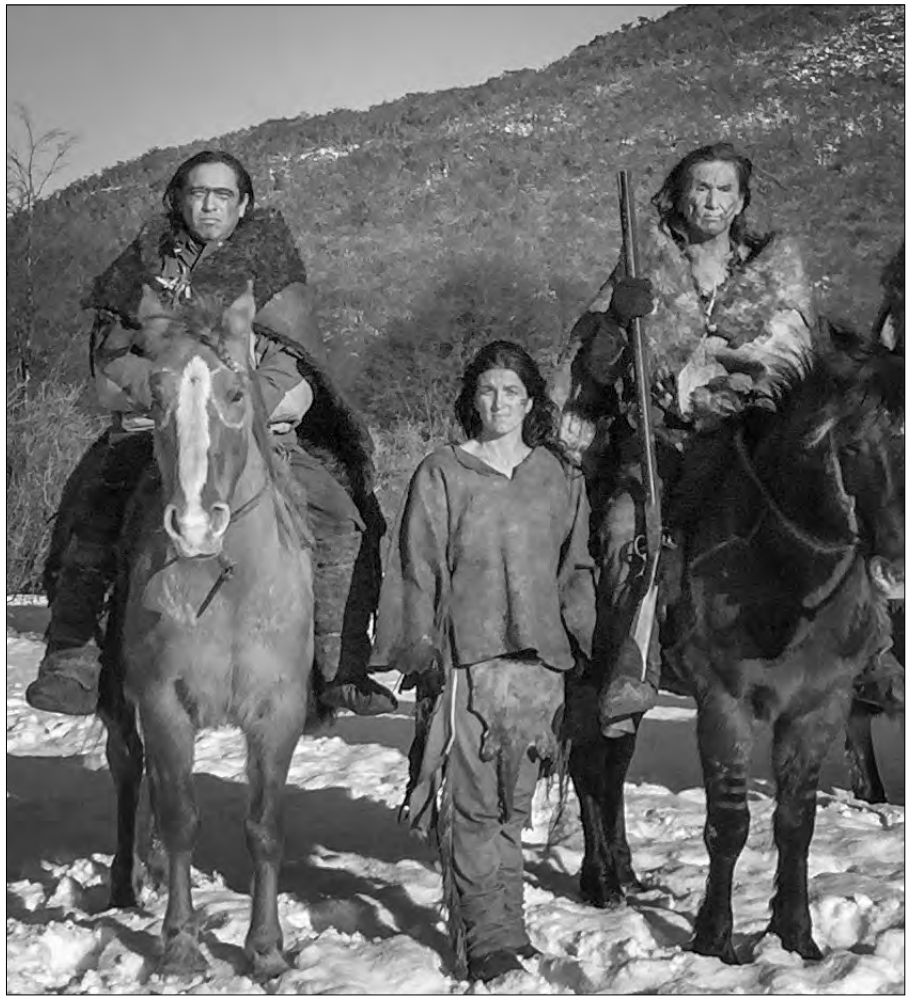
A Fast Horse and a Little Luck

Condon cowgirl enjoys silver screen adventures

By Jody Foss



Katie Garthwaite stands with other actors while working on "The Revenent" in southern Argentina. Her role was to double as a Native American woman crossing a river.

Photos courtesy of Katie Garthwaite

Five years ago, Katie Garthwaite was waiting her turn to compete at a barrel race when she received a phone call from her husband, Mike.

"Do you think you could fall off a horse?" he asked.

Mike was working on the movie "World of Warcraft" in British Columbia. His boss, producer, director, stunt coordinator and horseman Danny Virtue of Virtue Studios was looking for a girl to be able to ride a horse and do a saddle fall—rolling off the side of the saddle.

"I knew the kind of money everyone was making that was working on that show," Katie says. "I wanted to make some for myself as well, so I said, 'Sure.'"

Katie headed north and went to work on the set the next day. For three days, she watched stuntmen hooked to a line get ripped around the sets on ratchets as she marched horses into battle. On the last day, they decided to hook her up to a cable and ratchet her off her horse.

"I wasn't just falling off," she says. "I was going to get yanked off! Needless to say, I was very nervous. I had never done anything like that before."

The first time the harness under her costume pulled her to the ground, she landed on the back of her head.

"It rang my bell a bit so they adjusted the cable," Katie says. "My gig was to get my horse loping through all these guys fighting all around me as I was trying to kill a big ogre."

The ogre threw a shield and knocked her off her horse.

"I had a bit of a whiplash," Katie says, "but in the end it was a good experience."

Katie proved she could take a hit and still do her job, which led her into more stunt opportunities, such as tackling a bad guy at a lope and hitting the dirt on the TV show "Strange Empire."

"If it wouldn't have been for my husband encouraging me, I'm not sure I would have been able to do those things," she says.

Katie grew up in the saddle in Condon. She won barrel racing competitions at junior and pee wee rodeos. Her mother, Patti Kayser, was her mentor and biggest fan. The two traveled together to rodeo events across the West.

When Katie was 15, her mother let her buy her Women's Pro Rodeo Association card. She started competing with a horse named Rags, who Katie says was talented and competitive. She won the Columbia River Circuit in 1997 and finished third in the nation on the high school rodeo circuit in Pueblo, Colorado.

In 1999, while riding a friend's horse in the NFR finals, Katie left all barrels

standing in all 10 rounds and finished sixth all around.

Katie graduated high school in 1997 and met Mike, a Canadian Rodeo champion steer wrestler. The couple married in 2000 and moved to his family's ranch in Merritt, B.C, where they worked the ranch and continued to compete in rodeo.

Canada is a popular filming destination because there are tax breaks for Americans and the U.S. dollar is strong.

When it comes to filming, Katie says Danny Virtue Studios takes care of the details.

"They organize everything with the horses and do stunts," she says.

Katie has doubled for many actresses. She worked on a TV show called "The 100," and the Netflix movie "Strange Empire" and traveled to the tip of Argentina to double as a Native American woman crossing a wide river in the last scene of "The Revenant."

Katie says horses on set are treated really well and are talented stars of the show, just like rodeo horses. Some horses are trained to rear up and others, called liberty horses, are trained to run free in scenes. Other horses are trained how to fall.

"You can't just go out to the pasture and get a horse and hope they work on the set," she says. "They are surrounded by millions of dollars in cameras."

Last year, Katie and Mike traveled to Beijing and Xing Bao, China, to work with trainer Bill Lawrence of White Swan, Washington, to prepare Chinese horses for a feature film being produced there. Mike trained six horses to work as "fall" horses, and Katie helped ride 25 others to get them broke for the actors to ride in the movie.

"We started from scratch and the horses turned out really well," she says.

Katie's mother cared for the couple's daughter, Gracie, while she attended eighth grade in Condon.

These days, Katie, 40, isn't competing in rodeos, but she is carrying on the family tradition of mentoring her own little rider. Gracie hopes to qualify for the Junior High School Rodeo Finals in Huron, South Dakota. Last year, she qualified for the Junior National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

"She has some pretty hefty goals, and we are enjoying traveling around with her," Katie says. "Maybe someday Gracie and I can compete together, but right now I am enjoying watching my daughter ride great horses that we trained. I get a huge kick out of watching her compete."

Katie has met famous actors on the sets, including Leonardo diCaprio, Dennis Quaid, Jeff Bridges, Christian Slater and Luke Perry.

"I am definitely very lucky to have this life," she says. "I have had some opportunities that a lot of people never get, and I am thankful for that. For just being a small town girl from Condon, I have got to do some amazing things." ■

Above, Katie was a double for an actress on the TV show "The 100" in Canada.

Top, Katie and her husband, Mike, enjoy spending time with their horses and enjoying the success their daughter, Gracie, is having in barrel racing competitions and rodeos across the West.

Flying Feet First

Master pole vaulter is a record setter at 73

By Craig Reed

John Altendorf loves to power himself skyward—feet first.

That's what pole vaulters do.

John pushes himself upward off the pole in an effort to clear the bar at the peak of his jump. He then falls back to Earth, landing on foam pads to complete the thrill of vaulting.

John made his first vault during his sophomore track and field season at The Dalles High School. Now 73, he is still jumping. He is record good at it. John has been competing in master's track and field events since picking up a vault pole again at age 57. That's 35 years after completing his senior track and field season at the University of Portland and earning an engineering degree in 1968.

After a couple years of retraining, John has set and then improved on numerous American and world records in different age groups of the masters meets. Age groups are five-year periods: 60-64, 64-69, 70-74 and so on.

At age 64, John cleared his personal masters best of 13 feet, 3.5 inches in March 2010, improving on his own indoor world record in the 60-64 age group by an inch. In July 2010, he cleared 13 feet, 3 inches to set the outdoor world record for that same age group.

In 2011, at age 65, John set the outdoor world record in the 65-69 age group with a vault of 12 feet, 9 inches.

Although getting older, his vaulting technique was improving with more practice, more coaching and more study of his form so he could clear record heights for his age group.

While some of his American and world records have since been topped by other master vaulters, as of the end of 2018, John holds the outdoor world record for the 70-74 age group at 11 feet,

5.25 inches (set at age 70), the outdoor American record for 65-69 at 12 feet, 9 inches (set at age 65) and the indoor American record for 65-69 at 12 feet, 8 inches (set at age 66).

He is now training to clear the indoor 70-74 world record of 11 feet.

John says his return to pole vaulting after retiring from his career as an engineer for Westinghouse Aerospace and for Hewlett Packard in 2003 was pure coincidence. He played softball and took up running to keep the pounds off. When he read an article about Dennis Phillips, the Philomath High School pole vault coach, setting a national age group record in that event in a masters meet, he was intrigued.

"You mean there's a place for old guys to still do this," John says of his reaction to what he read.

John called Dennis, who shared details on the master track and field program.

"That's how I got started again," John says. "I knew I wasn't as fast, I wasn't as strong (compared to high school and college), but I had a brain that was better able to listen to coaching."

The first coaching advice he followed was to give up middle distance running and to focus on sprinting. Vaulters need speed down the runway to have the momentum needed to bend the pole that sends the vaulter skyward as it straightens out.

In his first masters meet at Hayward Field in Eugene, John doesn't recall his height, but he tied for third in the 55-60 age group.

"I had enough success early on without being a gung-ho workout freak," he says. "Compared to running a 10K (6.2 miles), crossing the finish line and feeling dead and wanting to puke, this was a lot more fun. I was willing to push myself to develop better technique for vaulting."

John Altendorf was a high school and college pole vaulter and didn't jump again for 35 years, until he turned 57.

Poles are made of varying weight ratings, lengths and flexibility.

Since taking up the pole and sprinting down runways again, John has received advice from several coaches. They've been impressed and inspired by his athletic ability in the vaulting event despite his age.

Dan West, vault coach at Lane Community College and a vaulter himself the past 54 years, says John has the elements that are most important for a vaulter: speed, strength, flexibility and coordination.

"John is still able to vault at his age because of his speed and flexibility," Dan says. "John has an amazing amount of speed. He's lean and that serves him well. And he's courageous, almost to a fault, but that allows him to vault as well as he does."

To train, John says he did what most masters athletes do. He volunteered to help coach, giving him access to the runways and vault pits at Crescent Valley and Corvallis high schools. He became a certified USA Track and Field pole vault official seven years ago, and has officiated numerous high school, college and elite meets around the world, including the NCAA cChampionships and the U.S. Olympic Trials.

"Officiating has given me the chance to meet elite vaulters, elite coaches," John says. "To be on the field when the best are there is amazing.

"When an elite vaulter starts talking to you and you tell them you're still vaulting in masters meets, they're proud of you. Vaulters are a pretty special group. There's a kinship there that I'm proud to be a part of."

John is a member of the Oregon Track Club Masters and the Raising The Bar Vault Club.

With encouragement from his wife, Jodie, John is continuing to vault this summer in hopes of clearing the 11-foot height for the 70-74 record.

He says he's a believer that the training and the relationships he's developed in pole vaulting are both key to longevity in life. ■

River and Rock

Maupin artist captures the art of detail along the Deschutes

By Drew Myron

Sue Knapp doesn't have to travel far for artistic inspiration. From her home on Fish Camp Road in Maupin, she walks down the street to stand at the rim of a canyon where she gazes at the wild and scenic Deschutes River.

Every day, Sue is equal parts artist and scientist, collecting details for paintings that will reveal how time and geology have shaped this place she calls home.

"The geology here is amazing," she says. "If you really look at the rocks you see the layers, and the different environmental changes. I want to capture the erosion process. The things I pay attention to, most people don't. Most people don't like rocks. I do. I want to capture a sense of place in a detailed way."

Sue recently won first place in the Maupin Daze Commemorative Poster Contest for "Maupin on the Deschutes," a lively watercolor detailing the many facets of this timber-town-turned-recreation destination.

Sue spent nearly her entire career in salmon recovery working as a natural resource biologist. She worked for the state of Oregon and for many years spent time on the rivers of the Pacific Northwest: Umatilla, Willamette, John Day, Snake and Columbia. As policy adviser in the Oregon Governor's Natural Resources Office in Salem, she managed a series of restoration efforts that were "satisfying but grueling," she says.

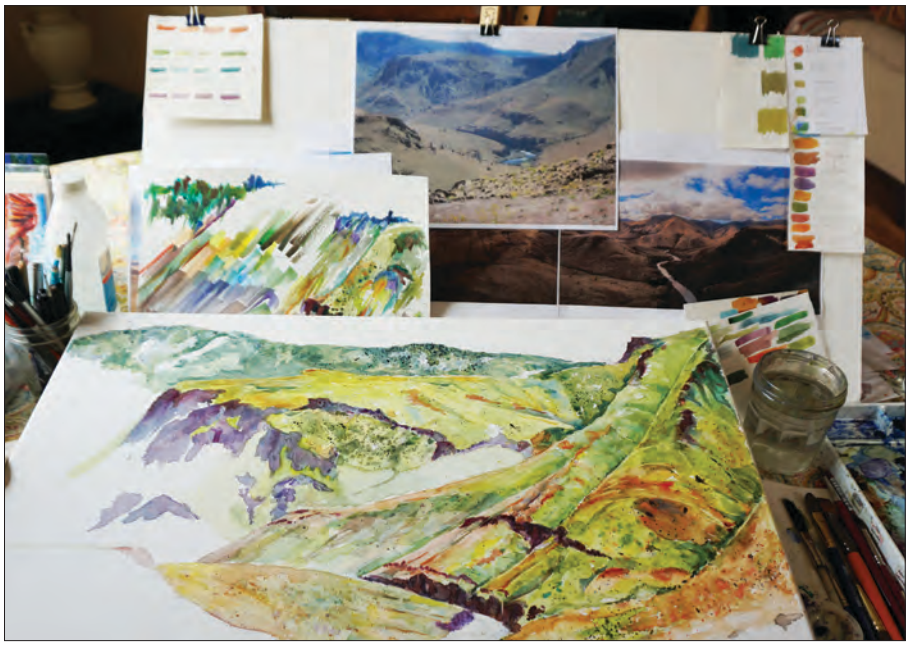
A self-taught artist, Sue Knapp has turned her dining room table into an art studio.

Focused on many high profile policy projects—including the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement—Sue faced numerous challenges.

"It was a men's club," she says. "My whole career was like that. You have to believe in yourself. You don't give up. You get beat up, but you gain that self confidence you need to keep going. If it's your passion, stick with it. Some things take decades to change. You have to persevere."

Once retired, Sue was eager to live on the east side of the Pacific Northwest—where the sun shines and sage grows—and took a two-year tour of potential towns, from Walla Walla to Goldendale, to the Tri-Cities and Bend.

"Maupin is a jewel in the desert," Sue says. A former fish biologist, she is thrilled to live in a place with a "fish-centric way of life."



Sue draws inspiration from the river, vision from hikes and details from photos, then heads to her art table to work out composition and color.

In 2001, single and not knowing a soul, Sue moved to Maupin.

"It's a jewel in the desert," she says.

As a former fish biologist, she says she was thrilled to find a town with "a fish-centric way of life."

Settled into a new home and pace, and with her grown children, Lindsay and Chester, living several hours away, Sue quickly immersed herself in community life. She joined the city of Maupin Budget Committee, and is in her second term on the Maupin City Council. She is on the White River Health District Board of Directors and the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District.

"I've always been committed to public service," Sue explains. "When you work for the state, you're serving the people, and I wanted to continue that."

Retirement offered the pleasure of a slower pace and an opportunity to return to art.

"I've always been an artist at heart," she says.

Though she always doodled, Sue ultimately pursued science over art. Still, in the lab and in the field, she was always an observant scientist crafting detailed drawings of her work.

In Maupin, she became captivated by the grandeur of the landscape. The Lower Deschutes River Canyon quickly became "a magnetic attraction," she says.

What began as simple pen-and-ink drawings matured into dozens of full and lively watercolor pieces.

Her fascination with the landscape comes through in a style that blends realism with slight abstraction. In her work she reveals the forces of uplifting, overlaying and erosion, with river and rock the central focus of nearly every painting.

Sue's paintings sell for $200 to $350. They are often on display at the Maupin Market, The Dalles Art Center and in private homes around town, thanks to the support of new friends.

With no formal training, Sue credits her newfound art emphasis to a group of local women artists with whom she's found support.

"I'm still learning," she says. "They encouraged me, and I just took off. I experiment and collect ideas and look at other paintings. It's a gift and sometimes it just flows."

Sue creates watercolor landscapes that blend detailed realism with colorful abstraction, as shown in this piece, "Mutton Mountains."

Sue draws heavily from her hikes along the Deschutes River, and has recently been exploring the view from drone cameras. She often creates rough sketches in the field or snaps photos that she takes back to her dining room table-turned-art studio. There, she determines the color palette and with an exacting eye, fills in the intricacies.

"I want people to see the details and say, 'I never noticed that,'" she says. ■

A Classic Car Craving

Collector's cars rekindle memories from his youth

By Craig Reed

Tom Keel parked his four cars in a semi-circle and then talked about each with pride.

There is the 1950 Studebaker Champion Starlight Coup, the 1939 Hudson Shortboy pickup, the 1955 Thunderbird and the 1968 Mercedes.

"Those are his babies," says Donnie Keel, Tom's wife of 54 years.

Cars have been a close part of Tom's life since he was a toddler. His father, Vern Keel, owned Keel Motors, a Studebaker dealership in Roseburg, during Tom's youth. Tom remembers polishing up the cars before his father sold them.

When Tom was a bit older, he helped in the dealership's shop after school, changing the oil and lubing vehicles.

Through the years, Tom maintained a connection to the older cars. The retired Douglas County parks director bought and sold several of them, and he and Donnie and their classic cars have participated in many of the Graffiti Weekend activities held each year in the Roseburg area.

They have also traveled to many car shows, going north into Canada and as far east as Kansas.

This year's 38th annual Graffiti Weekend is July 10-14. Activities include show-n-shine events, a swap meet, retirement and rest home tour, drag races, collector car auction, a walk/run, burnout competition, an antique motorcycle show-n-shine, a tear drop and vintage trailer display and a Saturday night cruise in downtown Roseburg, the featured event of the week.

Tom, now 83 years old, doesn't participate in as many Graffiti events as he used to, but the U.S. Army veteran plans to display one or two of his cars at the Graffiti Weekend Kickoff at the

Above, Tom Keel's array of classic cars, from left, a 1968 Mercedes, a 1955 Thunderbird, a 1950 Studebaker and a 1939 Hudson.

Left, the Hudson pickup has been featured in two different car magazines and a TV show.

Opposite page, the Studebaker is the same car his dad sold to the Cottage Grove postmaster when it was new. Tom bought it in 1978.

Roseburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center July 10.

"Having these cars and driving them to these events brings back memories of the 1950s and 1960s," says Tom, who is a member of the Cascade Historical Car Club. "When I see people looking at them, really enjoying them, I get a kick out of that."

Donnie admits she wasn't raised around cars, but because Tom "enjoys them so much, I'm OK with them."

"We'll probably drive in to some of the events and just be spectators," she says.

Tom says it's hard to pick a favorite of the four cars he now has, but he admits to having the most sentimental feelings for the Studebaker because of that model's ties to his family's history.

He remembers his father selling the Starlight Coup as a new vehicle to the postmaster in Cottage Grove. In 1978, Tom was at a Cottage Grove gas station when he looked across the street and saw the same car parked at a Ford dealership. It had the Keel Motors decal on the trunk, so Tom knew it was the same vehicle he had lubed back before it was sold.

"Donnie told me, 'You're going to have to buy it,'" Tom says.

He laughs about that support from his wife because after the purchase, he had to upgrade the kitchen in their home for her.

Tom bought the Hudson pickup at an auction in Grants Pass in the mid-1980s. He only knew that the vehicle had originally come from the 29 Palms area of Southern California. It has been featured in stories in two car magazines and also made an appearance in a TV episode of Grand Tour.

Tom also acquired the Thunderbird in the mid-1980s, trading a Volkswagen Beetle and a Mercury Cougar for it. He has no history on the T-bird.

The Mercedes was bought at a Graffiti auction in Roseburg and was intended to be a car Donnie could drive.

"It was supposed to be my car, but he's afraid of me getting rock chips or door dings on it so I haven't driven it much," Donnie says with a laugh.

She says she was a school bus driver for the Sutherlin and Umpqua school districts for 30 years so she is a competent driver.

In 2006, Tom took a class at Umpqua Community College and during that class with the help of the instructors, he rebuilt the Thunderbird's engine.

"I was proud that it actually ran after we did the rebuild," he says.

He's done some of the other work on the cars to restore them, but for the most part he's had professionals in the Roseburg and Sutherlin areas do any needed motor work, upholstery and painting on the cars.

Tom says he's "probably" done buying and selling classic cars.

"I'll probably stay with these four, unless I can figure a way to take one with me," he says of his classic cars. "I'll continue to drive them a little to enjoy them." ■

The Pursuit of Hoppiness

Local breweries draw in beer lovers

By Miranda Thompson

Our stunning coastline attracts tourists and newcomers for many reasons: picturesque scenery, local shops and artists, or distinct restaurants. Visitors and locals alike love the features that make our area unique, and we have plenty.

A growing trend nationwide is small craft breweries. Microbreweries have popped up nationally at an astonishing rate, and the southern Oregon Coast brewery selection does not disappoint. Several in the Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative Inc. area stand out, offering a variety of ales and lagers.

From the brewhouse to lighting, boiler house, refrigeration and more, microbreweries—like much of the beverage industry—are highly energy-intensive businesses. Most breweries run primarily on electricity. They also use some propane, especially with direct fire brew systems.

Self-proclaimed beer connoisseurs and newbie beer consumers want a knowledgeable tap house that offers something to suit their palate. These breweries have rave reviews on social media and Yelp, and are worth visiting.

Misty Mountain Brewing, Brookings

At the south end of CCEC's territory is a family owned and operated company offering eight taps and a small food menu. The name, Misty Mountain, comes from the book "The Hobbit." The name, décor and vibe are reflective of the J.R.R. Tolkien novels from which the mountain range was derived.

This tap haus has stellar reviews. Many who claim they "do not even like beer" have found something they really enjoyed here.

Misty Mountain has eight brews on tap.

Mark Camarillo started the brewery after his son Matt had heart surgery. Matt had worked for a commercial brewer. During his recovery in 2015, father and son decided to start brewing together. Matt is the head brewer, but Mark and other family members help run the company.

This brewery works on a smaller scale, taking pride in the quality of each of the 150 barrels produced annually, with no rushing or shortcuts. The standard U.S. barrel is 31 gallons.

Picking a favorite brew is a little like trying to pick a favorite child, Mark says, noting he loves each of the flavors offered. However, he settles on Sea of Ruin Imperial Red Ale, which boasts 9% alcohol by volume and "has the potential to ruin you."

Chetco Brewing Co., Brookings

Self-taught brewmaster Michael Frederick began with a home brew kit and realized it would not satisfy his thirst for beer making. He ordered hop rhizomes to grow his own hops, and thought owning a brewery would be a lot of fun. But life obstacles got in the way of making his dream a reality.

"Life is what happens while you are planning something else, right?" Michael says.

Michael homebrewed off and on for about nine years before opening Chetco Brewery in 2013.

Interesting Beer/Brewery Facts

- The strongest beer in the world is from Scottish brewery Brewmeister. Called "Snake Venom," it has an astounding 67.5% alcohol content.
- Some popular beers from Africa are made from bananas.
- Large commercial breweries use inexpensive grains such as rice to convert sugar to alcohol. Craft brewers avoid this practice.
- Freezing beer and straining the water out to make a stronger alcohol content was a common practice. Once called "jacking," it is now known as fractional freezing.

Chetco Brewing Co., above and below, offers 15 beers on tap, along with home-brewed root beer and kombucha tea.

Left and below, Arch Rock Brewery has a 15-barrel brewhouse, which has two 30-barrel fermenters and one 30-barrel bright tank.

Production has increased each year, hitting 501 barrels in 2018. He outgrew the first location. The new location typically offers 15 beers on tap. Chetco also makes its own root beer and kombucha tea. A vegan food truck sells snacks and meals.

Michael is partial to the Summer Salmon IPA—a single hop IPA with all Chinook hops. He describes it as having "essences of ruby red grapefruit.".

Arch Rock Brewery, Gold Beach

This business partnership offers three exclusive tastes found in bars and restaurants from Brookings to Florence, the Rogue Valley, Roseburg and Eugene. All three beers have won national awards.

Larry and Marjie Brennan made their cabinetry shop into this Arch Rock Brewery with the help of James and Kristen Smith. James is the mastermind behind the three beers currently offered on tap, as well as a fourth rotating, limited-time flavor. When that flavor is gone, it may or may not reappear later.

James began homebrewing in 1999 and started working at an Oregon commercial brewery in 2005 before moving to Gold Beach with his wife, Kristen. Both now work at Arch Rock. Kristen does the accounting and Larry works on sales and business development.

Arch Rock produces 1,200 barrels a year. James is partial to their Gold Beach lager. The partners acquired the property north of their location, and plan to expand. They envision more brewing space, a tasting room and outdoor seating.

Gold Beach Brewing Co., Gold Beach

The newest brewery coming to the CCEC service territory is at the Port of Gold Beach. The grand opening was expected on Independence Day. ■

Misty Mountain Brewing
625 Chetco Ave, Suite 120
541-813-2599

Chetco Brewing Co.
830 Railroad St.
541-661-KEGS

Arch Rock Brewery
28779 Hunter Creek Road
541-247-0555

Gold Beach Brewing Co.
10 Harbor Way
541-247-0247

Get in a JAM

Lowell's Blackberry Jam Festival Celebrates 25 Years

By Patty Jo Angelini

The last weekend in July marks the 25th anniversary of Lowell celebrating family, fun and music with the free Blackberry Jam Festival at Rolling Rock Park.

"Back in 1995 we were looking for ways to promote the communities of Lowell, Fall Creek and Dexter without relying on property tax revenue," says Warren Weathers, one of the festival's co-founders. "We realized a festival would accomplish that, and provide fun times for local families and visitors."

The first Blackberry Jam Festival featured a fishing derby at Lowell State Park, which highlighted the beauty of Lowell and improved the fishery by reducing the squawfish population in Dexter Lake. A flatbed trailer served as the stage at the marina. An Elvis Presley look-alike and the Lowell High School band provided entertainment. Irma Ballenger was named first citizen for the festival. Lowell resident Art Flower won the fishing derby with the longest fish measuring 17 inches.

Fast forward 25 years. Although Elvis has left the building, the Blackberry Jam Festival fills Rolling Rock Park and spills over to Lowell State Park and the covered bridge. The fishing derby is still a favorite, but now there is also a parade, two-day quilt show, kids' corner, horseshoe tournament, and craft and food vendors. The outdoor amphitheater is home to a magic show, other performances and live music. New to 2019 is a beer, hard cider and spirits garden.

"It's heartwarming to see how the festival has grown and how people come year after year," says Gail Harris, whose husband was the other festival co-founder. "Hundreds of people pack our park day and night, and they come from throughout Oregon. Kids leave exhausted and parents head home humming some tune they heard the live bands play. It's a perfect small-town celebration."

Brad Anderson, Lane Electric Cooperative's fleet mechanic, grew up in the Dexter/Pleasant Hill area. This will be his fourth year organizing the horseshoe tournament.

"About 15 guys who grew up in this area play horseshoes just about every weekend in the summer," Brad says. "I called up Blackberry Jam a few years ago to see if they would add a horseshoe tournament to the festivities. The answer was 'Yes, and you're in charge.'"

Horseshoe tournament participants travel from

The pie-eating contest is a great photo opportunity and lots of fun for everyone.

Above, the quilt contest is a popular attraction.

Clockwise from left, a runner competes in the Blackberry Jam Festival 5K.

2018 winners Dustin Holmes and Scott Bradfeldt show off their horseshoe trophies created by Brad Anderson.

Lane Electric Cooperative fleet mechanic Brad Anderson sets up last year's horseshoe tournament.

Kids look for coins in a stack of straw.

near and far, including the 2017 winners who came from Grants Pass. First place winners get 50% of the entry fees ($20 per two-person team) and second place gets 25%. Another 25% goes back to the festival.

Putting together the festival is a yearlong effort, says Mike Galvin, Blackberry Jam Festival committee chairman. "It takes 40 to 50 volunteers to make this festival come alive, and we always can use more volunteers. Volunteer duties range from logistics, staffing kids' games and, of course, making blackberry pies for the all important pie-eating contest.

"We've got two activities where you always count on seeing great crowds and cheering: our pie-eating contest and the greased pole climb. I am tempted to say they both put a smile on people's faces, but that pie can be pretty tart for the contestants." ■

Berry Important Details

- The Blackberry Jam Festival begins at 5 p.m. Friday, July 26, and ends at 4 p.m. Sunday, July 28.
- Space is still available for entry in the parade, car and quilt shows.
- For more information, visit blackberryjamfestival.com or call 866-516-5534.
- To pre-register for the horseshoe tournament, contact Brad at branderso202@gmail.com.

Helping is Healing

Allan Guse has found helping others eases his anxiety around strangers

By Craig Reed

By helping others, Allen Guse has discovered he's helping himself.

During a 13-year U.S. Army career, he was stationed in Bosnia at a time of genocide and then stationed in Kuwait and near the Iraq border where bombs were exploding. After he returned home, Allen has been somewhat of a mountain hermit.

He has lived in the Coast Range woods near the small community of Deadwood, separating him from constant social interaction, the sounds of sirens and a more hectic pace of life.

But when Allen talked to his cousin, Al Jenkins of Roseburg, and heard what Al was doing to help victims of the Camp Fire that devastated the Paradise, California, area last November, he was inspired to help.

Allen has now made six trips south with Al to deliver loads of donated goods to people who suffered from the fire that covered 240 square miles, resulting in 85 deaths, 18,804 destroyed structures and $16.5 billion in damage.

"I've had some pretty serious anxiety, but I knew I had to go help those people," says Allen, 48. "We're filling in where other services weren't. We can't leave our brothers and sisters out there with nothing.

"I told Al on the way down there on my first trip that I have to learn to be around people again. He comes at things from a place of kindness, love, caring for all human beings. I was looking to him to show me how to do that.

"The things I deal with don't go away, but they can be managed. After making

these trips, I have more compassion now and I'm able to show that compassion."

Allen says helping others has helped him not be as angry with himself or with others.

"I'm now able to present myself as being much kinder," he says. "My anger level now is nowhere near to where it was. As I help to improve the world around me, I'm improving myself."

Al, a retired mental health therapist, has seen a change in his cousin during the past several months as the two have traveled together to help those in need in the Paradise area.

"Allen's self care was to isolate, to be away from everybody so there were no alarms or triggers to deal with," Al says. "When he heard what I was doing, he asked if he could go along and I said, 'Absolutely.' What I've observed is that he's much more relaxed in public now, he's a lot more able to engage people in conversation, especially strangers.

"If you're suffering, the therapy you receive in helping others is immense. Helping others is one of the best things you can do to help yourself."

With the help of donated goods and money from family, friends, neighbors and strangers, Al and Allen have delivered about $20,000 in cash and gift cards and about $40,000 in products such as bedding, personal hygiene items, camping gear, kitchen appliances and tools.

Through Facebook postings, the Deadwood Community Center, the Swisshome Evangelical Church, Triangle Grange No. 533 and the Siuslaw Institute either provided locations for the collection of donated goods or financial help.

Allen loaded up the donations, drove to Roseburg—where Al had also collected goods—and together they drove south to the Paradise area, where they found individuals or families they could help directly with items. More recently, they found nonprofit groups that distribute the donated items.

"These kind of efforts really touch people," Allen says. "They know that somebody out in this world cares about them, that somebody out in this world is thinking of them."

Above, Allen Guse bundles donated linens and bedding for transport to Paradise, California, where he and his cousin, Al Jenkins, will hand them out to those affected by last year's Camp Fire.

Opposite page, Allen loads more donated items for transport.

Paradise, a town of 28,000 residents, was flattened by the fire. Some smaller surrounding communities were also destroyed.

Allen says many moments during his trips south 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."

Allen, the son of Clifford and Regina Guse, saw firsthand the giving spirit as a youth. His father was a pilot who worked and flew for Mission Aviation Fellowship. That job took the family to Quebec, Canada, and Zaire, Africa.

In June 1994, Allen enlisted in the Army.

"I've always had a love for our country and I enjoyed being able to travel," he says.

He worked as a radar operator, as an infantryman and in transportation logistics, with extended assignments in Germany, Bosnia, South Korea, Kuwait and at several U.S. bases. During his infantry time, he was involved in testing equipment and how much the human body could carry. The result for him were injured discs in his back, forcing him to transfer to logistics.

Early in 2003, Allen was part of a team in Kuwait that moved 160,000 people and 60,000 tons of their supplies to that country for Operation Iraqi Freedom. He spent 15 months on the Kuwait-Iraq border, helping track people and supplies going into and out of Iraq on the main supply line.

Allen returned to the U.S. in April 2004, and spent time in Texas tracking the coming and going of equipment for the Iraqi war.

His back injury and some mental health issues finally sidelined him. After some time in a military hospital, he was discharged as a disabled veteran in July 2007.

"I was treated for degenerative discs," he says. "I live with pain. I just have to be very careful with it."

Allen says living in the Coast Range provides him with peace and quiet. Working with his small herd of cows and their calves and a small flock of ewes with their lambs provides him with therapy.

His more recent caring for fire victims with Al has also been therapeutic. He plans to continue to help those in need through Al's recently established nonprofit, Grateful Hands Disaster Survivors Relief Fund.

"Giving of yourself can be powerful," Allen says. "It's been good for me." ■

Established in 1919, Duckwall Fruit in Odell is celebrating 100 years of business.

Photos by Blaine Franger

A Family Pride in Pears

Duckwall Fruit marks 100 years in business

By Drew Myron

As leader of one of the largest fruit packing companies in Hood River, Fred Duckwall has every reason to crow. But he doesn't want to talk about his success. Instead, he shuffles quietly across the factory, talking softly and assessing pears.

"The work is the most important thing," says Fred, 77.

Modesty, it seems, is a Duckwall mark that has carried this family business from humble orchard to international success.

Duckwall Fruit is a family company celebrating 100 years. The company has grown from a small operation in the middle of an orchard to a company shipping more than 2 million cartons of pears annually to worldwide markets.

With its signature bufflehead duck label, Duckwall is an established brand providing pears to Safeway, Costco and other domestic grocers, with more than a third of its business in exports to the Netherlands, Germany, Russia, India, Brazil, Guatemala, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Peru, Fiji, the Dominican Republic, Canada and Mexico.

Fred's father, John, established the company in 1919. A banker in Indianapolis, John moved to Oregon and planted a few fruit trees in the Hood River Valley. He sent some of his fruit to his family in Indianapolis.

When neighboring farmers heard of John's profits, they asked him to pack and sell theirs, too—and a business was born.

As sales grew, John decided to sell his orchard and pack only fruit from other growers.

In 1926, John set up his first office in Hood River. A few years later, he traveled to Europe to establish export markets. By 1958, with business booming, operations moved to Odell, where they remain today.

When John retired, his son Dick—Fred's brother—took the lead.

In 1971, Duckwall merged with Pooley Fruit Co. and nearly doubled the size of the company. For name recognition, the Duckwall moniker remained intact.

Overwhelmed, Dick called Fred for help. Though he held a business degree from Oregon State University and had served as a U.S. Army officer in Germany, Fred joined the family business as a trainee, ordering supplies and overseeing

quality control. He grew to know every aspect of the Duckwall business.

"I still have my forklift license," he says, proudly.

When Dick retired in 1992, Fred was named president. He is now CEO.

Duckwall has always had a family focus, and the emphasis continues as the third and fourth generations manage day-to-day operations. Fred's son Nathan, a former building contractor, works as special projects and maintenance manager. Fred's daughter, Sara, is senior accountant. His great-nephew, Ed Weathers, is president and sales manager.

Other members of the management team are Staci Coburn, Kathy Nishimoto, Wade Root and Craig Mallon.

"This company is a living legacy that we're a part of," Sara says. "I hope our heirs will take pride and ownership as Grandpa John did. It's important they know it didn't start with us."

The official Oregon state fruit is the pear, and Hood River County is the world's leading producer of anjou, a short-necked winter pear.

There are more than 250 pear orchards in Hood River County. While many are small family farms, they account for about two-thirds of the state's pears.

Much of the harvest is shipped out fresh or placed in cold storage for distribution and sale throughout the year. Only about 2% of Oregon pears are consumed in the U.S., according to the Pear Bureau.

Duckwall packages pears grown by 75 orchardists from more than 100 area farms.

As it celebrates a century, business is booming. Ten years ago, the company packed 1.5 million pears annually. Now it handles more than 2 million pieces of fruit each year.

"Farmers are better and getting better yield," says Ed, who credits the substantial growth to enhanced technology and farming practices.

With a sole focus on pears, Duckwall employs 300 people at the peak of the season and about 50 year-round. Packing begins in mid-August. The last of the winter pears are shipped by late May or early June.

With the work of up to 300 employees, Duckwall sorts, packages and ships more than 2 million pears every year.

"We respect and appreciate our employees," says Fred, who notes that many of their packers have worked at the company for 25 to 30 years. "We've got incredible employees."

"I've known Fred for 30 years, and he's always had a steady hand when it comes to business and community," says Mike Doke, executive director of Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers—the consortium representing more than 400 fruit growers and 20 packing houses in Hood River and Wasco counties. "Fred is highly regarded in the fruit industry. People listen to him because of his experience."

Though not one to boast, Fred does offer a tip. A good business, he says, operates like three legs of a stool: customers, growers and employees.

"Our goal is to provide competitive return for our growers so they are profitable and successful, growing quality fruit for us to pack and ship," he says. "We have a totally open atmosphere here. Growers can come in, sit down and talk to us. It's a nice family way to do business." ■

Duckwall Fruit runs with second-, third- and fourth-generation management. From left are Ed Weathers, president and sales manager; Sara Duckwall, senior accountant; Fred Duckwall, CEO; and Nathan Duckwall, special projects and maintenance manager.

Kristy Lombard creates and sells ceramics in her downtown Tillamook shop. She is part of a growing group of artists in the area.

The Downtown Tillamook Vibe

A growing collective of artists is helping revitalize the downtown business district

By Denise Porter

Look around downtown Tillamook and it's easy to see the new pavement, curbs and plaza that are the result of the three-year U.S. Highway 101 renovation project funded by the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Less noticeable has been the slow, subtle and steady change happening to downtown Tillamook's business vibe. In the past decade, downtown has attracted a collection of artistically minded creatives who fashion and sell their own artisan wares.

Seasons Kaz Sparks says downtown almost needs its own social media hashtag: #TillamookArtDistrict.

Seasons is the owner of Salty Raven, a store on Second Street, which she says is a "full-fledged wholesale and retail apparel and gift line."

Inside Salty Raven, Seasons showcases her quirky and creative sketches brought to life on T-shirts, mugs, glassware, magnets and other items. She also has a more serious line: Seasons K Designs, which features the natural beauty of Oregon's trees and rugged outdoors.

She opened her store in 2018 after moving with her husband from Portland to Cape Meares in 2016. Both of their jobs could be worked remotely, and they were looking for a quieter life.

"I grew up in inner Southeast Portland," Seasons says. "That area of the city was very small. Portland was considered more of a town than a city and they acted as such."

Portland, she believes, has lost its small-town feel.

"To me, Tillamook feels like the inner Southeast Portland of my youth," Seasons says. "It has a culture, grittiness—opportunity to shine and succeed. It's not a grind of strangers."

Kristy's work includes a lot of slab-built ceramics infused with texture.

Photos by Joanna Stelzig

After opening her store, Seasons says she immediately felt something big was bubbling to the town's surface.

"It's a huge creative force," she says. "As an artist, that's really appealing. (Downtown) naturally is attracting that. Nobody's soliciting for it, but it really has happened organically."

Seasons' friend Kristy Lombard agrees. Kristy's studio, Kristy Lombard Pottery, is just a block east from Salty Raven on U.S. 101 in Tillamook. The women are two of several fairly new faces in the downtown business sector. They didn't know each other before opening their respective shops.

Kristy also opened her business in 2018 and hails from Portland. She moved to Netarts after her husband accepted a job as a park ranger at nearby Cape Lookout State Park. Kristy's family has owned a vacation home in Oceanside for a long time.

"There's pictures of me in diapers in the Oceanside tunnel," she says. "We decided it was a great time to get out of Portland, and it was a great time to live at the beach. I really didn't know what to expect moving out here and starting a business out here. (People) have been super supportive."

While there are several downtown businesses with male owners, there is no denying a strong female business spirit. The trend isn't necessarily new, Seasons says.

"Historically, nationwide, small businesses are owned by women," she says. "Here it's also specifically creative in some way: making soap, pottery, baking, making beer, for example. It's not just women (owning the business), it's women makers doing it. I really am even more excited about being part of a community that is making and selling what they make."

Both Seasons and Kristy fit this model. Their retail stores are also studios.

Shoppers at Kristy's pottery studio will find her hard at work. People today want, to understand where products come from.

"They want to buy locally and American made. I do feel it here," Kristy says of the way the community has embraced having her studio.

Kristy's pottery is inspired by the Pacific Northwest and is what she calls "primarily functional work, but contemporary, with a unique spin on pieces." She began her pottery career as a teen in high school, and credits Ron Linn, a teacher at Portland's David Douglas High School, for sparking her interest.

Kristy has a bachelor's degree in ceramics from the University of Oregon. She taught six pottery classes a week at Georgie's Ceramics and Clay Co. in Portland before deciding in 2011, that she was done with teaching. She began working full time as a maker and seller.

Like most small business owners, Kristy is a one-woman show. She makes, markets, packages and sells her pottery.

Seasons also worked in her field before starting her own business—and still does. Seasons is the brand ambassador and creative director for Presents of Mind, the largest and oldest card and gift store in Portland.

Seasons began her own business out of frustration. As a purchaser for Presents of Mind, she could not find products to fill niche markets she knew people in Portland were looking for.

Today, both women bring their years of networking in the Pacific Northwest to their small businesses in downtown Tillamook.

Both say the digital era makes marketing possible to a broader audience than just local customers.

Kristy diversifies her selling reach by attending up to 10 art shows a year, having a small number of pieces for sale in galleries, hosting a website and selling from her studio in town.

Seasons markets her products on a wholesale basis via the internet. She also makes custom design work in her shop. She's writing a children's book to go along with her popular line called "Flock of Gerrys." The whimsical seagull from this design is patterned after a living seagull that frequents Cape Meares. Her business name is also derived from a visitor to her home, whose name is Salty the Raven.

Both women say they've been supported by downtown merchants, those who have established, long-time businesses, and those who are new as well.

"Downtown has a vibe, a good energy," Kristy says. "I hear a lot that people are happy to see me, have me in the windows. Something artistic is happening here, it feels like and I'm excited to be here." ■

An Initiative to Work Safely

By Pam Blair

Nearly two decades ago, Northfork Electric Cooperative's Heath Martin survived a 7,200-volt shock on the job. He admits the accident was his fault.

Heath and his co-worker, Chad Crompton, had worked all night, then were called to a routine outage.

Heath says he was thinking about an upcoming fishing trip with his buddies.

"I was in a hurry, but it was no reason to take a shortcut," he says.

Heath suffered severe burns to his hands and face, resulting in skin grafts, multiple surgeries and physical therapy.

"Grounding that line down would have taken me maybe five minutes at the most," says Heath, who now is safety director at the Oklahoma co-op. "I just made a bad decision that day."

Although the overall injury rate has fallen dramatically, serious injuries and fatalities among electric cooperative lineworkers are happening with alarming regularity, says Bud Branham, director of safety for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"Research shows you can have the best injury rates in the world, but you can still fall victim to a catastrophic incident," Bud says. "We must all remain focused."

A nationwide survey of 51,000 co-op employees conducted annually between 2006 and 2015 found an average of more than 23 serious injuries and fatalities, which is defined as any claim greater than $100,000—"a life-altering event for an employee," Bud says.

"The No. 1 cause of claims—40 percent—are electrical contacts that result from failure to use appropriate personal protective equipment or insulated covers, or to test and ground facilities—the life-saving rules everyone has been taught," Bud says. "It's like blocking and tackling in football. There are always pressures to take

shortcuts. As we become more skilled, we become less risk-aware. The simpler the task, the less our brain focuses on it. With fast-brain thinking, we skip steps."

Especially during outage restoration work, the tendency is to "hurry up and get it done," Bud says, noting the thought pattern can be, "I'll just do it this one time. It won't hurt me."

Sometimes it doesn't. Other times it does. Either way, it's a trend safety leaders across the country want to stop.

In April 2018, NRECA, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange and electric co-op statewide safety leaders introduced the voluntary Commitment to Zero Contacts initiative.

It is designed to provide CEOs, senior leaders and field personnel with resources to help eliminate serious injuries and fatalities due to electrical contact and enhance co-op safety programs.

The campaign provides a toolkit of resources, including field guides, videos, logos and written commitment forms.

One aspect of the campaign is a downloadable job-planning app—Stop and Focus Everyday—for use on mobile devices. It requires step-by-step acknowledgement of the life-saving rules of the job, with a goal of building and reinforcing safe work habits.

Use of the app encourages crew leaders to stop, focus and review crucial risk factors that could lead to employee contacts. The app also provides efficient job-planning processes for energized work, outage restoration and daily tasks.

Job-briefing data is automatically submitted to Federated's website with a time and date stamp. It is accessible in real-time and searchable by date, time, submitting employee, job type or job number so it can be used for training.

"We must do job planning on all jobs," Bud says. "The worst accidents tend to happen during routine jobs where risk awareness declines and complacency is more likely. They know they need to do certain things, but do they?

"If we can get crews to increase job briefings to 100 percent of the time, we will decrease accidents. If you follow these rules every single time, you will go home with your arms, legs and life."

Creating a strong culture of safety helps mitigate the risk at all levels. Earlier this year, Mt. Wheeler Power leaders presented employees with the cooperative's signed Commitment and Board Resolution to Zero Contacts at an Employee Appreciation Luncheon.

"It seemed like the perfect time to share our commitment with the employees," says CEO Kevin Robison. "We are

A Positive Spin on Safety

Commitment to Zero Contacts suggests co-ops avoid a "bad cop" mentality and instead focus on a systemwide approach that helps them:

- Clarify and define life-saving rules.
- Verify use of life-saving rules.
- Create effective job planning on all jobs, including the routine.
- Form a structured safety management process.
- Seek employee involvement.

Mt. Wheeler Power Linemen Bill Baumann, right, and Jason McNutt conduct a pole-top-rescue training exercise. Photo by Christina Sawyer

a team here at Mt. Wheeler Power, and getting our crew home to their families at the end of the day is our number one priority."

Mt. Wheeler Power Operations Manager Bill Ricci often shares these words from Federated CEO Phil Irwin: Working on live lines is not dangerous; it's unforgiving. Bill says Phil's words motivate him to instill the strongest possible safety practices.

Mt. Wheeler Power's "We EmPower Safety" slogan has been adopted by the crew and employees, serving as a reminder that they are responsible for their safety.

"We have the training and the equipment to do the job safely," Bill says. "It's up to us to use it correctly to avoid accidents."

Line Foreman Chad Bliss, a 22-year veteran, says he was working with a new apprentice recently when the apprentice asked, "Is it safe to touch?'

"I realized nothing in this job is routine," Chad says. "Every job has risks. Working with these young lineman is a great reminder of safety protocol. It's important everyone feels comfortable asking questions and understands the risks involved with the job at hand."

At Mt. Wheeler Power, safety goes beyond the line crew.

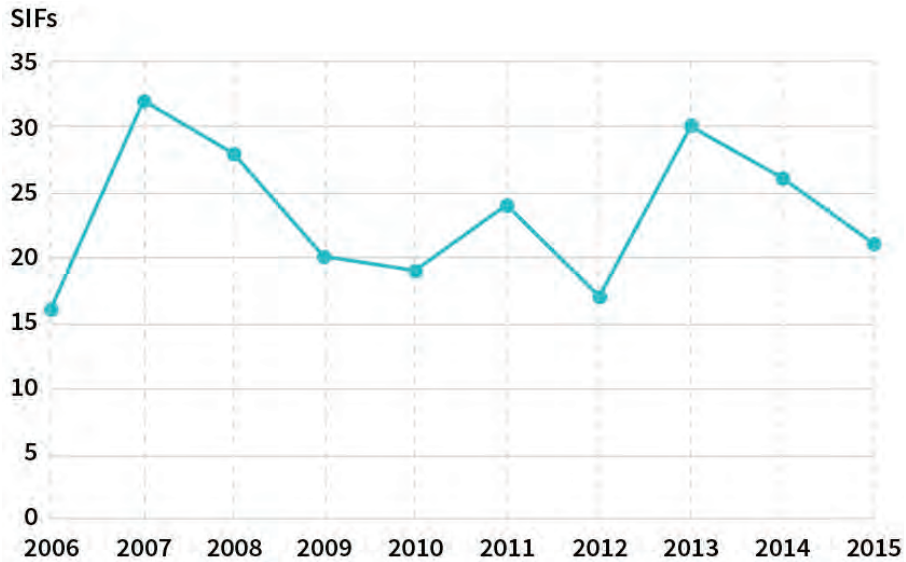
"We empower all of our employees to conduct their daily activities in a safe manner," Kevin says.

Mt. Wheeler Power's no-lost-time policy is another safety initiative to which the co-op is committed.

"Our goal of 250,000 hours without a lost-time accident is within our grasp," Kevin says. "We celebrate benchmarks along the way because every day without an accident is worth recognition"

Mt. Wheeler Power has earned its reputation for restoring power quickly, but staff takes every precaution to restore power in the safest manner possible because nothing is more important than returning crew members home to their families. ■

Serious Injuries and Fatalities for Co-op Lineworkers



In the past decade, the overall injury rate has fallen among co-op lineworkers, but high rates of serious injuries and fatalities persist. Source: Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange and statewide associations

Carlin's Cherished Chef-Artist

By Dianna Troyer

In 1983, Chin's Café opened its doors in Carlin. Since then, the popular Chinese restaurant that doubles as an art gallery has become a revered institution in the small community of 2,400 people.

Li Ju Chin, the café's 64-year-old matriarch and co-founder, coupled her love for Chinese cooking with her passion for oil painting to create a unique establishment that's rich in Chinese-American tradition.

Li and her husband, Johnson, cook six days a week for their loyal customers at Chin's Café.

"Their food is amazing," says Carlin City Council member Margaret Johnston. "They could do a lot of business with tour buses in summer, but Li always tells them to go to Elko because her local customers come first."

Charlie and his mother Pat Kendrick, customers for two decades, take their out-of-town visitors to Chin's.

"I love bringing them here for her food, artwork and hospitality," Charlie says. "Her paintings are vibrant and full of life and seem to have movement. I get a radiant and peaceful feeling looking at them."

When Charlie and Pat's longtime friend and Carlin High graduate Kim Weighter makes her annual trip home to Carlin from California, the Kendricks always meet Kim at Chin's for a meal.

Chin's Café owner and artist Li Ju Chin painted this cowboy portrait. Li says she enjoys painting subjects that reflect western American and Chinese cultures.

Photos by Lonny Brown

"Li is a most gracious host, serves excellent food, and is an exquisite painter," Kim says. "Her Chinese heritage and commitment to Carlin are equally important."

Several of Li's paintings are on display at the café, including a diving eagle grasping its prey, a lynx, a Chinese girl walking her Pomeranian dog, and birds in flight. She often gives paintings to customers and friends.

"Giving away paintings is my way to thank customers for coming to our café," she says. "Sometimes they ask me, 'Will you do a painting of my dog?' Even though I'm not perfect or professional, people seem to like my paintings."

Li paints in her spare time, usually in the mornings before coming to work.

"I like to paint everything—people, scenery, wildlife and children," she says. "Painting makes me feel peaceful and patient and relaxed. It makes me look at the whole world and see how beautiful it is. After taking lessons, I began to notice colors in nature— the different shades of blue in the sky or greens in the grass and trees. I don't know why I never noticed those things before."

Chin's Café occasionally serves as a place for Li to meet with civic leaders and plan community events. One of her recent community projects is still attracting national and international media attention.

Last summer, Li and Margaret coordinated a team of volunteers to rebury 13 Chinese residents who lived in Carlin between the late 1800s and early 1920s and had been buried in an unmarked cemetery. Now known in media circles as "the Carlin 13," the Chinese residents helped build the Transcontinental Railroad, ran local businesses and sold vegetables they raised.

Their caskets were found during a routine backyard excavation project in 1996, and researchers from universities and federal agencies exhumed the caskets to study the remains and artifacts inside, which included opium pipes, coins and dishes.

The Carlin 13 were eventually taken to the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Twenty-two years after the remains were found, Li and Margaret led a community effort to have them returned to Carlin, where they were buried last summer during a ceremony

Community Comes Together for Ceremony Honoring 'the Carlin 13'

When Chin's Café owner Li Ju Chin led the charge to bring the Carlin 13 home and lay them to their final rest in Carlin City Cemetery last summer, City Council member Margaret Johnston reached out to the townspeople and local businesses for help on a short deadline.

"By the time all the bureaucratic forms were signed to release the remains, we only had four days to get everything done in time for our celebration," Margaret says. "We may be a small town, but we have big hearts. We all pull together when there's a need."

Retired archaeologist Tim Murphy of nearby Spring Creek, who helped with the original excavation of the Carlin 13, volunteered to drive to UNLV to bring the remains back to Carlin.

Meanwhile, the city donated cemetery plots, and Public Works Department employees opened gravesites, ensuring the remains were buried in the same arrangement they were found in the historic cemetery.

When Margaret told the Home Depot manager in Elko what the folks in Carlin were up to, he donated all the lumber and supplies for the caskets. Local woodworkers Gary and Rachel Wright, Les Tracy and Jan Brizee worked from dawn to dusk each day to build the caskets in four days. Jeanine Holmes led the crew that painted the caskets.

Li Ju Chin and City Council member Margaret Johnston hold up the memorial that honors the Carlin 13.

Former mayor Donetta Skinner donated a replica of a handcart—the type often used by Chinese merchants who sold vegetables around Carlin during the late 1800s. Scott and Holly Paterson refurbished the replica, which was used to transport the 13 caskets to the cemetery.

"So many people in our community helped make it happen," Li says.

About 70 people attended the funeral ceremony, including members of the nearest chapter of the Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association in Salt Lake City.

After the local newspaper covered the event, the story gained widespread media attention.

"I had calls from the media as far away as San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City and China," Margaret says. "This story keeps growing. I'm still getting calls. The question asked most often is, 'Why would Carlin care about these strangers?' I explained that in a small town like ours, we're like a big family. We considered them to be citizens of our community and wanted to bring them home."

Li recently attended an early screening of "Going Home," a documentary about the Carlin 13 by Min Zhou that's still in production.

"It made everyone cry," she says.

Two of the Carlin 13 have been identified, and their families in China have been notified.

The Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association will dedicate a bronze plaque to honor the Carlin 13 at 9 a.m. July 4 at Carlin City Cemetery.

Community members are also organizing an exhibit at the town's museum to recognize Chinese residents' contributions to Carlin.

"We're planning a big celebration," Margaret says. "All this would never have happened if Li hadn't kept asking for the remains to be returned." ■

that coincided with the town's sesquicentennial celebration July 3.

"I thought they should have a traditional Chinese burial so they could finally be at peace," Li says. "My husband and I were honored to cook food for the ceremony."

While running Chin's Café and serving her community, Li says she often thinks of ideas for paintings.

"If I ever retire, I'll paint even more," she says. "But for now, I'm happy cooking at our café, painting when I have spare time and helping our community. We hope someday someone will take over the café and continue serving our food. Then I'll have more time to paint and do other projects in town." ■

Li's portrait of a Chinese child.

For Phil Marshall, Austin is the Place

'I believe I can make a difference'

By John M. Glionna

AUSTIN, Nev. – Phil Marshall has a philosophy about rural places: If you grew up there, if a town or a locale has earned special meaning in your life, then it's your responsibility to take care of it, to see that it survives.

Marshall and his family feel just that way about this former mining town of just 192 residents in central Nevada, a place that over the generations has fallen on hard times. The mines have all closed and a few hardy souls hang on here. Jobs are scarce so most make their living running motels, restaurants or trinket shops that cater to the tourist traffic along U.S. Highway 50. But the infrastructure is crumbling.

Marshall wants to change that.

Now a construction company owner and rancher living in the San Francisco Bay Area, Marshall has invested in Austin. He's bought more than a half-dozen buildings along the town's main drag, donated land for a new visitor's center and is working to reopen the Silver State Bar and Grill.

One Nevada history lesson is that the profits from the Comstock Lode in the 1800s helped make San Francisco what it was – after local money was moved to banks there. Now Californians, it seems, are giving back.

A few years ago, the Cline vintner family from Northern California bought the Mizpah Hotel and pumped millions into the economy in Tonopah, starting a new casino and building a microbrewery for starters.

Nancy Cline's family roots in Nevada date back more than a century, when the twin frontier towns of Goldfield and Tonopah were the bustling center of the state's epic gold and silver boom. Cline's grandmother, Emma Ramsey, was once the postmaster of Goldfield. And her great uncle, Harry Ramsey, one of Tonopah's first settlers, owned the first saloon in town, a crude affair with a tarp roof near where the Mizpah now sits.

Marshall has similar dreams for his beloved Austin.

"I have a soft spot for this town – many of my relatives are in the cemetery here," he said. "And I believe I can make a difference."

When he was a kid, Marshall and his three older brothers lived just about everywhere. Their father was a mining prospector and the earth seemed to be yielding up its riches just about any place other than where the Marshall family seemed to be.

The one constant was Austin. His grandparents ran a general store here, and the boys would spend their summers helping out, doing the things boys do out here in the rolling high desert.

Phil Marshall, organizer of the Coyote Derby hunt in Austin, waits for the hunters to return.

Photos by John M. Glionna

"We lived a lot of places, all over the country," Marshall said. "But we always came back to Austin. It gave us a feeling of home. The only stability we had in our lives came from our grandparents and that store."

Austin had characters, like his grandfather, George, a former Army master sergeant wounded in World War I that everyone called Sarge, who worked extra hours to clean the county courthouse up the street. He and his wife, Ethel, brought a gritty Depression-era work ethic to their affairs, one they passed on to their grandsons.

Marshall was a teenager when Sarge sold the place and his grandmother died in 1989. Time passed, until a few years ago, when Marshall's mother, Mary, who still lives in Austin, asked him to do some renovations on her house.

He took one look at the place and decided to build her a whole new one. But Marshall didn't stop there. He put the word out to local residents to give him a call if they saw any buildings put up for sale. They did, and Marshall bought many of them.

Marshall keeps a book of old photographs that showed what the buildings once looked like and what they are now. Marshall is proud of those pictures.

But not everyone believes that such a largess of outside money is good for Austin. Some whisper that Marshall is just feeding is ego, trying to

"I have a soft spot for this town," says Marshall. "Many of my relatives are in the cemetery here." At left, Marshall compiles the winners' shares for the coyote hunt.

throw his weight around.

"A lot of people appreciate what Phil is doing here, but a lot of people are jealous," said Dee Helming, who runs the bar and grill when Marshall is away. "It's typical of a small town or a family. There are those that can and those who only wish they could. And those latter ones always bark the loudest."

She looked out the window. "If Phil hadn't bought these buildings, they'd just be rubble on the ground by now."

But Marshall isn't stopping there. His family has started a charitable foundation to lure more money into town. And he sponsors an annual coyote killing contest that brings in hunters from around the state.

"For one thing, there's not grocery store here," he said. "But people in Austin are hardy. They make things work without a 7-11 across the street."

Marshall brings a visitor on a tour of the storefronts of his bar, where there's a new barber shop and nail salon, where vacant shops sat before. He wants officials from local Lander County to create a youth center where the old firehouse once stood.

"We're trying to shame them into it," he said. "But you have to be vocal. You have to scream and yell to get their attention. But the people in Austin aren't used to doing that – to going to meetings and coming up with plans for the future."

But Marshall is, and he's not done yet.

He talks about what's special about the place he calls home, what is here that is worth saving.

He tells a visitor to drive around and head out of town to the Stokes Castle built by a mine developer in 1896. Today it sits in disrepair, who knows for how long, with Phil Marshall in town.

"Go up to the castle and look out into the valley," he said. "On a clear day, you can see for 50 miles. It's like heaven." ■

A FAMILY'S NEED FOR SPEED

Caliente's Gubler family races off-road throughout the West in pursuit of adrenaline

By Dianna Troyer

Racing across a dry lakebed near Primm, Nevada, Tammie Gubler's speedometer pegged 120 miles per hour in her Ford F-150 race truck.

"It's hard to describe what it feels like to go that fast," says the 58-year-old Caliente resident, recalling the 2008 Buffalo Bills/Primm Casino 400. "It's an adrenaline rush and scary and addicting all at the same time. Once you start racing, you can't quit. Besides having children, it's the most amazing thing I've ever done. Your vehicle is a part of you, and takes care of you like you take care of it."

Tammie's elation was tempered with controlled panic when she realized her truck needed immediate and unavailable care during the 400-mile race near the southern Nevada/California border. Racers drive four 100-mile laps following a rugged marked course in the desert.

"Suddenly it was hard to steer, but I couldn't tell why," she says. "My co-driver is taller than I am and looked out and told me the front passenger's side tire was flat. All I could do was maintain momentum and keep going fast. When I finally had to slow down coming in for a pit stop, I gripped the steering wheel and just held on. The tire was changed, and we kept going."

While competing in desert races throughout the West, Tammie and her family have come to expect the unexpected—mishaps involving flat tires, mechanical failures, rollovers or occasional rainstorms that turn the route into muddy hazards. To minimize risks, competitors sometimes have a co-driver or a co-rider. They help navigate, handle radio communications, get cars unstuck

Opposite page, Colton Gubler's off-road car gets airborne during the 2016 Battle at Primm. He placed second. Left, Tammie in her off-road truck. She says she feels like she is part of her truck while racing. Below from left, Tammie, Colton, his brother Jaden and sister Samantha.

Photos by courtesy of the Gubler family

or take a turn driving during long nighttime races.

Races range from 250 to 500 miles, with winning times of six to 16 hours depending on the distance. One lap could be 60 to 100 miles long.

Tammie, her husband, Regen, and their seven children have been racing off-road throughout the West for most of their lives, driving motorcycles, trucks, dune buggies and, most recently, mini-sprints—small open wheel cars on a circular dirt track.

The Gublers have accumulated countless memories, miles, trophies and championships in numerous classes based on a driver's age and vehicle type.

"There's nothing like it," says Regen, who met Tammie at a race in 1990. "It's a sensation you can't get in any other racing motorsport—to be out in the desert going 120 miles an hour. For us, racing is a family-and-friends affair, our serious hobby for about 40 years. I'm in my early 60s, and Tammie and I still love it as much as when we started. The racing bug bit me in my teens, and Tammie and Colton started racing motorcycles when they were kids."

As the Gubler children grew, the racing interest waned for most of them except for Colton, 24, who recently moved to Henderson, Nevada. Colton and his mother often compete in the same event, most recently in the mini-sprint class. In 2017, Colton won the Western Outlaws/Wild Bills Raceway Mini-Sprint Championship, and in 2018 Tammie won.

A few years ago, Regen stopped racing to handle logistics for Tammie, Colton and the team.

"I'm proud to be known as the 'Pit

Continues on page 8

Colton catches big air while racing his motorcycle.

Need for Speed

Continued from page 5

Tootsie,'" Regen says, laughing. He supervises a pit crew of up to 20 family and good friends who keep the vehicles fueled and repaired and the drivers fed and hydrated.

"I get a kick out of watching Tammie and Colton," Regen says. "Tammie is a pedal-to-the-metal driver who's always excited at a race. Colton is calm and methodical like me, but he's also got fire and a competitive streak like his mom. He's a combination of our good traits."

This racing season, the Gublers are scaling down a bit and only doing a few off-road and mini-sprint races so they can gear up for a bigger and more serious racing venture next year.

The Gublers pick races they enjoy the most and that don't conflict with working at their development and construction company based in Caliente.

"We love it here," Regen says of Caliente and the vast network of dirt roads in Lincoln County that they explore in their spare time.

While living in Las Vegas, the Gublers often went to Lincoln County to relax.

"A ranch north of Eagle Valley has been in our family, so we would come up here to get away from the city," Regen says. "We finally got tired of Las Vegas and moved here in 2008."

Caliente hosts a popular race, the Knotty Pine Caliente 250, scheduled annually the second weekend of June. Organized by Southern Nevada Off Road Enthusiasts, the race attracts about 120 competitors and—with their fans and pit-crew members—brings more than 1,500 people to town.

"It's one of our favorite races," Tammie says. "It's known for the local landmark, OMG Hill. It's a very steep descent coming into town, with about a 30 to 40 percent grade for about a half-mile. From the top, you swear it's straight down."

Tammie accepts the sport's risks. While racing in 2005, she rolled her race truck while driving more than 65 miles per hour and cracked her T12 vertebrae in the mid-section of her back. She took a year off to recover.

"It was hard to not do what I love," Tammie says. "I'll never give it up. It's our life. For me, racing has always been my dream. I'm always encouraging others, especially kids and older women like me to follow your dream no matter how old or young you are." ■

Lane Electric Cooperative Manager Debi Wilson, left, and Douglas Electric Cooperative Manager Keith Brooks may be forced to make some difficult decisions for their co-ops if the RURAL Act fails to pass.

Photo by Andrew Barter

The RURAL Act to the Rescue

Legislation to protect electric co-op's tax-exempt status is pending in the U.S. Congress, but it needs a push.

By Ted Case

Oregon's electric cooperatives may soon face their own version of a Hobson's choice. Do they accept Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance after their system has been leveled by a storm? Do they accept broadband grants to serve members on the wrong side of the digital divide?

What normally would be easy decisions have become an agonizing struggle because of a recent determination by the Internal Revenue Service that has jeopardized the ability of Oregon electric cooperatives to deliver services to more than a half-million people.

As community-focused member organizations, no more than 15% of an electric cooperative's gross income may come from nonmember sources. Recent changes to the Internal Revenue Code created an unintended consequence for electric cooperatives, as government grants may now be considered nonmember income. This determination could lead to the end of an electric cooperative's tax-exempt status.

Electric cooperatives receive grants for a variety of purposes—none more important than those from FEMA. Oregon electric cooperatives faced some of the most devastating storms in their history this winter, taking down entire

In 2018, Columbia Basin Manager Tommy Wolff, left, met with Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai to discuss broadband. Without the RURAL Act, broadband grants will count as nonmember income for electric co-ops.

Sen. Ron Wyden meets with electric co-op leaders in 2018. He is a key member of the Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over the RURAL Act.

electrical systems.

President Donald Trump has approved Gov. Kate Brown's disaster declaration to make FEMA funds available to rebuild vital infrastructure. But for some Oregon electric cooperatives, accepting FEMA reimbursements could come at the price of losing their tax-exempt status.

As Douglas Electric Manager Keith Brooks said in a recent letter to Sen. Ron Wyden, "Our damages could yield up to $7.5 million in FEMA reimbursement ... causing us to lose our tax exemption."

But there is a solution. To address this issue, the Revitalizing Underdeveloped Rural Areas and Lands Act (RURAL Act - H.R. 2147 and S. 1032) has been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate, respectively, to address this issue. The RURAL Act would change the tax code to exempt federal, state and local grants from being defined as income for electric cooperatives.

The grants include broadband programs that help bring high-speed services to rural areas that have been plagued by slow, unreliable internet connections.

Tommy Wolff, manager of Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative, has pushed for rural broadband at the highest level, including a meeting last year with Ajit Pai, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission.

CBEC is moving ahead with an ambitious broadband program that will require federal grants. Without the RURAL Act, Wolff told the Capitol Press that CBEC would need to assess an "abrupt and large increase in power rates to rural consumers due to this inadvertent oversight."

Fortunately, the Oregon congressional delegation is taking this issue seriously. Congressman Greg Walden, whose district is home to 10 electric cooperatives, recently sent a letter to the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee calling for swift action.

"The RURAL Act would ensure (cooperatives) can rebuild after a disaster without chaining their consumers to increased tax costs in the future," Walden wrote.

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR-3), a key member of the House Ways and Means Committee, has signed on as a co-sponsor, as has Congressman Kurt Schrader (D-OR-5).

A key player in the debate will be Wyden, dean of the Oregon congressional delegation and a powerful ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee.

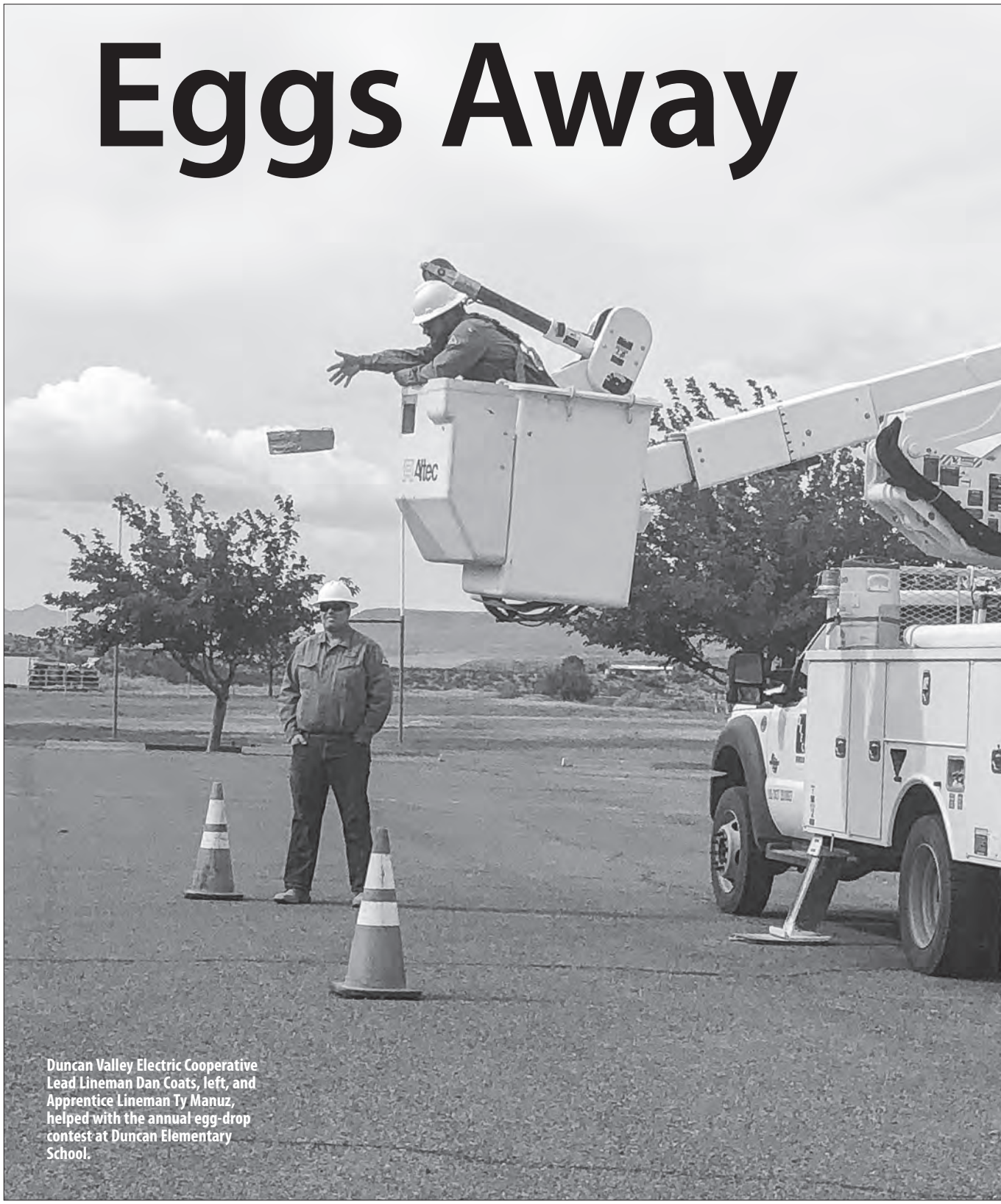
Electric cooperative leaders continue to talk to Wyden's staff about the legislation. All of Oregon's 18 electric cooperative managers recently endorsed a joint letter to Wyden seeking his leadership.

"You are well-positioned to help solve a problem that, while not of your making, threatens to harm our members that can least afford additional costs," they wrote.

Wyden's office is exploring potential nonlegislative solutions with the U.S. Treasury Department because of the difficultly of passing a bill in a Capitol fraught with politics.

This strategy gives electric cooperatives another potential avenue to solve a dilemma that, so far, has only yielded the toughest of choices. ■

Eggs Away



Duncan Valley Electric Cooperative Lead Lineman Dan Coats, left, and Apprentice Lineman Ty Manuz, helped with the annual egg-drop contest at Duncan Elementary School.

Students Test Engineering Skills With Egg-Drop Contest

After six rounds, the annual Duncan Elementary School's egg-drop competition is complete.

Every year, Duncan Elementary School seventh graders compete against each other to see whose egg can withstand falling from a Duncan Valley Electric Cooperative bucket truck.

"We look forward to participating in the egg drop every May," says Dan Coats, DVEC's lead lineman. "We started providing a bucket truck for this event about seven years ago, and it never disappoints. I love seeing the kids' excitement and hearing them yell, 'Higher! Higher!' as we take our bucket higher for a farther drop. This year was especially exciting for me because my daughter Karly was a participant. Another example of our cooperative family!"

"This is my first year participating in the egg drop and it was such a cool experience," says Ty Manuz, DVEC's newest apprentice lineman. "The kids are a lot of fun, and it's amazing to see the different canisters the kids come up with for their eggs. I'm already looking forward to doing it next year." ■

Left, Dan and Ty enjoy seeing the kids' enthusiasm. Above, the seventh grade class.