have their club meetings and birthday parties here. It's nice to have the community support for what we do."

Alesong's location in wine country was not accidental. The intention behind Alesong is to take the brewing process slowly and naturally, and what better place to do so than in the countryside, Brian says.

"We're closer to nature here and closer to local farmers and people living off the land," he says. "That's exactly what we wanted." ■

# Coming Clean After a Dirty Job

*Fine fabrics replace clogged drains for Myron Fox*

By Craig Reed

Myron Fox is making quite the transition in careers, gradually easing out of dirty, slimy work and into beautiful, clean work.

For 32 years, Myron owned a drain-cleaning business. His resume includes unclogging hundreds of drains, pulling out a multitude of wet, gross items or flushing them down the pipe.

But for the past few years, Myron has split his time between drains and his home-based Fox Quilting business that involves machine stitching beautiful quilt fabrics and designs.

Myron, 66, has a Quilt Master with an accompanying table. The full-frame quilting machine can stitch a California king-size quilt or a lap quilt.

“It’s transitioning from a physical way of life to a more mental one,” Myron says. “Quilting is also probably doing my immune system some good. I think I’ve found a niche. I’m ready to spend more time at home doing quilting.”

Myron says when he was a boy, his mother, grandmother and their lady friends would sit around a large room and hand stitch their quilts.

“I even did a little bit as a boy, enough to know I would not want to do it by hand,” says Myron, who grew up in the Elmira area and is a 1970 Elmira High School graduate.

His mother, Dorothy Luttrell, continued to stitch together quilt blocks until she died three years ago. Dorothy also taught Myron’s wife, Anita, how to quilt.

Several years ago, Myron bought Anita a long-arm quilting machine that stitched together the top, batting and bottom layers of quilts. But it turned out to be Myron, not Anita, who most enjoyed



programming the machine to do the quilting. Myron split his time between drains and the quilting machine.

Last summer, he and Anita stepped up their quilting business to another level with the purchase of the full-frame

machine and the adjoining table. The two products arrived at their Elmira-area home unassembled.

Myron not only assembled the table and quilting machine, he built a domed, insulated metal building with a concrete



**Left, Myron Fox programs his long-arm quilting machine for a job.**

**Bottom left, Myron keeps a variety of threads in stock.**

**Opposite page, Myron and his wife, Anita, stretch a quilt onto a frame before moving it over to the quilting machine.**



floor to house them and the long-arm quilting machine. There's also plenty of room for Anita's three sewing machines, giving her space to store fabric and be a seamstress.

"It's a creative outlet for me," Myron says. "To take all this fabric, to put it all together and then to watch as a lady first sees it and smiles, that's worth a million bucks right there.

"I've told some guys I really like quilting and they've given me some odd looks. But I enjoy working with the machines and creating the patterns."

Cindy Laury of Elmira and Sherry Claric of Veneta are 20-year friends of Myron and Anita, having met through Olivet Baptist Church. Cindy and Sherry both enjoy piecing and sewing together

quilt blocks, but are more than happy to have Myron and his machines stitch together the three layers.

Sherry says when she first got into quilting in 2002, she talked to her husband, Ed, about buying a quilting machine.

"But he said, 'Nope, send them to Myron,'" she recalls. "I'm glad Ed said what he said because I don't think that's a part of quilting I would love that much and Myron has that marvelous machine.

"Myron takes the time to care about each quilt," Sherry says. "He knows which pattern to choose to add a different touch that finishes the quilt, to make it complete. I'll get a quilt back and it's 'Wow!' I'm never disappointed in his decision-making. I trust him to know what pattern is best."

On a quilt that Sherry made for her cat-loving daughter, Myron and his machine stitched a 6-inch-high cat pattern in both of the bottom corners.

"I didn't know he was going to do that, but it made the quilt special, perfect," Sherry says.

Cindy has taken her quilts to Myron since she began quilting in 2012. She also likes Myron's creativity in designing patterns on the quilts.

"Sometimes I don't know what I want or what is best, so I give him creative license," she says. "The quilt always comes back just beautiful. If I have a plain border, he'll put a creative design on it, just what it needs to look good."

Myron marks his work with a dime-sized signature flower in a corner of each quilt that he and his machines stitch.

"I love that he loves doing the quilting," Sherry says. "He enjoys it."

Cindy agrees.

"One of the things that make his work so good is that he loves what he's doing," she says.

Myron and Anita charge a fee for their work. He says it's a supplement to their Social Security. But the couple also donate their time to finishing quilts for their church's Community Holiday Bazaar and for Comfort Quilts, an outreach program that provides lap quilts to cancer patients at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend in Springfield.

"The good part is that I enjoy doing this," Myron says. "I'd be burnt out by now if it wasn't fun."

He also likes the cleanliness and beauty of the work. It's nothing like cleaning drains. ■

## Tree Planting Guide

Properly planted trees around the home provide many benefits. They can reduce energy consumption, decrease heating and cooling costs, increase property values, facilitate groundwater retention, and beautify homes and neighborhoods.

Before buying and planting a tree, consider the planting site carefully. Imagine how big your tree will be in 20 to 40 years. Will it come in contact with power lines? Will it shade your home? Is it too close to your foundation?

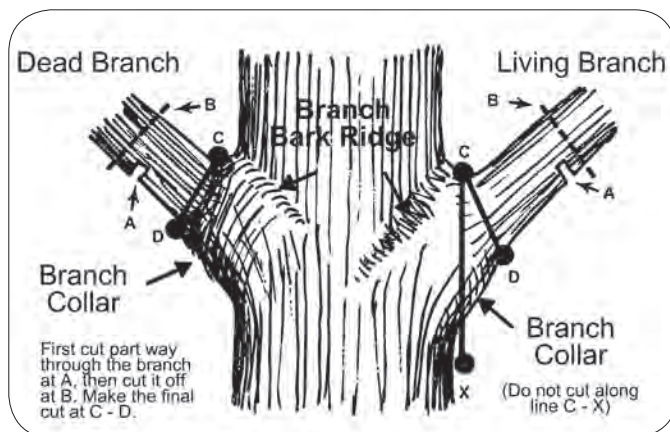
By planning ahead, you can pick the right tree for the right spot and avoid future problems for you and your new tree.

### Planting Guidelines

Planting a tree is pretty simple, as long as you have thought about the type of tree you are planting and the environment you are planting it in. Whether you are planning a community event or a weekend project around your home, you will need to know how to get your trees into the ground. In addition, please call 811 before digging to find out where underground power lines are located.

First, locate the trunk flare of the tree. The trunk flare is above the area where the roots are growing and is most often recognizable by the swelling or flared appearance of the trunk. For a container-grown tree, the flare should be at the surface of the soil in the container.

One of the most common tree planting mistakes is digging a hole too deep or too narrow. Dig a hole that is no deeper than the distance from the trunk flare to the bottom of the root ball or the container. The hole should also be at least three times wider than the root ball or the container. This allows for good air and water movement, and can provide looser soil for the roots to begin growing outward.



### Simple Pruning Practices

The objective of pruning is to produce strong, healthy and attractive plants. By understanding how and why to prune, and by following a few standard principles, this objective can be achieved.

Pruning for safety involves removing branches that could fall and cause injury or property damage, trimming branches that could interfere with lines of sight on streets or driveways, and removing branches that could grow into utility lines. Pruning for health involves removing diseased or insect-infested wood, thinning the crown to increase airflow, and removing crossing or rubbing branches. Pruning for aesthetics involves enhancing the natural form and character of trees or to stimulate flower growth.

Pruning cuts should be made so only branch tissue is removed and stem tissue is not damaged. At the point where the branch attaches to the stem, branch and stem tissues remain separate, but are contiguous. If only branch tissues are cut when pruning, the stem tissues of the tree will probably not become decayed, and the wound will seal more effectively.

If you have any questions about pruning, visit [www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht\\_prune/htprune.pdf](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/htprune.pdf). ■



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

## Utility Line Trees

Never plant trees with a mature growth height of more than 20 feet directly below overhead power lines. Trees reaching 20 to 40 feet in height should be planted at least 30 feet from power lines. Trees growing to more than 40 feet tall should be a minimum of 50 feet from power lines.

Some examples of acceptable trees to plant under power lines include:

Maples	<i>Acer</i> spp.
Hawthornes	<i>Crataegus</i> spp.
Kwansan Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i>
Canada Red Chokecherry	<i>Malus</i> spp.
Columnar Mountain Ash	<i>Sorbus x hybrida</i> "Fatigiata"
Flowering Crabapple	<i>Malus pumila</i>
Tea Crabapple	<i>Malus hupehensis</i>

## Medium-Sized Trees

Medium-sized trees—between 30 and 50 feet at maturity—may be planted 15 to 30 feet from power lines. Some examples include:

Common Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>
Autumn Purple Ash	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>
Green Ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>
Honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia tricanthos</i> "Inermus"
Columnar English Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i> 'fastigiata'
Apricot	<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>
Utah Juniper	<i>Juniperus osteosperma</i>
Cliffrose	<i>Purshia stansburiana</i>
Eastern Red-Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>
Staghorn Sumac	<i>Rhus typhina</i>
Washington Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>
Eastern Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>

## Large-Sized Trees

Large trees (more than 50 feet high at maturity) may be planted 50 feet or more from wires. Some examples include:

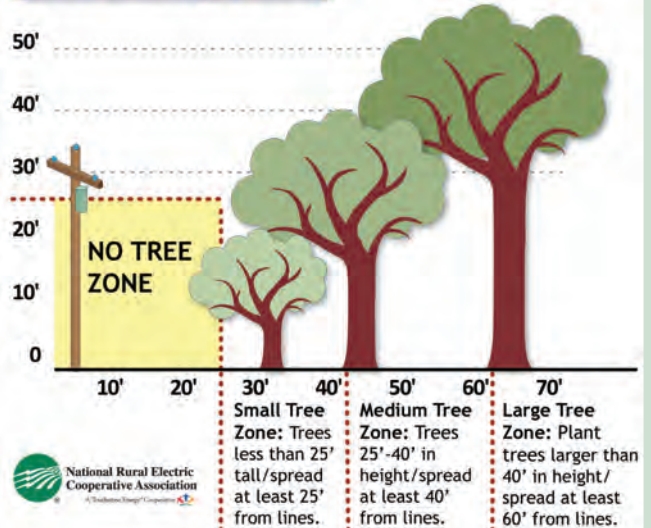
Northern Catalpa	<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	Black Pine	<i>Pinus thunbergii</i>
Kentucky Coffeetree	<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	Kousa Dogwood	<i>Cornus cousa</i>
London Planetree	<i>Platanus acerfolia</i>	Singleleaf Ash	<i>Fraxinus anomala</i>
Linden	<i>Tilia</i> spp.	Rocky Mountain Juniper	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Callery Pear	<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>
Northern Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Winter King Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus viridis</i>
Pin Oak	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	Lavelle Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus x lavelle</i>
American Elm	<i>Ulmus americana</i>	Gray Dogwood	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>
Ponderosa Pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	Hybrid Forsythia	<i>Forsythia x intermedia</i>
Spruces	<i>Picea</i> spp.	Wayfaringtree Viburnum	<i>Viburnum litana</i>
Firs	<i>Abies</i> spp.		

## Our Region

Please note that in Ely and surrounding areas, trees adaptable to U.S. Department of Agriculture hardiness zone 4b are best for exposed areas. It is not advisable to plant trees that are not adaptable to climates greater than hardiness zone 6b because it is possible the trees will not be able to acclimate and survive.

Mt. Wheeler Power encourages residents to consider other species not listed here and to determine the mature height of trees before purchasing to ensure a healthy, long-lived tree.

## Tree Planting Guide





**"Don't mess with me," says Kathy Bragg. "That's pretty much fact."**

Photos by John M. Glionna

## At Crystal's Short Branch, You Play by Ms. Kathy's Rules

*Open from noon to 7 p.m. Unless it's not.*

**By John M. Glionna**

CRYSTAL, Nev. – Hey partner, listen up: If you're gonna drink at the Short Branch Saloon in the far-flung desert burg of Crystal, you best be forewarned that you gotta play by the rules.

Ms. Kathy's rules.

Yep, she's the owner of the joint, as sharp as a rusted nail, and what she says goes.

Don't be fooled by this grandmother in blue jeans and strawberry-blond hair whose signature meat loaf once brought them in for miles around. Or that every Christmas she sponsors a cookie bakeoff, the results distributed among the road and utility workers who help keep life nice in the little settlement of 100 residents.

She runs a respectable

place out here next to a shuttered brothel and a cluster of simple homes and trailers, a community where the mostly unpaved roads bear such cowboy-themed names as "Pinto," "Corral" and "Bridle."

Ms. Kathy, her regulars know, will as soon throw you out as look at you, as a few now-pitiable former patrons can tell you. She slaps possible troublemakers with one-or-two beer limits. After that they're done, no arguments, she says, because they've

shown in the past that that they can't be respectful.

The drinker folks here call "Loosey" learned his lesson. He'd run his mouth, used a few too many cuss words. But he was a big man, over 6-foot-4, and he climbs high-voltage electric poles for a living, so Ms. Kathy waited until he walked out and then locked the front door behind him. He had car trouble and was back a few moments later, pounding on the door, demanding to be let back in.

Not on your life.

"Don't mess with me," Ms. Kathy says. "That's pretty much fact."

After two long decades of serving drinks and not taking any lip, she owns the bar and

motel outright, which gives her a bit of leverage in laying down the law. She opens her doors Tuesday through Saturday, from noon until 7 p.m., or whenever she feels like closing.

Complaining that you drove all this way to find the place closed? “Well then, come when I’m here!” Ms. Kathy will say.

Her full name is Kathy Bragg and she bought the Short Branch in 1998, while working for Sears department store down in Las Vegas.

Don’t even ask her age: “You don’t need to know.”

Husbands? “No need to talk about them,” she says. “I just don’t know how to pick men. I can’t even count the total, but they had this in common: They were bad.”

Ms. Kathy’s outspoken ways harken back to Nevada’s pioneer era, when single women had to look out for themselves or be taken advantage of by all those men.

But this bar owner is no damsel in distress. A poster hanging near the bar could very well define Ms. Kathy’s self-image, right there for all male drinkers to see: There’s an image of a witch, along with the phrase, “Broom rides 25 cents.”

Other placards show, quite plainly, what Ms. Kathy thinks of men.

“Men are like parking spaces,” one reads. “The good ones are taken; the rest are handicapped.” Or try this one on for size: “Men are like coolers. Load them with beer and you can take them anywhere.”

Hanging on another wall are memorials to departed regulars now drinking at that big bar in the sky.



**Ms. Kathy's only regret? That she didn't find the Short Branch before she did.**

Country music plays, a sickly Christmas tree leans into a corner.

Ms. Kathy is a staunch Trump supporter like few others. Just sit down, shut your trap, and she’ll tell you all about the horrors of being a small business owner under that other party. “Only those people who don’t look around and read get in trouble in here,” she says, pointing to a sticker under that TV that read, “#Trump Train” and another disparaging U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

She also doesn’t cater to those sophisticated city-types who walk in ordering drinks with fancy names. You want a vodka and orange juice? Then say so. She doesn’t want to hear the words “screw” or “driver.”

Over the years, Ms. Kathy has devised ways to pack the place. She sponsors the annual bordello run for charity and brings in thousands of bikers.

But her movie day came to a screeching halt when the TV broke down.

On a Saturday, the regulars roll in like tumbleweeds.

There’s Charlotte LeVar, who once worked as prison warden’s secretary, and her husband, Dan, dressed in bib overalls. He says a visitor can use his name, “as long as you’re not from MSNBC or CNN, or else I’ll get in my truck and leave right now.”

Then Gordon and Jackie Steffek arrive with their dog Sadie.

“Hi sweetie,” Ms. Kathy coos at the animal. “Hi baby girl.”

Jackie walks behind the bar to peruse some women’s lingerie for sale, then walks away sighing. “My husband won’t let me buy one more stick of clothing, shoes or even purse.”

Gordon Steffek says proudly he’s been coming to the Short Branch for 19 years “and I haven’t been thrown out yet.”

Yes, he adds, he and Jackie are married. “Well, we were when we walked in here.”

They all rave about Crystal’s quiet life, seeing the occasional badger or long-necked crane on a winter morning, not to mention those gorgeous summer sunsets.

Ms. Kathy also likes it here, despite the fact that the phone service is lousy, and it’s hard to get good help. Mostly because she stays busy. “There’s always towels to wash, floors to mop and nine toilets to clean.”

Wiping down the bar, Ms. Kathy laments that she might have wasted 32 years working at Sears; if she’d only known how much darned fun she’d have running the Short Branch out in Crystal.

Because this is no department store. Out here, it’s Ms. Kathy’s way or the highway.

As she talks, the male drinkers stay quiet, nodding in agreement. ■



**"Don't mess with me," says Kathy Bragg. "That's pretty much fact."**

Photos by John M. Glionna

## At Crystal's Short Branch, You Play by Ms. Kathy's Rules

*Open from noon to 7 p.m. Unless it's not.*

**By John M. Glionna**

CRYSTAL, Nev. – Hey partner, listen up: If you're gonna drink at the Short Branch Saloon in the far-flung desert burg of Crystal, you best be forewarned that you gotta play by the rules.

Ms. Kathy's rules.

Yep, she's the owner of the joint, as sharp as a rusted nail, and what she says goes.

Don't be fooled by this grandmother in blue jeans and strawberry-blond hair whose signature meat loaf once brought them in for miles around. Or that every Christmas she sponsors a cookie bakeoff, the results distributed among the road and utility workers who help keep life nice in the little settlement of 100 residents.

She runs a respectable

place out here next to a shuttered brothel and a cluster of simple homes and trailers, a community where the mostly unpaved roads bear such cowboy-themed names as "Pinto," "Corral" and "Bridle."

Ms. Kathy, her regulars know, will as soon throw you out as look at you, as a few now-pitiable former patrons can tell you. She slaps possible troublemakers with one-or-two beer limits. After that they're done, no arguments, she says, because they've

shown in the past that that they can't be respectful.

The drinker folks here call "Loosey" learned his lesson. He'd run his mouth, used a few too many cuss words. But he was a big man, over 6-foot-4, and he climbs high-voltage electric poles for a living, so Ms. Kathy waited until he walked out and then locked the front door behind him. He had car trouble and was back a few moments later, pounding on the door, demanding to be let back in.

Not on your life.

"Don't mess with me," Ms. Kathy says. "That's pretty much fact."

After two long decades of serving drinks and not taking any lip, she owns the bar and

motel outright, which gives her a bit of leverage in laying down the law. She opens her doors Tuesday through Saturday, from noon until 7 p.m., or whenever she feels like closing.

Complaining that you drove all this way to find the place closed? “Well then, come when I’m here!” Ms. Kathy will say.

Her full name is Kathy Bragg and she bought the Short Branch in 1998, while working for Sears department store down in Las Vegas.

Don’t even ask her age: “You don’t need to know.”

Husbands? “No need to talk about them,” she says. “I just don’t know how to pick men. I can’t even count the total, but they had this in common: They were bad.”

Ms. Kathy’s outspoken ways harken back to Nevada’s pioneer era, when single women had to look out for themselves or be taken advantage of by all those men.

But this bar owner is no damsel in distress. A poster hanging near the bar could very well define Ms. Kathy’s self-image, right there for all male drinkers to see: There’s an image of a witch, along with the phrase, “Broom rides 25 cents.”

Other placards show, quite plainly, what Ms. Kathy thinks of men.

“Men are like parking spaces,” one reads. “The good ones are taken; the rest are handicapped.” Or try this one on for size: “Men are like coolers. Load them with beer and you can take them anywhere.”

Hanging on another wall are memorials to departed regulars now drinking at that big bar in the sky.



**Ms. Kathy's only regret? That she didn't find the Short Branch before she did.**

Country music plays, a sickly Christmas tree leans into a corner.

Ms. Kathy is a staunch Trump supporter like few others. Just sit down, shut your trap, and she’ll tell you all about the horrors of being a small business owner under that other party. “Only those people who don’t look around and read get in trouble in here,” she says, pointing to a sticker under that TV that read, “#Trump Train” and another disparaging U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

She also doesn’t cater to those sophisticated city-types who walk in ordering drinks with fancy names. You want a vodka and orange juice? Then say so. She doesn’t want to hear the words “screw” or “driver.”

Over the years, Ms. Kathy has devised ways to pack the place. She sponsors the annual bordello run for charity and brings in thousands of bikers.

But her movie day came to a screeching halt when the TV broke down.

On a Saturday, the regulars roll in like tumbleweeds.

There’s Charlotte LeVar, who once worked as prison warden’s secretary, and her husband, Dan, dressed in bib overalls. He says a visitor can use his name, “as long as you’re not from MSNBC or CNN, or else I’ll get in my truck and leave right now.”

Then Gordon and Jackie Steffek arrive with their dog Sadie.

“Hi sweetie,” Ms. Kathy coos at the animal. “Hi baby girl.”

Jackie walks behind the bar to peruse some women’s lingerie for sale, then walks away sighing. “My husband won’t let me buy one more stick of clothing, shoes or even purse.”

Gordon Steffek says proudly he’s been coming to the Short Branch for 19 years “and I haven’t been thrown out yet.”

Yes, he adds, he and Jackie are married. “Well, we were when we walked in here.”

They all rave about Crystal’s quiet life, seeing the occasional badger or long-necked crane on a winter morning, not to mention those gorgeous summer sunsets.

Ms. Kathy also likes it here, despite the fact that the phone service is lousy, and it’s hard to get good help. Mostly because she stays busy. “There’s always towels to wash, floors to mop and nine toilets to clean.”

Wiping down the bar, Ms. Kathy laments that she might have wasted 32 years working at Sears; if she’d only known how much darned fun she’d have running the Short Branch out in Crystal.

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Amani Center hosted Race Against Child Abuse on April 13 in St. Helens. More than 200 participants helped raise funds and awareness for the center's work.

# Helping Those in Crisis

*SAFE of Columbia County and Amani Center support survivors of abuse and violence*

By Scott Laird

When you're frightened, alone and fearing for your safety, it is good to know there is someone who will listen to your story and offer support, comfort and protection.

That's what SAFE of Columbia County and Amani Center—two social service agencies operating in Columbia County—do for some of the most vulnerable local citizens.

Through its trained and certified advocates, SAFE provides support and resources for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. In addition to operating a confidential shelter that provides a safe place for families, it helps survivors navigate the justice system, operates a 24-hour emergency hotline, helps with safety planning and teaches prevention.

Amani Center in St. Helens provides professional forensic evaluations of children who may have been abused or neglected. The center offers support to children and families through medical

assessments, unbiased interviews, referrals to public safety or health agencies, case management, family support, advocacy services, safety planning and public outreach.

Beth Pulito has been Amani Center's fundraising and outreach coordinator for the past three years. She has a degree in communications and marketing. Prior to joining the Amani Center staff, Beth was a stay-at-home mom.

"This position fit my desire to be involved in the community," she says. "It used to be that I was always the one to say, 'I'll help with that fundraiser' or 'I'll plan that event.' Now it's my job."

Ellyn Bell is executive director of SAFE. She has spent her adult life working in social services, either as a volunteer or as a paid staff member, addressing domestic violence and sexual assault. She has worked with marginalized youth, including the homeless and youth in the foster care system.

Prior to coming to Oregon, Ellyn managed a runaway youth program in Sacramento, California, and ran the Domestic Violence Coalition for the state of California. She has worked on the issue of human trafficking, and served two terms on the Sacramento School Board.

“I just really want to be part of the solution,” Ellyn says.

SAFE and Amani Center often work together—their clients sometimes overlap—by coordinating referrals and support services.

“We have a lot of the same desires, and our overall missions to reduce child abuse and reduce sexual assault are similar,” Beth says. “We just go about it in different ways. We try to utilize each other’s services that already exist so we’re not duplicating anything.”

“I think we have a good partnership, and both of our organizations are very necessary in our community,” Ellyn says.

Children seen at Amani Center are examined by trained medical personnel. They are interviewed by professionals in a safe, family-friendly space designed to make them comfortable talking about what has happened to them.

Amani Center medical staff are physicians contracted through the medical examiner’s office. Interviewers are Amani Center staff members.

Last year, Amani Center saw 256 children.

“A lot of our referrals come from law enforcement, schools or Department of Human Services,” Beth says. “Our main purpose with our interview process is to be the one place where a child has to tell their story—in their own words and at their own pace—so they don’t have to tell it multiple times.”

The story a child tells in an interview can be used as their testimony in court.

Ellyn says SAFE provides trauma training for community law



**Amani Center has family-friendly rooms where staff can conduct forensic evaluations and interviews with children suspected of suffering child abuse.**

enforcement, teachers and others who come in contact with people who have experienced abuse or violence. They offer support groups and classes to assist people. They also provide community-based advocates who can meet with potential clients in Clatskanie, Rainier, Vernonia and Scappoose.

“Our community advocacy is really important because sometimes the people we meet with don’t have transportation,” Ellen says.

SAFE served more than 600 people in 2018.

SAFE’s emergency shelter has 23 beds in a dormitory-style facility, and is the only shelter in Columbia County. Ellyn says their shelter beds have often been full, and SAFE has had to rent local motel rooms for clients. SAFE provided shelter for 132 people last year.

There is one significant difference between the two organizations: SAFE is not a mandatory reporter under Oregon law, which states that all county health employees are required to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

“Oregon is one of the first states to recognize that the privilege lies with the individual and that an advocate should

hold confidentiality—that there needs to be protection and a safe place for people to disclose without any fear that there is any line that might be crossed,” Ellyn says. “There are many cases where mandatory reporting is absolutely necessary.”

Ellyn says SAFE has expanded its prevention programs the past several years. SAFE staff works in a number of Columbia County schools providing healthy relationship, trauma and mindfulness training for students and teachers.

Amani Center also does community outreach. It held a speaker series in April, “Raising a Community,”

which discussed child abuse and domestic violence. The center also partnered with SAFE to host a speaker and film series in April to raise awareness about human trafficking, victims’ rights, internet safety, mental health issues and suicide prevention.

Funding for both Amani Center and SAFE comes from multiple sources and includes federal, state and county funding, competitive and noncompetitive grant programs, individual donors, fundraisers and foundations.

SAFE holds its annual fundraiser, Roots of Resilience, Saturday, May 11, at the Scappoose Creek Inn. The fundraiser includes an auction, live music and food.

Amani Center held its Race Against Child Abuse fundraising 5K run April 13 in St. Helens. The center will host a run in Clatskanie on Saturday, June 29, in conjunction with Heritage Days and the Clatskanie Car Show. ■

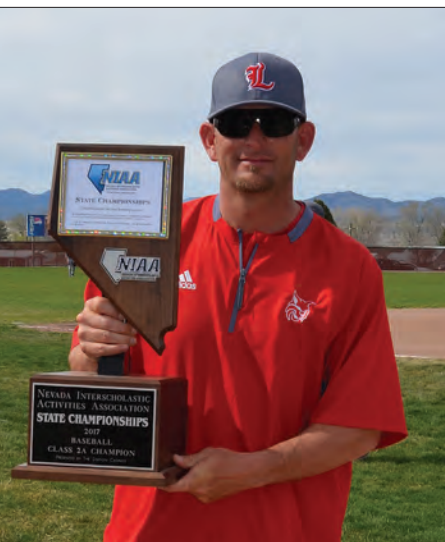
*To learn more about SAFE of Columbia County, go to [www.SafeofColumbiaCounty.com](http://www.SafeofColumbiaCounty.com) or call the office at 503-397-7110. Its 24-hour help line is 866-397-6161 or 503-367-6161. To learn more about Amani Center, go to [www.AmaniCenter.org](http://www.AmaniCenter.org) or call 503-366-4005.*



Softball coach Ben Long hits balls to his players.  
Photos by Gretchen Soderborg

# COACHING

For the volunteer coaches at Lincoln County High, sports are about more than winning



Baseball coach Dell O'Connor holds the Lynx's 2017 state championship trophy.

## By Dianna Troyer

When it comes to athletics, the Lincoln County High School Lynx are supposed to be underdogs, often competing against schools twice their size. But the school's packed trophy cases attest to its strength in sports.

Despite having only about 18 players each season, the Lynx baseball team has won the state championship the past three years, and players hope to win a fourth championship May 17-18 in Mesquite.

Of the 18 schools in

Nevada's 2A division—those with 170 to 460 students—Lincoln County High School in Panaca is among the smallest, with enrollment generally around 180.

"Some years, when enrollment falls a little, we've been asked if we want to drop down to 1A, but we've always turned down the offer," says assistant football coach Steve Lucchesi, a Lynx alum. "Despite being underdogs from not having as many players as other schools, we're usually in the top four competing for a state championship."

Steve says the Lynx varsity football team usually averages about 20 players while opponents bring up to 60 to each game. Many Lynx athletes play both offense and defense.

Track and field coach Lacie Pearson says the Lynx track team usually has about two dozen athletes at each meet while opponents typically have around 50.

The Lynx overcome their disadvantages by employing devoted, passionate coaches who train their athletes hard. Coaches are often unpaid alumni and veterans of state championship teams who want



# UP

to impart life lessons that matter as much as the trophies.

“As a coaching staff, we want to give players opportunities to develop and learn values that will guide and motivate them long after high school in whatever they do,” says English teacher Raymond Wadsworth, the school’s football and baseball coach since 2012. “Our coaches are invaluable for all our sports programs. Whether they’re unpaid volunteers or assistants who receive a small stipend, they have a fantastic rapport with our students and really motivate them.”

Coaching stipends are modest, and many volunteer coaches work full-time jobs, committing much of their free time to coaching.

With daily practices and competitions that sometimes require bus trips as long as five hours one way, coaching is a significant commitment.

“In small towns like ours, people wear a lot of hats and volunteer because there’s a need,” Raymond says of Panaca and neighboring Pioche, each with about 1,000 residents. “Coaches and fans here are generous, donating their time and money because they care about the kids.”

Lacie says she could not run the track program without volunteer coaches.

“I did distance events and the shotput in high school and cross country in college, so I don’t have the expertise for all the other events,” Lacie says. “Several coaches don’t even have kids in the program. They’re coaching because they competed in a certain event in high school or college and want to share their enthusiasm and pass along what they learned.”

Lacie says she relies on Melinda Markarian in pole vault, Afton Poulsen in discus and shotput, Tim Olson in long jump and triple jump, and Spencer Hafen in high jump.

Summoning insights they have gained from their diverse ages and occupations, coaches share favorite lessons they strive to instill in athletes.

“Remember, you’re stronger than you think you are,” Lacie likes to tell the track team.

Softball coach Phil Boucher, a retired maintenance supervisor with

the Nevada Department of Transportation, emphasizes positivity.

“We love to win, but it’s not everything,” Phil says. “Have a positive attitude on and off the field and a work ethic, which are traits you’ll need the rest of your life.”

A third-year apprentice lineman at Lincoln County Power District No. 1, Eric Bernal reinforces similar ideas while coaching the girls basketball team.

“Not everyone will be a starter, so I tell them to stay positive and think of what they’re learning through sports,” Eric says. “Make the best of opportunities. Be accountable and on time for practices and games. Have a plan and be prepared for any situation that might arise. The drills and exercises we do may seem repetitive and boring, but they’ll pay off in the end. Reach for your goals no matter how long it takes.”

An operations technician for the power district, Steve tells football players not to have a sense of entitlement.

“Nothing is handed to you, and nothing comes easy,” he says. “You can’t just show up at practice or a game and expect to win. If you put in time and effort and hard work, you get a lot out of whatever sport you’re playing or job you’re doing.”

A power district lineman and baseball coach, Dane Bradfield says, “There’s so much to teach about strategy. It’s rewarding to watch players learn and understand certain tactics.”

Robert Ruben Rowe, a fire captain for the Bureau of Land Management, says he hopes players will share



**Raymond Wadsworth hopes the baseball team will add another trophy to the case in May.**

his love of baseball long after high school and one day give back to the community.

“Who knows,” he says. “Maybe they’ll become coaches.”

Power district lineman Dell O’Connor tells baseball players about self-control and self-motivation.

“Take care of the only two things you can control: your attitude and effort,” he says.

Following Lynx coaching advice, Dell’s son McClain, a 2017 graduate, plays second base for the University of California Santa Barbara, where he earned a scholarship and is majoring in sociology. During a high school tournament in Reno, a recruiter from Lassen Community College in Susanville, California, noticed McClain, who played for Lassen a year before stepping up to UCSB.

“McClain was recruited because he’s slender, has a

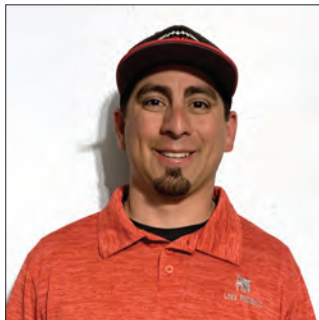
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good reach and quick reflexes and works hard,” Dell says. “Since we’ve gotten to know the Lassen coach, we hope a few more of our players will go there.”

Dell says another reason Lynx teams have been successful is due to a parent, Ed Vincent, who motivates players individually.

“I enjoy figuring out what makes each one tick to help them improve,” says Ed, a carpenter. “I’ll make notes during a game and talk to a player afterward. Living in a small community, you know everyone and take a personal interest in the kids.”



**Lincoln County Power District’s Steve Lucchesi helps coach Lynx football.**

Ed says at the end of a game or season, a team’s win-loss record or scores are not what matter most.

“It’s not about the X’s and O’s but the Willies and the Joes,” Ed says. “Everyone matters.”

Whether they win or lose



**Track coach Lacie Pearson relies on several coaches to teach athletes.**

a game, Raymond says he reminds players their effort and roles are equally important on a team.

“After high school, you’ll have a role, whether a CEO or ditch digger,” Raymond says. “Whatever your role is, do your best because it will help



**Girls softball coach Phil Boucher preaches positive mental attitude.**

others do their best too.”

As the state baseball championship nears, Raymond is pitching a new mantra to players.

“Never be complacent,” he says. “I’ve been reminding them to be humble and hungry.” ■

**Eric Bernal draws out a play for the girls basketball team.**

