

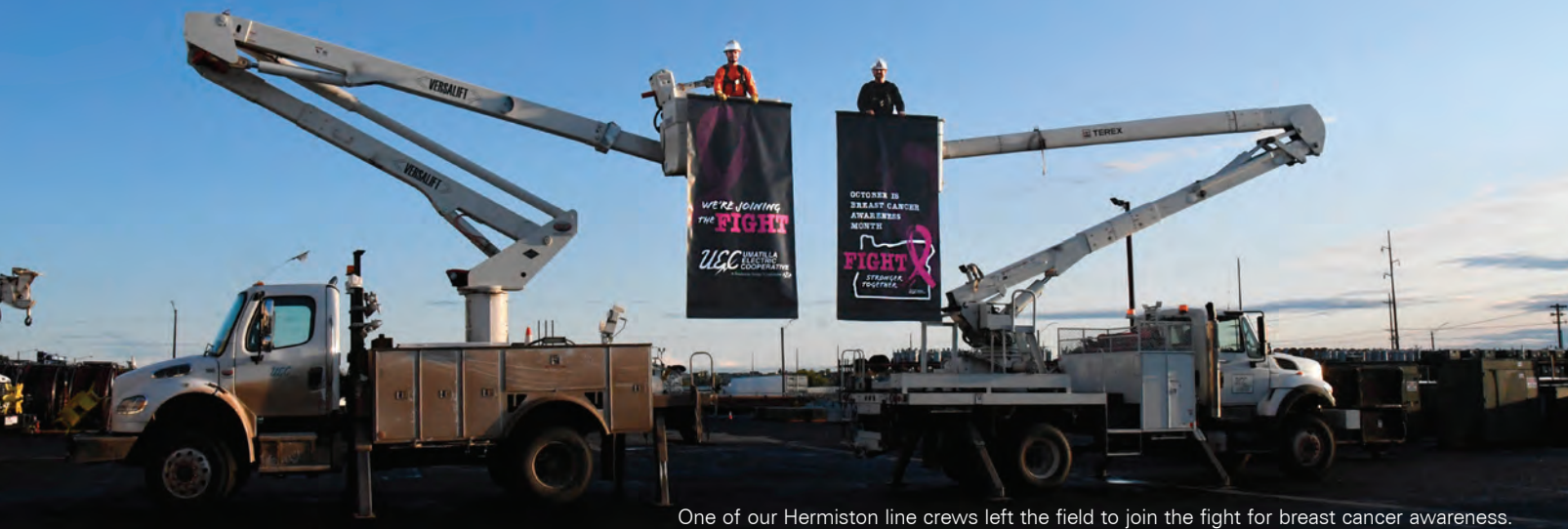


HELP US SUPPORT  
THE **FIGHT** AGAINST  
**BREAST CANCER.**

**1 in 8 women**  
will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.

**1 in 1,000 men**  
will be diagnosed in their lifetime.

**JOIN US IN FIGHTING STRONGER TOGETHER!**



One of our Hermiston line crews left the field to join the fight for breast cancer awareness.

According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of women each year and affecting countries at all levels of modernization.

In recent years, perhaps coinciding with the decline in prescriptive hormone replacement therapy after menopause, the National Breast Cancer Foundation has seen a gradual reduction in female breast cancer incidence rates among women aged 50 and older. Death rates from breast cancer have been declining since about 1990, in part due to better screening and early detection, increased awareness, and continually improving treatment options.

Nearly everyone knows someone that has had breast cancer, so it seems everyone is affected by this terrible disease in some way.

In honor of National Breast Cancer Awareness month, this October watch for special messages, health information from our local Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation and line trucks promoting awareness with pink ribbons tied to their hoods.

We hope you will join us as we fight.

### If you would like to donate:

- ▶ Containers will be located in the front office at our Hermiston and Boardman offices.
- ▶ OR, complete the form mailed with your October bill and specify a donation amount.



**Funds will be donated to the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation and will be used to help in our community.**



UEC Board of Director's and General Manager stand together to join the fight against breast cancer.



Gail Withers was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 44. Now 68, she is an advocate for monthly self exams.

# Breast Cancer Aware

*Vigilance is key to ensuring cancers are caught early*

**By Craig Reed**

Breast cancer survivors Gail Withers and Belinda Geyer-Brown have strong words of advice: Check yourself on a monthly basis for breast cancer, and be thorough.

Both Gail and Belinda felt a lump during their self-examinations. Belinda was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 41. She is now 70. Gail was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 44. She is now 68.

The two are grateful to be long-time survivors. October is Breast Cancer

Awareness month, and they want to inspire others to be aware of the disease and do self exams to detect it early if it does occur.

"You have to be vigilant," Gail says. "You can't be complacent. You have to continually check yourself. This can happen to all women. You have to develop a habit of monthly self exams. If I hadn't checked myself, it could have gone another three or four months or longer without being detected."

Belinda says October and the

dominant color of pink that symbolizes breast cancer awareness give her hope.

"I have plenty of that," she says. "When I tell my story, there's always hope. Miracles happen every day, every second of every day. I feel like I've had a miracle and I want others to know there's hope for them too."

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is recognized in many nations around the world. The month helps increase attention and support for those with the disease, for early detection and treatment



and for palliative care.

Gail and Belinda say they were surprised by their respective diagnoses because there was no history of breast cancer in their families.

Gail says the lump she felt didn't show up on her mammogram because of its location on the backside of her breast. Surgery removed the lump that turned out to be a cyst, but a laboratory discovered the tissue just below the cyst was cancerous. A second surgery a few days later removed all of the remaining cancerous tumor that was attached to the cyst and three lymph nodes. A lab test found the lymph nodes to be clean of any cancer.

After a month of post-surgery healing, Gail decided on radiation rather than chemotherapy. She started a program of 35 radiation treatments, five a week for seven weeks.

Gail was diagnosed with breast cancer in August, just before the start of classes at the University of Oregon where she had been accepted as a student. She continued as a student despite having to deal with the cancer and treatments.

"I didn't want it to control my life. I wanted to be in control," Gail says. "If a person is passive and lets depression get to you, then you're living in fear. I had a goal.



**Above, Belinda Geyer-Brown, with Registered Nurse Mandy Smith, left, and Medical Assistant Kylie Atterbury, during a chemo treatment. Left, Belinda eyes the chemicals that will help ensure her cancer is gone.**

I was going to get my B.S. I had to buck up and say, 'This is not going to run my life. You have to do what you have to do.'"

Gail drove to Eugene from her Lookingglass Valley home, attended classes at UO and would stop at the cancer center for treatment before going home. After treatments ended, she took tamoxifen for more than two years to help prevent the return of cancer.

She earned her bachelor's degree in humanities and history in 1996 and a year later her master's in education from Western Oregon University.

"I just gutted through it and tried to have as normal a schedule as possible," Gail says.

Belinda's five children were her inspiration to fight cancer. She decided to have her left breast surgically removed "because I was scared the cancer would come back if I didn't."

She had four chemotherapy treatments followed by 30 radiation treatments over six weeks.

"My doctor told me the worst thing from the treatments would be losing my hair. I'll gladly lose my hair to save my life," Belinda says. "I also had the radiation treatments because they would improve my chances of the cancer not coming back. I had already lost my hair and felt sick from the chemo, so why not

the radiation, too?"

Belinda was warned that the cancer could return, and it took 29 years to do so. She recently had her gall bladder removed, and lab tests showed cancer wrapped around her colon. She had six chemotherapy treatments, and a new scan showed the cancer was gone.

"I have to live for my children and grandchildren," Belinda says. "I have a lot of strength, and my strength comes straight from God. When people prayed for me, they never prayed for him to heal me, but rather to give me strength for what I needed to do to deal with the cancer."

Belinda and Gail are advocates of monthly self-exams, regular mammograms and checkups with their doctors.

"You can't become complacent," Gail says. "It's not like you have measles once and then never again. You have to stay on top of things because cancer can come back."

When Belinda went to the Community Cancer Center in Roseburg for her recent treatments, she visited with other patients and tried to positively relate her experiences with cancer.

"I would tell them they were going to be fine," she says. "I could see some of the scariness ease for them. It's just important to be aware." ■



Much of Jeff Lee's cooking is done in a traditional wok over an open flame. He started working in restaurants as a small boy in Hong Kong in exchange for food.

# A Home in Oakridge

*Once a chef to celebrities, Jeff Lee now serves his spin on Asian food to locals*

**By Craig Reed**

Jeff Lee's earliest memories include picking food out of trash cans in Hong Kong.

"I was homeless at 4," he recalls. "I needed food."

He also stayed close to food carts in those early years of his youth, doing small jobs for the cart owners in trade for food.

Since those days of wandering the streets of Hong Kong, the South Vietnamese native has made many stops during life. There has been one common thread to all those stops: food.

Jeff, now 60 and about halfway around the world from his homeland, can be found in Oakridge, where he and his wife, Grace, are owners and the

only employees of Lee's Gourmet Garden. The restaurant's menu is 70% Asian.

Jeff cooks in what he describes as Taiwanese style using a wok over an open flame. He adds a variety of seasonings to the beef, chicken, pork and vegetables that he prepares. Grace waits on customers out front. When there is a break, Jeff frequently comes out to the dining area to talk with his visitors.

"Cooking is like an art," Jeff says. "When cooking, use your heart. You want people to enjoy the food, to feel very happy about it. They love my food because they smile."

"Before, I have nothing. I never went to school. People on the street taught me. I said no to bad

people to do bad things for money. Money I have made myself. Hard work and luck. I've worked hard. You have to make your own luck. I've always appreciated the life I have."

The Lees opened their Oakridge restaurant in January 2008. They accidentally found the location.

Jeff had been working at a friend's restaurant in Klamath Falls when the couple decided to drive to Philomath to check out a restaurant for sale. That business proved to be too big and expensive for the Lees, but on their return home they were intrigued by an empty lot fronting Highway 58 in the middle of Oakridge. They talked to the owner and made an agreement. The owner would build a building, and the Lees would fill the kitchen with cooking equipment and the dining room with tables and chairs.

George Custer and his wife, Sayre, have been regular customers of the restaurant for several years.

"We're spoiled by Jeff's food," George says. "Other people we meet there say the same thing. The Lees are our diamond here in Oakridge. On the Yelp website, a lot of people have given the restaurant good reviews."

Oakridge Mayor Kathy Holston says small towns such as hers are always looking for food varieties.

"Having Lee's here is important to the community," she says. "Jeff cooks amazing and wonderful food that draws a good number of people."

Jeff's persistence is what got him into the restaurant industry. At age 9 in Hong Kong, he went to numerous restaurants in search of a job and was finally hired. His pay was food and a place to stay in the restaurant's kitchen. He also received plenty of cooking training and kitchen experience.

After three years at the restaurant, Jeff says he began to earn a little bit.

When his boss took a job in Taiwan 12 years later, he took his kitchen team, including Jeff, with him. Jeff spent several years in Taiwan. At age 22,



**Jeff and Grace are the only employees at Lee's Gourmet Garden.**

he made his first trip to the U.S., taking a job cooking Taiwanese food at the Taiwan embassy in Los Angeles.

Three years later, he accepted the kitchen manager's position at a high-end restaurant in Vail, Colorado. The food was all Asian.

"They paid more, but during the ski season it was a lot of orders, a lot of work," Jeff says. "Vail was very, very big business."

In 1994, Jeff became a first-time owner, buying a restaurant in Park City, Utah. The year before at age 34, Jeff had become a U.S. citizen.

He says his goal was to be a U.S. citizen and own a business. Jeff spent 10 years in Park City, cooking for several celebrities, including actor

Jackie Chan. When he got a good offer for the restaurant, he decided to sell and settle in a climate that was warmer year-around.

He worked in a restaurant in Kauai, Hawaii. He spent five years there before moving to Klamath Falls to help a friend in his restaurant.

In 2006, Jeff married Grace, who he met when working in Taiwan. They opened Lee's Gourmet Garden in Oakridge two years later.

"Every day, I tell my wife 'If you don't keep working hard, the business will fail,'" Jeff says. "People come to have a meal and to spend their money. They are the boss, the guests. You have to treat them right."

Jeff and Grace return to Taiwan for several weeks each year to visit Grace's family. Jeff has no family. He was raised in an orphanage before being taken in by a church in Hong Kong when he was a boy.

On the trips to Taiwan, the Lees help at an orphanage as a way to give back. Jeff says what the world is missing is love, so he shares his with the kids at the orphanage.

Back in Oakridge, he shares his cooking and food with those who visit his restaurant.

"I know a lot of people in this world have no food, so when people eat my food, I'm thankful," Jeff says. ■

Lyndee Jacobsen performs with Mane Attraction Rodeo Performance Team. She also is an accounting technician at Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative.

Photos by Max Jacobsen



## A Life of Precision With Horses and Numbers

By Craig Reed

Lyndee Jacobsen is comfortable, whether sitting at her desk or on a loping horse.

At her desk, Lyndee has been an accounting technician for Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative since January. She works the numbers at her desk and frequently steps up to the front counter to help visiting co-op members.

"I think the work environment here is friendly," the 25-year-old says. "You get to interact with a lot of the co-op's members."

Outside of work, Lyndee enjoys time with her husband, Max, but also with Cole, a quarter horse that she has had for 15 years, and with Oscar, an Australian shepherd she has had since he was a puppy.

Lyndee and Cole are members of Mane Attraction Rodeo Performance Team—a horse-and-rider group that gallop, lope and trot through routines at rodeos.

She says the best way to describe the activity is to compare it to synchronized swimming, but on

horseback. The group's eight riders and their horses ride a 6-minute choreographed routine to provide entertainment at rodeos.

A 2011 graduate of Siuslaw High School in Florence, Lyndee came to Blachly-Lane with a bachelor's degree in accounting from Oregon State University. She graduated in 2017 and after a year of working for a public accounting firm in Eugene, she was hired by the cooperative.

"Matt Bottensek, a friend of mine, bragged about the working situation and atmosphere at Blachly-Lane," Lyndee says. "I wasn't really ready to leave my other job. I was halfway through the process of becoming a licensed CPA, but I decided I could complete the process while working at Blachly-Lane."

"I was doing corporate tax and nonprofit auditing at my other job and this is so different. I had thought accounting was the same across the board, but accounting for a utility is very different than what I was used to. It's been a good learning experience. There's a lot of room for opportunity here."



Lyndee with her horse Cole, top, and her dog Oscar, above.

Carole Phillips, the co-op's chief financial officer, says Lyndee has been a wonderful fit.

"She brings a positive can-do attitude," Carole says. "She brings that same pleasant, smiling attitude to the counter when she's waiting on our customers. She's got a lot of potential. She's got a bright future ahead of her."

At home, Lyndee and Max are working in their spare time on a 10-acre property they recently bought. They're remodeling the interior of their house, and clearing brush and other debris from the acreage.

It's been a slow process, with both Lyndee and Max holding down full-time jobs.

"We're just a two-person crew," Lyndee says.

Max, who is from Sisters, is a X-ray technician at a medical office in Eugene.

Lyndee says her father, Roger Center, and Max's father, Frank Jacobsen, have helped out with the remodeling project. Roger owns a construction company in Florence and Frank is an electrician.

While work and the home projects keep her busy, Lyndee finds time to be with her two favorite

animals, Cole and Oscar.

"They take up a lot of my time," she admits. "Max has to put up with the horse, but he loves the dog."

When Cole was a colt, Lyndee exercised him regularly for the owner. With money she earned working for her father's construction company, she bought the horse.

Lyndee joined the performance team five years ago with encouragement and persistence from Lisa Petersen, her middle school principal and president of Mane Attractions. The team gives four performances a year at area rodeos and enters some drill competitions.

Because Cole was trained to race in the barrels event, Lyndee rode a different horse, Buster, for three years in the Mane Attraction performances. During that time, she worked with Cole to make him capable of being a performance horse. The two became part of the drill team this year.

"I think Cole and I have been together so long, we've done so many things together, he's willing to do whatever I ask," Lyndee says. "He enjoys the exercise and activity."

Lisa says she watched Lyndee in high school equestrian events, saw that she had a deep interest in horses and then pestered Lyndee until she joined Mane Attraction.

"She's so good at riding," Lisa says. "You point her in the right direction in a drill and she just goes. She can ride at any position in the drill."

Lisa adds that Lyndee and Cole are "a marriage."

"They know each other—they read each other's language," Lisa says. "Cole will do anything for her and she'll do anything for Cole. She's a great rider."

Lyndee says it's important that the horse and rider stay alert and pay attention to the details of the performance because the horses pass close to each other as they move through the routine.

At last year's Eugene Rodeo, the Mane Attraction team put on a light performance. Strings of lights were draped on the horses and the riders, the arena lights were turned off and the team rode a routine.

"We had to ride a little slower and do a simpler routine because it was harder to see the other horses," Lyndee says, noting the team finished the performance with no issues. ■

# Cancer Survivors Stress Awareness

*Family, friends and faith help women through disease ordeal*

By Craig Reed

Breast cancer survivors Lori Weller and Leanne Klump are quick to thank their families, friends and faith for helping them deal with the disease.

"I got through all the treatments thanks to God's grace," Lori says. "I could not have done this without my Lord and savior. He was there the whole time."

Leanne has similar thoughts.

"It's God," she says. "There's no way I could do this on my own. I talked to the Lord. I said, 'I can't do this alone, I need you to help me.' I'm a walking miracle. I'm a child of God."

Lori, a 59-year-old resident of La Pine, was diagnosed with breast cancer on December 20, 2017, after finding a lump during a self-examination. Lori, who was adopted at birth, was not totally surprised by the diagnosis. When she connected with her birth mother in 2013, she found out her sister had cancer and was going through treatments.

Leanne, 66, and a resident of Gilchrist, found two lumps during a self-exam and was diagnosed with breast cancer on March 26, 2018. She had an ultrasound and biopsy a week later. Leanne had worked in a hospital in Riverside, California, for 20 years, so she was familiar with different medical processes.

"I wanted to know everything," she says of the diagnosis and the options. "I wasn't afraid of knowing the situation."

Leanne's mother had breast, thyroid and colon cancers, so she knew the genetic odds weren't in her favor.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Both women adamantly encourage women to do monthly self-exams and have regular mammograms.



**Lori Weller, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2017, encourages women to do self examinations for the disease, to have regular mammograms and, if necessary, fight it. Lori had both chemotherapy and radiation to clear herself of cancerous cells.**

Photo by Renita Cuevas

"You look at it in a whole different light when you've been through it," Lori says of the disease. "I really notice all the pink ribbons so much more now. I can't help but see them and take note of them."

Lori and her husband, Tom, have two daughters in their 30s. Lori says she is constantly encouraging them to be aware of the potential of breast cancer.

"You have to be very diligent," she says.

"Do the exams, get the mammograms, don't let it go. Do all the precautions you need to do. If you catch it early, there's a lot of hope. If you don't, there's not."

Leanne says it is important for women to do self-exams for their own well-being.

"I'm a believer in self-exams," she says. "Don't be afraid to check. If you wait too long, it could turn out to be something worse or bigger than if you would have caught it in the beginning. Fear of something like this is like a poison. It can paralyze you, but you can't let that happen."

Leanne underwent daily chemotherapy treatments for 12 weeks. She also attended an educational cancer class.

During treatments and class, she was positive about her situation and talked to other patients about being as optimistic as possible.

"I was smiling and laughing through chemo except when I felt sick," Leanne says. "I feel the Lord used me in that chemo room. I used songs to comfort people through him, not me."

Leanne had hair down to her waist, but she went bald with the treatments.

"I didn't mind being bald," she says.

Friend Karen Stinson gave Leanne numerous rides to her appointments and saw up close how positive she was through her ordeal.

"The medical staff said they never met anybody with an outlook like hers," Karen says. "She was always smiling. She was always laughing and singing on her way to chemo. People just smiled at her, and that gave us the chance to witness to people."

Leanne's husband, Jim, says his wife was usually happy. He says the few times Leanne was worried, it didn't last long.

"I never saw her depressed," he says.

When Leanne completed the chemotherapy, she faced a major decision. The fact that cancer was in the family genes helped Leanne decide to have a mastectomy on her left breast. Twelve lymph nodes on that side were also removed. Testing showed eight of



**Above, during an early chemotherapy treatment, Leanne Klump enjoys the warmth of a quilt provided for patients at the St. Charles Cancer Center in Bend. Left, Leanne lost her hair after a few chemotherapy sessions but says baldness didn't bother her.**

Photos by Karen Stinson

them to be cancerous.

She elected to not have reconstructive breast surgery.

"I'm flat and I don't mind it because I don't have cancer anymore," she says with a laugh.

Lori also endured chemotherapy. She had daily treatments for two months, and a test showed her cancerous area had shrunk by 46 percent. Her treatments were decreased to once a week for a month and then once every three weeks

for four months. Midway through the latter time period, another test showed her tissue to be clear of cancer. But for added prevention, she had daily radiation treatments for four weeks during that same time.

When Lori was diagnosed with cancer, she and Tom were in the early stages of putting their house on the market, moving into a new house and building a shop building. She says those aspects of their lives continued. Tom continued his work at Midstate Electric Cooperative, but he was also there for her.

"With the grace of God, we got through it," she says. "This was definitely a faith booster for us."

The same goes for Leanne.

"They say I'm cancer free," she says. "But I know it could come back. If so, I may not like it, but I won't be mad about it. It just won't be the end of the journey yet. I have faith it'll be OK." ■



Irene Kurzweil is one of the founding members of Jamba, an all-female marimba band sharing joyful sounds throughout the Columbia Gorge.

# Happy Sounds

*Jamba creates bonds through marimba*

By Drew Myron

A summer breeze carries a deep sound—mellow, gentle and earthy—and Irene Kurzweil can't stop smiling. At 92, she's a slight figure against a massive wooden instrument. Her body bends into every note.

A classical pianist and violinist since childhood, Irene took up marimba 23 years ago. She says the ancient form changed the way she experienced music.

"My first instructor gave me the best advice," Irene explains. "She said, 'This is not intellectual music. You have to feel it in your bones.' It was such a different approach and such a shift in my brain. I felt like a part of me that had been dormant was set free."

Irene is a founding member of Jamba, an all-female marimba band that shares joyful sounds throughout the Columbia Gorge. Jamba plays music from Zimbabwe, Africa, as well as from the Caribbean and other parts of the world.

Performing at local festivals, farmers markets, wineries and special events, the band has been praised for its "infectiously happy" energy and sound.

Nine women, hailing from both sides of the Columbia River, make up the band and bring together a variety of geographical and musical backgrounds. Members are Avalon Totten-Denton and Keri Bradberry of Odell; Dotty Nelson of Parkdale; Irene Kurzweil, Abigail Merickel and Marilyn Smith of Hood River; and Lorrie DeKay, Gretchen Moisen and Anita Johnson of White Salmon.

Marimba belongs to the xylophone family. It has two or three octaves of wood keys, often arranged in simple scales. Soprano and tenor marimbas have two complete octaves—15 keys. The tenor, baritone and bass have one to two octaves, with the tenor having a higher pitch. The keys are made from padauk, wenge, mahogany or rosewood. Each key is cut and tuned by grinding a groove in the underside.

Part of the key to the marimba's rich sound are its resonators—tubes that hang below each bar.



**Audiences have praised Jamba for its happy energy.**

Like a xylophone, bars are struck with mallets to produce tones. While the xylophone gives a harsh sound thanks to metal bars, a marimba produces a deep, rich tone. Characterized by its relaxed rhythmic structure and syncopated melodies, marimba resonates with warm notes and a relaxed sound.

The origins of the marimba are not clear, though most believe the instrument began in Africa. Holes were dug in the ground, wooden bars were made to cross over the hole and bars were struck to produce sound.

Jamba plays with seven marimbas: three sopranos, two tenors, one baritone and one bass. The group performs at fairs, festivals and private parties throughout the region, including Hood River, Parkdale, White Salmon, Bingen, Stevenson, Trout Lake and Maryhill.

Jamba wasn't always a band of women. In 1996, Will Griffith formed the group, then named Mutamba. The group included three married couples, including Irene and her late husband, Bob Aikin.

"We joked that the couple that plays together stays together," Irene says.

In 2002, the group reorganized as Jamba, and has evolved into a robust band of female musicians ranging in age from mid 50s to early 90s. They rehearse every Wednesday night in Irene's large garage and perform throughout the summer. Each member plays every instrument, and during a performance

will rotate through each piece. Some are accomplished musicians; others came to the group with limited experience.

Before she joined Jamba five years ago, Abigail—a visual artist—took marimba lessons as a creative challenge.

"I was so impressed with the spunk and pizzazz of these older women that I thought this is a great way to age gracefully, staying fully engaged, learning new music, and being a part of a positive and supportive community," she says.

Dotty, who joined the group in 2002, is one of the longest-running members. Jamba fulfills a childhood wish.

"I have always been a wannabe drummer," she jokes, "but my mother said it was not ladylike."

Keri is one of the newer members, having joined in 2014.

"I so enjoy the camaraderie of these amazing, inspiring, encouraging, vibrant women who have smashed all the stereotypes I once had of growing older," she says.

For Lorrie, Jamba completes a circle that began years ago.

"In the 1990s, I lived in West Africa and became familiar with African music there and on trips to Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana and South Africa," she says. "I never thought I'd end up in a marimba band in Oregon playing music from Zimbabwe!" ■

*For more information on Jamba Marimba, go to <http://jambamarimba.com> or [www.facebook.com/Jamba-Marimba](http://www.facebook.com/Jamba-Marimba), contact Avalon Totten-Denton at 541-490-8303 or [avalontdenton@gmail.com](mailto:avalontdenton@gmail.com), or contact Lorrie DeKay at 509-637-2737 or [lorriedk@gmail.com](mailto:lorriedk@gmail.com).*

# Airplane Hobbyists Get Airborne

*Earthbound pilots take their radio-controlled aircraft to the skies*

By Dianna Troyer

Whenever he wants his spirits to soar, Bob Burroughs flies his radio-controlled airplane. Maneuvering toggles on a hand-held panel, he watches his white plane fly against a turquoise blue sky with the Lost River Mountains as a backdrop.

"I got hooked after watching some flight demonstrations and a pilot let me fly his plane," says the 74-year-old Mackay retiree.

Bob has time for his hobby since retiring from the nearby Idaho National Laboratory's Naval Reactors Facility.

"As long as the weather is good, I'll fly," he says. "I'm a newbie and still learning."

He flies an E-Flite Timber Model, a 44-ounce, sturdy molded-foam plane with a 48-inch wingspan and motor designed for short takeoffs and landings.

"I like that model because if a big gust of wind suddenly comes along or something else happens, I can put it on auto-pilot and it will level itself out," he says. "My grandkids really get excited watching the planes fly."

Wanting to share his enthusiasm for RC aircraft, he helped organize Wings over Mackay, an annual summer fun fly

at the Mackay Airport sanctioned by the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Bob, a member of the Mackay City Council, and Mayor Wayne Olsen worked with Mark Bell to host the increasingly popular event.

Mark, an RC aircraft enthusiast who lives in Nampa 230 miles west of Mackay, often visits his sister, Nancy, a resident of the Antelope Creek Living Center south of town.

"My sister thought the residents at the center would love to see some aerobatic displays," Mark says. "Bob heard about it and watched the demonstration. He suggested I ask the city council about the town hosting a fun fly. It's exciting to see how much it's grown since we started six years ago. People here are so welcoming, and the scenery is unbelievable."

In its first year in 2013, Mark and another pilot came with four planes to fly during the two-day event in late August. This summer, the five-day event attracted 22 pilots and about 100 aircraft from Idaho, Utah, Wyoming and Colorado.

"People of all ages and occupations have an interest in RC aircraft," says Mark, 67, a financial planner.

Like their life-sized counterparts, the RC planes and jets do aerobatic stunts such as loops and rolls.

Mark flies a scale model of a fighter jet, an F-15C Eagle. The RC version was built to replicate the hallmark aircraft and has a realistic jet turbine-like sound. With a 38-inch wingspan and 57-inch length, the 109-ounce jet can fly 100 mph on a level course. It was designed to give intermediate RC pilots thrilling flights.

"I love flying it because it looks so real and is an eye-catcher at the field," Mark says.

A nitro-fueled jet sounds like the real thing, says Bryan Diffendaffer, an engineering technician at Micron Technology in Meridian, after landing his jet at the



Mark Bell's F-15C Eagle replica is ready for takeoff on the runway. It can reach 100 mph. Photo by Ed Gygli



**Clockwise from above, Mackay resident Bob Burroughs flies his radio-controlled Timber at the Mackay Airport. He helps organize an annual RC event. Mark Bell says he flies a fighter jet because it looks so real and is a crowd pleaser on the flying field. Bob Gillespie of Nampa flies a bright yellow biplane. A biplane heads skyward after soaring over the group's runway.**

Photos at top and right by Ed Gygli

fun fly.

"It's super smooth to fly," he says. "It does exactly what I want it to do."

Ed Gygli of Pocatello, a retired Idaho State Police officer, launched his glider and watched it soar gracefully and silently.

"This fun fly is known for the

camaraderie among pilots and being in such a beautiful area," Ed says. "Local businesses open their arms to us. We all have a great time."

Wayne says city leaders plan to eventually make a grassy runway for RC and licensed glider pilots.

"We had a great turnout of spectators

and pilots at our fun fly," Bob says. "We're grateful a local resident and former RC pilot, Carl Espenschade, dropped by and said he wants to donate his planes to us to help promote the sport with anyone who wants to learn to fly. Eventually, I hope we have enough interest in the valley to start a club here." ■

# Helping Others Find Their Voice

*A nonreader as a child, Shannon Rouse now has book recommendations for everyone she meets*

By Denise Porter

As a child, Shannon Rouse did not have time for books. She was a self-professed “outdoorsy girl.”

Shannon, 70, is a retired teacher and has lived in Tillamook her entire life. Her students knew her as Mrs. Rouse, but even then she could have been called Mrs. Tillabook.

Shannon’s teaching strategy involved an obvious love for reading. She happily recommends her favorite authors and stories to friends, relatives, former students and anyone she meets.

Shannon says she finds herself uttering the same phrase time and again: “Oh! I know the perfect book you should read!”

Not only does she recommend books, she often gives them away.

“I didn’t read when I was growing up,” she says, then laughs at the irony of her adult self compared to her child self. “When I was in sixth grade, I certainly didn’t read. I was busy playing outside. It wasn’t until high school and later on, I really began to read.”

Shannon spent most of her teaching career with her favorite age of students: grade six. She says this age is a special developmental time in a child’s life when kids are leaving childhood and tiptoeing into adulthood.

“I just had an affinity for that age,” she explains, then chuckles. “The only other thing I can think of is maybe that’s my arrested development age.

“Actually,” she adds, turning serious, “I had a terrible sixth grade year. I



Shannon Rouse found her calling as a teacher in her late 30s. She promoted reading to her young students as a way to help them build empathy.

was that girl—the one the other girls talked about. Looking back, that’s very typical, apparently, but as a teacher, I was determined that my kids weren’t going to behave like that.”

Shannon explains that in her

classroom, students at odds with each other had to talk it out.

“Being catty was something I just could never tolerate,” she says. “They need all the adult help and love that they can get from that age period.”

One of the ways Shannon built empathy in her students was to promote reading. When a student was grappling with something big in their life, she would hand the student a book that had a character struggling with a similar difficulty.

"Children's books are so magical," she explains. "There are so many lessons to be learned there."

Shannon's road to teaching began later than that of many teachers. She married young, and attended two years of college at Western Oregon University before she and her husband moved back to Tillamook.

A few years later, with three young daughters, Shannon began her working career as a secretary at East Elementary School in Tillamook.

When Shannon's youngest daughter became school-aged, one of Shannon's friends enrolled at Portland State University and convinced Shannon to enroll as well. The two carpooled back and forth to classes.

While in college, Shannon says she fell in love with children's literature and began voraciously reading the genre.

"I had two of the most incredible children's literature teachers," she says.

The most influential was Eric Kimmel, an author and illustrator.

Shannon began teaching at age 37 as a fifth grade teacher. A year later, she moved up to sixth grade.

"It was the best thing in the world," Shannon says of beginning a career at that age. "I was a totally different teacher because I was an adult and I had kids."

She says that while sitting in college lectures as a parent listening to professors talk about managing a classroom, she found herself chuckling at times and thinking, "Ha! That's a great theory, but it won't work in practice."

Shannon also had observed her daughters' teachers when she volunteered in their classrooms. She knew who the great teachers were, and why their classroom management was effective.



**Shannon and her rescue mastiff in her home, which is filled with books.**

All of her daughters had the same sixth grade teacher: Marion Grassley.

"I adapted so much of what I did from what she did," Shannon says. "The kids were independent, yes, and they worked in groups and those groups changed around. She was phenomenal."

Shannon's classroom management changed a bit throughout the years, but several things never changed. Her students worked in teams, and they were encouraged to read a lot. Shannon also kept a mailbox on her desk. Her students could write about anything positive or negative that was on their minds, and drop the letter in the box. The mailbox

was nearly always full, and Shannon responded to every letter.

"Giving kids a voice at that age is so important," she says.

Retired after 33 years as an educator, Shannon still works as a substitute teacher and still recommends books for her students.

"I've had my grandkids, nieces and nephews in my classroom as students, and also as teacher aides," she says. "I've marveled at the roots and then all the branches that are offered in a small community. That, more than anything else, was my gift to me in my teaching. I feel like I've been so fortunate." ■

# USDA Grants Available for Rural Development



**By Christina Sawyer**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is awarding grants for projects in all states to reduce energy costs for farmers, ag producers and rural-based businesses and institutions.

“Lowering energy costs helps rural businesses improve their bottom line and create jobs,” says Rural Business-Cooperative Service Administrator Bette Brand. “USDA is committed to increasing economic development in America’s rural communities through strong partnerships because when rural America thrives, all of America thrives.”

Under the announcement, USDA is investing \$9.3 million through the Rural Energy for America Program for renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects nationwide. Congress appropriated \$50 million for REAP grants and

loan guarantees in fiscal 2019.

Recipients can use REAP funding for a variety of needs, such as conducting energy audits and installing renewable energy systems such as biomass, geothermal, hydropower and solar. Funds also can be used to make energy-efficiency improvements to heating, ventilation and cooling systems, insulation, lighting and refrigeration. The REAP grant can support up to 25% of the total project cost for a small rural business, farmer or rancher to develop a renewable energy system or install energy-efficiency improvements.

In White Pine County, Economy Drug, a family-owned pharmacy, used a \$3,850 REAP grant to complete lighting upgrades in a basement area of the drug-store to improve marketability and increase energy efficiency.

“The basement of our toy

store still had the original lighting from the 1990s when they opened up that department” says Economy Drug Owner April Bath. “The halogen tube lights were almost impossible to find, and many of the burnt-out bulbs couldn’t be replaced, leaving the basement store very dark.”

As a small family business, the cost to replace the lighting was out of reach. Bath heard about the REAP grant at a downtown revitalization meeting last year. She started the grant application process in October, and the lights came on in April.

“There was quite a lot of paperwork, but the team out of Carson City was a tremendous help,” April says. “Literally, a phone call away during every step of the process.”

April worked with a local contractor to have LED lighting installed. Installation took about three days.

“We noticed an immediate difference,” April says. “The lighting has created a much more appealing feel to the store. We are excited to find out what kind of difference the energy-efficient lighting makes on our power bill.”

For more information on REAP in Nevada, contact USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator Laura Chavez at 775-443-4764.

October 31 is the next deadline to apply for REAP grants that are \$20,000 or less, or for REAP guaranteed loans. Visit [tinyurl.com/y3x55koc](http://tinyurl.com/y3x55koc) for more information.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements, business development, housing, community facilities, public safety, health care and high-speed internet access in rural areas. ■

## Mt. Wheeler Power Breaks New Ground

*Pardon our dust. We are busy powering your future.*

By Christina Sawyer

Mt. Wheeler Power's board of directors approved plans July 23 for the co-op to move forward with a much-needed \$7 million renovation project that will significantly improve the co-op's infrastructure and service going forward.

The board's vote was the last step in a yearlong process to finalize plans for a large-scale construction project and renovation of our 35-year-old headquarters in Ely. The project includes construction of a new 25,000-square-foot, climate-controlled vehicle storage bay and warehouse, new office spaces and much-needed security updates to our front office.

"Our aging building and infrastructure were falling behind in functionality and safety, and a major renovation was inevitable," says Mt. Wheeler Power CEO Kevin Robison. "When we embarked on this journey, we knew we needed to better protect the \$4 million in equipment that we currently store outside."

Mt. Wheeler Power crews often spend precious time clearing snow from trucks and equipment in the winter. The new vehicle bay will extend the life of the co-op's assets and reduce response times during outages.

Following the mantra "We empower safety," the co-op's leadership emphasized the need to provide essential modernizations to our Ely office to provide a safer and more secure environment for our staff and members.

"Unfortunately, the open access to our offices and staff that we have always had is now considered a risk to our employees and members," Kevin says. "Their



**Mt. Wheeler Power's Board of Directors joined CEO Kevin Robison to break ground on the cooperative's new facilities at a small ceremony September 10.**

safety has remained paramount throughout the planning process."

The project team also sought to design an environment where members can comfortably and confidently meet with member service representatives to discuss account issues privately.

"From the start of the planning process, one of the most important aspects has been the support from our members," Kevin says. "To balance the renovation's costs with its benefits, we applied a rigorous research and planning approach, especially toward our financing objectives."

In spring 2018, MWP enlisted the help of Cooperative Building Solutions to complete an assessment of the property condition and a feasibility and

functionality study. CBS, based out of St. Louis, Missouri, works exclusively for electric cooperatives and is backed by 80 years of industry experience.

"Their professionals made several visits to MWP's facilities to prepare their assessment," Kevin says. "They provided preliminary designs, showing they understood the importance and impact the remodel will have on our membership. Their suggestions were innovative and sustainable, but most importantly, they earned our trust by listening to our needs and respecting our budget."

Excavation began August 26. Co-op leadership held a small groundbreaking ceremony September 10 to celebrate the important step in securing Mt. Wheeler Power's future.



Concept images, clockwise from top, the warehouse and vehicle storage bay; lobby and reception areas; offices and operations areas.

Contractors will begin interior preparations in early October, and staff will relocate to a temporary workspace in the downstairs board room.

“While these accommodations are not ideal, we will continue to provide the high quality of service our members expect and deserve,” Kevin says. “We appreciate everyone’s patience and continued cooperation as we make these important improvements.”

Kevin says now is a great time to sign up for one of our many alternative payment options. Doing so will help you avoid the need to visit our offices while they’re under construction.

“We are as committed as ever to the future of our communities,” Kevin

says. “We hope to serve as an example, encouraging others to incorporate similar approaches and designs into existing facilities throughout our community. We are excited to welcome you to our new and improved home next summer.”

MWP staff are standing by to answer any questions members might have about this important project.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us at any time. Be sure to check in on our Facebook and Twitter pages for photos and updates on our progress.

“Mt. Wheeler Power celebrates its 50th anniversary next year, and we can’t think of a better way to mark a half-century of service than to open our doors to a bright future,” Kevin says. ■



Concept image of vehicle storage bay.

# New City Manager Envisions a More Vibrant Carlin

By Dianna Troyer

No, taxi driver was not listed on Madison Mahon's job description when she applied to be Carlin's city manager. Neither was event planner. Yet the energetic 23-year-old did both with no regrets.

In July, Madison, who became city manager in June, helped coordinate a day of volunteerism for 52 summer interns who work for Nevada Gold Mines. She spent a good part of the day driving them to work sites and hearing about their impressions of Carlin.

"When you work in a small town like this, you do whatever needs to be done," she says. "I like the variety in my job and that no day is ever the same."

Madison asked city department heads what needed to be done and received a long wish list.

"We were grateful for a day of free labor from conscientious, energetic people," she says.

Among their numerous projects, interns laid pavers at the library's patio, helped at the senior center, painted red lines around fire hydrants, tested the hydrants' water pressure and did other improvement projects.

For Madison, town beautification is a priority—one that Mayor Dana Holbrook shares.

"Some city managers chase grants, thinking they're a small town's saving grace," Dana says. "It takes a lot of time and doesn't always pay off. Yet encouraging residents to clean up their yards, to have a little civic pride, is a doable goal. We can make Carlin a town everyone wants to live in."

Many people who work at gold mines north of Carlin commute from Elko, 20 miles to the east.

"When I moved here, I noticed a sign near town where a housing development was once proposed but fell through," Madison says. "It reads, 'If You Lived in Carlin, You Would Already be Home.' One of our goals is to provide newer housing to attract people."

Receiving grants to improve infrastructure, such as the town's water system, is another goal.

"Carlin residents' median income is too high to qualify for grants from some agencies," she says. "So I'm researching other sources such as USDA Rural Development."

While Madison concedes

her job description—responsible for city operations—is vague, she welcomes its breadth.

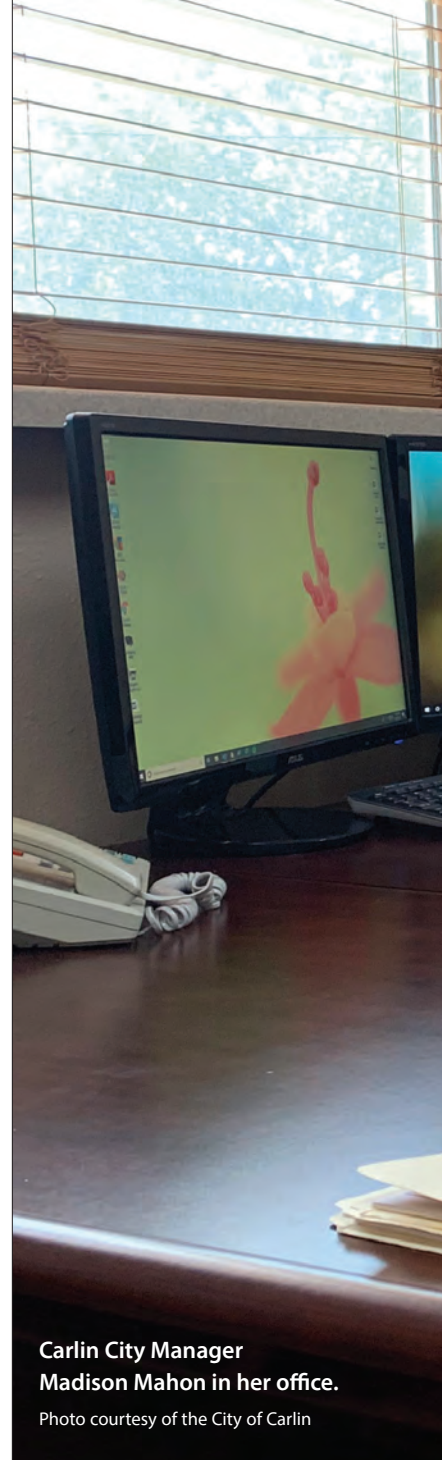
"It's the type of job I've always wanted—to be able to make a positive difference in a small town," she says.

In May, Madison graduated from the University of Utah with a master's degree in public administration. She heard about the opening in Carlin, a town of 3,200, through [www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com).

"I'd done public policy internships in Salt Lake City and was surprised when I came here that many of the issues are similar, except in a small town you have less staff and money to deal with those issues," Madison says.

Her internship experiences helped her make the shortlist for the manager position. Dana and the city council narrowed down the applicant pool to five finalists.

"She stood out because she was calm, quiet, focused, energetic, articulate and a good listener," Dana recalls. "Someone asked her a question, and I don't even remember what it was. She set her jaw, made eye contact and confidently answered it. We could tell she isn't intimidated—whatever she does.



**Carlin City Manager  
Madison Mahon in her office.**

Photo courtesy of the City of Carlin

She's someone who has a fresh outlook and can jump-start Carlin to help it grow."

Madison says she is impressed with Carlin's recent growth. A grocery store, dental clinic and salon recently opened. The historical society opened a new museum, showcasing local history, including contributions of Chinese residents. The senior center regularly hosts community events. The old post office is being



remodeled into a community center.

“We’re working on recruiting more businesses,” she says. “With Carlin being half-way between Salt Lake City and Sacramento, we’d like to steer travelers to town and give them a reason to stop. I’m excited to see what the future holds for Carlin. The town has so much potential. I’m here for the foreseeable future.” ■



**Madison helped bring these summer interns from Nevada Gold Mines to Carlin for a day of beautification projects.**

Photo courtesy of the City of Carlin

# Moderation? No, Thanks

*Terry Eddington experiences the world's extremes first hand*

By John M. Glionna

Throughout her adventurous life, Terry Eddington has gone to extremes.

Traveling far and wide from her Southern California roots, the 57-year old National Park Service custodian has wintered in Antarctica, a forbidden place where exposed toes and fingers can ice up in mere minutes, and the filter on a cigarette freezes after a few puffs, where you can almost feel the icebox-cold sucking the heat right through your pores.

And for the past few years, she has been greeted each day with the polar opposite of brutal cold, performing her outdoor labors for the National Park Service in Death Valley, one of the hottest places on the planet.

One late summer morning, the public thermometer outside the park service's Furnace Creek visitor's center already reads 124 degrees. It's the kind of day when you make sure your water bottle isn't far from reach and, if you work at the park, you leave your vehicle running at all times as a refuge from the billowing, devil's-breath heat.

On her travels throughout Death Valley, Eddington has seen temperatures approach 130 degrees. In Antarctica, she faced a thermometer



Whether it is life in Antarctica ...

Photo courtesy of Terry Eddington

reading that hit minus 104.

That's a 234-degree temperature difference, tantamount to blasting off from the surface of Venus and landing on the frigid dark side of the moon.

"When people hear about where I've worked and the conditions I've faced, they say 'Oh my gosh, you're one of a kind,' but a lot of people have done it. Surviving extremes is really all about preparation and taking proper precautions."

Because one wrong move could prove fatal.

Eddington stands a graceful 6-feet tall, with a lanky easy-going style. She laughs, expressing her amazement that a self-described high school slacker from Lakewood, Calif., with no aspirations to college could have carved out such an intrepid life.

"I'm not a book person, I'm a doer," she says. "I want to learn something by doing it, not reading about it in some manual."

She was raised by a single Norwegian-immigrant mother, but she and her brother spent some summers with her Montana-born father, camping and building tree houses and forts at their Lakewood home. That's how she fell in love with the Great Outdoors, and by age 24 knew she had to escape L.A. for her mental health.

That was her blast-off decision.

She soon took a job as a restaurant waitress at



... or Death Valley, preparation is key.

John Glionna

Kings Canyon National Park in Northern California. In 1985, when she was just 25, she landed her seasonal job with the National Park Service, as a laborer. "Maintenance work paid better than other jobs and you didn't need an education," she says.

While working in Yellowstone, she spoke to a park ranger who had just returned from Antarctica. She was fascinated.

"So, it is like a man camp there?"

"No," he said. "There are some girls there." (The male-to-female ratio is 4-1.)

Eddington put the South Pole on her employment bucket list, and in 2005 spent the winter working for the National Science Foundation at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, a research facility located at the southernmost place on Earth.

She spent another two winters at McMurdo Station, on the southern tip of Ross Island — an outpost equally as remote, equally as cold, where on a blustery day the wind chill can hit minus 140.

Eddington spent her days in logistics, either off-loading cargo and supplies with heavy equipment or tracking everything from food to oil filters. Venturing out into the elements on an inclement day was not for the faint of heart. The government contractor bought hand and toe warmers by the pallet-load.

You put toe-warmers on your hands and wrapped them around your thumb and index-finger. Then you shoved your hands into heavy mittens, topped by two more hand warmers. You wore a parka that covered your face and left two tiny slits to see out of.



**Extra care was taken to ward off frost bite.**

Photo courtesy of Terry Eddington

the isolation and cabin fever, and it was enough to turn the physically and emotionally unprepared into that Jack Nicholson character in *The Shining*.

"Our only goal was to survive the winter," she says, "and be there to see that first plane arrive come spring."

Eddington says extreme heat scares her more than the frigid cold.

Sometimes, your breath would immediately crystallize, turning your face mask into a sheet of ice.

Try holding a pen and clip-board in that get-up. Add in



**Terry's responsibilities included unloading cargo in Antarctica.**

Photo courtesy of Terry Eddington

Out under the unrelenting Death Valley sun, there is no reprieve, no South Pole cold weather gear. You survive on your wits and your preparation. You carry enough water for both yourself and anyone else in need.

"And you never turn off your vehicle," she says. "That's your safe haven."

Since 2016, Eddington has joined two dozen other park maintenance workers to clean toilets and carry trash on hellish days when park temperatures makes national news.

She knows from experience that you can burn your throat breathing glacial air, but says heat kills just as fast. "Anything beyond 110 degrees is beyond my comfort zone," she says. "You have to keep asking yourself whether what you're doing is safe."

Surviving such extremes requires the buddy system. At the South Pole, she kept an eye on the noses of her coworkers for the first signs of frostbite. And in Death Valley, she's advised workers to seek shelter.

"Once your face starts flashing red, you're heat-stressed," she warns. "And it won't be long before that turns into heatstroke."

A few months ago, Eddington came in, perhaps for good, from working out there in the heat and the cold. She took an indoor job, one that came with round-the-clock air-conditioning.

She knows that enduring extremes has taught her a lot about personal endurance.

From now on, however, Eddington says she prefers spending her days in a place where the temperature is about 75 degrees.

Preferably on a cool mountaintop. ■

## Try These Five Things to Improve Your WiFi Network

Home WiFi networks are doing more work – and making life more convenient and enjoyable – for consumers every day. Smart phones, computers, thermostats, audio systems, TVs, games, security systems and even stove tops and refrigerators all can connect to a consumer's home network.

The luxuries of yesterday are now considered necessities today. And each of these conveniences love bandwidth.

The technicians in Valley Communications Association Network

Operations Center (NOC) – who combined have more than four decades of experience in broadband – want to help you keep your network in

tip-top shape so it can better serve you and your family.

The number of residential and commercial consumers subscribing to Valley Communications Association broadband services passed the 10,000 mark in August. More than 90 percent of VCA consumers are on wireless. Fixed wireless broadband – or WiMAX – delivers between 40-50 megabits per second of bandwidth – the volume of information that can be delivered to your devices in one second.

Bandwidth works a lot like water flowing through

a pipe – the wider the pipe, the more information that can flow through it. A typical VCA wireless connection should be able to handle a streaming movie, an internet gaming device and several phones simultaneously. It has a limit, however. In addition, the WiFi network within the home has limitations, and significant factors include the distance from the device to the router and walls through which the signal must pass. As download devices are

added to the network, performance starts to deteriorate.

VCA's Network Operations Technicians talk to dozens of consumers every day,

assisting member-consumers with network issues. Following are some tips from our technicians to keep your network operating at optimum efficiency and serving your needs.

► **Reboot.** Almost anything will work better if you unplug it for a few minutes every once in a while. At least once a month, unplug your router to clear the cache. Routers are small computers with limited storage (cache) of recent activity for fast access. It helps to clear the cache periodically. Leave it

**The technicians in Valley Communications Association Network Operations Center (NOC) want to help you keep your network in tip-top shape.**



From left, Network Operations Center Technician Dax Whittle, Customer Service Representative Jennifer Spurrier, NOC Technicians Ramon Yopez and Brian Thomas and CSR Jamie Taylor. (Not pictured, Technician Jessica Armendariz.)

unplugged for two minutes, and after you plug it back in, wait another two minutes before using it.

► **Know your network's limits.** Streaming and gaming are bandwidth hogs. Consumers have far more options to stream movies and enjoy video games than even a few years ago. Those activities consume more bandwidth than almost any other. Returning to the plumbing analogy, if all the showers and faucets in the house are wide open, that won't leave much water pressure to do the laundry. The same principle applies to bandwidth. Each device connected to your home network consumes a percentage of the bandwidth. How many devices are on your network?

► **Walls and distance.** Know that a WiFi network is affected by walls, distance and the number of devices on the network. More distance, more walls, more devices affect performance.

► **Device setup.** Within 25 feet of the router – usually within the same room – use 5G band. Also, put cell phones on this band, which has stronger bandwidth over a shorter distance. Devices that go from room to room (laptops, tablets) or are anchored in other room should be put on 2.4G band. The speeds will be lower, but it travels farther and works better through walls.

► **Update your router.** Yes, routers are computers, and they need software upgrades from time to time. If possible, set your router to update automatically. If not, check to be sure it has the latest version of software, also known as firmware.

► **Call us.** If you've tried all the above tactics to improve the performance of your broadband network, and it's still running like a dog, give us a call at 775-727-5312. We will do what we can to get your service running at peak performance. ■

# Powering Rural America

*The Columbia Basin dams play an important role in electrification history*

By Lisa Jacoby

As much as we depend on flipping a switch to cast light on our lives, widespread electricity is less than a century old in the United States.

"We had kerosene lamps," says Duane Hutton, who lives in Baker City.

Electricity came to his Keating ranch in 1953 or 1954.

"We had to wire the house, the barn, the sheep shed, everything," he says.

It also meant lambing camp had lights and heaters.

"It helped in all kinds of ways," Duane says.

For Elton Cook, getting electricity meant moving the house a mile closer to Powder River. His family's ranch was on a hill in Keating Valley.

"We couldn't afford to have them put the electricity up there," Elton says.

Relocating made it possible to pay for the power line. It replaced a 32-volt generator, which meant the Cooks had to rewire the house for the new source of power. This was in 1952.

"The year I graduated was the year we got electricity," Elton says. "It made a big difference. We could have a refrigerator."

Electricity slowly spread across the U.S. in the early 1900s. When President Franklin Roosevelt established the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, only 10% of the nation's farms had electricity.

The Northwest, however, was a slightly different situation. According to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, nearly 48% of farms in Washington had electricity. Oregon's number was 27.5%, and Idaho was slightly higher at 30%.

The program to bring electricity to rural areas began in 1936 with a 10-year loan program designed to entice utilities to extend power lines to rural customers. This endeavor, however, was an expensive prospect because maintaining lines in rural areas cost more than in cities.

Electric cooperatives were the answer.

In Baker City, three citizens took up the cause in the 1980s. Dick Haynes, Peggi Timm and Glenn Timm proposed forming a cooperative to own and operate the utility. Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative was founded in 1987.

To secure a loan, the trio collected a penny from 700 citizens



**Workers on giant turbine being lowered into Bonneville Dam in 1937.**

Photos courtesy of Army Corps of Engineers

to show community support in Baker, Union, Grant and Harney counties. This was enough to earn a \$33 million loan from the Cooperative Finance Corporation. The next year brought full operation of OTEC. The first order of business was replacing poles, wires and substations to upgrade the system.

President Roosevelt supported the conservation of natural resources and developing water power. In the archives of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Roosevelt's 1920 speech in Portland—he was campaigning for the vice presidency—exemplifies his vision of hydropower after he traveled down the Columbia River Gorge.

“When you cross the mountain states and that portion of the coast states that lies well back from the ocean, you are impressed by those great stretches of physical territory now practically unused but destined someday to contain the homes of thousands and hundreds of thousands of citizens like us, a territory to be developed by the nation and for the nation,” he said. “As we were coming down the river today, I could not help thinking, as everyone does, of all that water running unchecked down to the sea.”

Roosevelt won the election in 1932, and construction of the dams that supply hydropower soon followed.

Puget Sound Power and Light Co.—an investor-owned utility—completed Rock Island Dam in 1933 near Wenatchee with the sole purpose of generating electricity. The federal dams—Bonneville and Grand Coulee—soon followed to meet the demand for power in rural areas.

By 1940, 59% of the farms in Oregon had electricity. In Washington, the figure was 71%. By 1970, nearly all farms had electricity.

The functions of the REA were assumed by the Rural Utilities Service in 1994. Today, that is part of USDA Rural Development, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The dams in the Columbia River basin and the power they produce have served an important role improving the quality of life in the entire Northwest for more than 80 years.

## The Dams

Most Columbia River Basin dams are multipurposed. In addition to generating power, the dams provide flood management, irrigation and locks for boat and barge navigation. Reservoirs created behind the dams provide places for recreation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates the Bonneville Dam. In 1937, Congress created the Bonneville Power Administration to market, transmit and set the rates for the power generated at Bonneville Dam. Grand Coulee Dam, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, was added to the grid upon completion in 1942.

BPA is self-funding and covers costs by marketing wholesale power from 31 federal hydroelectric projects in the Northwest, one nonfederal nuclear plant and several small nonfederal power plants. BPA provides about 28% of the electric power used in the Northwest and its resources—primarily hydroelectric—making BPA power produced from the dams 100% carbon-free. Hydroelectric dams can constantly generate electricity, unlike renewables such as solar and wind, which depend on the weather.

A history of the Army Corps of Engineers details how hydroelectric projects expanded following World War II. By 1975, Corps projects on the Columbia and Snake rivers were producing 27% of the total U.S. hydropower and 4.4% of all



**Bonneville Dam under construction in 1935.**

electrical energy output.

Today, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council reports that the Columbia River, through its system of dams, provides more than half of the electricity used in the Pacific Northwest.

President Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot—chief forester of the U.S. Forest Service—advocated for the conservation of natural resources and for public control of waterways. In 1907, Roosevelt created the Inland Waterways Commission, which studied the development of rivers. The report, according to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, “declared rivers are assets of the people, warned about monopolies taking over river development, and endorsed multiple-purpose development of rivers.”

In 1920, the Federal Water Power Act passed to coordinate the hydroelectric projects in the United States.

Today, it is hard to imagine life without electricity—unless you first grew up with a wood stove and kerosene lanterns.

“So much changed when they could turn on a lightbulb,” says Libby Burke, archivist for the BPA library. “It was a huge change for a small investment.”

A rich history full of hardworking people who had a vision of cultivating and developing the resources of the Columbia River Basin is being realized today. The people of the Northwest, including OTEC members, continue to reap benefits from the low-cost, clean energy produced by the dams. ■

*For more information, go to [www.nwccouncil.org](http://www.nwccouncil.org) or [bpa.gov](http://bpa.gov).*

# The Value of Your Membership

*OTEC celebrates National Cooperative Month with member appreciation*

By Susan Parrish

In October, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative celebrates National Cooperative Month by making it all about members. The co-op serves about 23,000 members and 31,500 meters in Baker, Grant, Harney and Union counties. As a co-op member, do you know the differences among the three types of electric utility ownership?

- OTEC is a member-owned cooperative. Its members are also consumers of the services.
- An investor-owned utility is a for-profit business.
- A public power system is owned by a city, state or federal government.

In general, cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. Following in the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Being a member of OTEC means members have a voice in the governance of the cooperative. They vote in the annual election of a local board of directors, who set the vision and direction for the cooperative. Members receive a capital credit check in the mail for excess revenues above expenses. They have access to OTEC's generous rebate programs to upgrade to energy-efficient appliances and complete projects that help lower bills.

Sandra Ghormley, OTEC director of member services, says most importantly, OTEC is service-driven and member-driven.

"OTEC is in the business to recover the cost of doing business, not to make a profit," she says. "This makes us different from other utilities. We continually

strive to exceed the expectation of our members whenever possible because we live, work and play in the same communities as our members. They're our neighbors, friends and family."

She says for-profit utilities drive profit so they can take care of their shareholders, but OTEC is driven by all the members it serves.

"For example, when OTEC's revenues exceed expenses, all excess margins are allocated back to the members through the capital credit program," Sandra says.

In addition to capital credits, there are many other membership benefits, such as helping members find ways to save energy and lower bills, college and trade school scholarships, youth programs that support leadership development, support for economic development and community involvement, and a plethora of convenient services and options to make it easy to conduct business with OTEC.

Recently, several members throughout OTEC's service area shared the benefits of their membership beyond the co-op's competitively priced electricity.

up for their first electric service 55 years ago when Dick was 18. He says they have been OTEC members "since before it was OTEC."

A lifelong Harney County resident, Dick touts the benefits of OTEC membership.

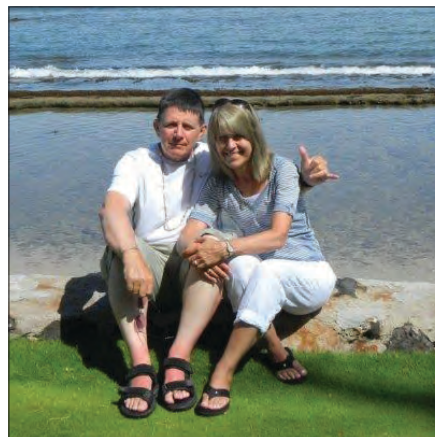
"We have very good electric rates," he says. "OTEC has given us really good service. I've known most of the local OTEC employees over the years. Good people—very community oriented. The rebate checks also are very nice."



## Megan Demirjian La Grande, Union County

Megan Demirjian, 20, is a junior at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande who shares an on-campus apartment with roommates. Their OTEC bill was in her roommate's name, so when the roommate moved out, Megan contacted OTEC to transfer the apartment's electric bill to her name. It's the first time Megan has had an electric account in her name.

"OTEC makes it really easy for young adults to get into the transition of paying their bills," Megan says. "When you go in and set up your account, they tell you everything you need to know. There are no hidden fees. It's straightforward. Their



## Dick and Patsy Baird Hines, Harney County

Dick Baird, 73, and his wife, Patsy, signed

website is easy to navigate. If you have any beginner questions, OTEC answers them. And they give you a free coffee card when you sign up.”

Megan grew up in Manhattan Beach, California, where electricity costs more.

“When I saw my first electric bill, I was very pleasantly surprised,” she says.

### **David and Mary Lou Dethman Baker City, Baker County**

David and Mary Lou Dethman recently relocated to Baker City from Prineville, where they had a positive experience as members of Central Electric Cooperative in Crook County for 22 years.

After David retired from Crook County Sheriff’s Office, he was hired part time as a deputy with Baker County Sheriff’s Office in 2018. He lived in his travel trailer in a Baker City RV park for 18 months until Mary Lou retired and joined him in July.

The couple recently bought a home in Baker City and signed up for OTEC service. David says they expect to replace the air conditioner with a heat pump. They will work with OTEC to receive an energy rebate to help them cover the cost of the project.



### **Jodie and Ted Hausotter Baker City, Baker County**

In the past 16 years, members Jodie

and Ted Hausotter have used OTEC’s energy rebate program twice to upgrade the lighting at their Baker City business, Natural Structures, which manufactures waterslides and water playgrounds. The buildings in their facility were built during the 1920s to 1970s.

“A lot of the lighting was a bare bulb hanging from a cord,” Ted says. The old lights probably were running at 10 to 20% efficiency. They didn’t provide very good light for manufacturing.”

After upgrading all their lights to LED three years ago, Ted says the new lights provide good light they can measure in.

“We have better lighting, got energy rebates and save electricity,” he says.



### **Prairie City School Prairie City, Grant County**

Prairie City School District recently worked with OTEC to receive substantial rebates for energy-efficient upgrades. The district serves 170 students in kindergarten through grade 12. Its main building dates to 1911. The newer wing was added in 1967.

The district installed six mini-split ductless heat pumps, added hand dryers to its restrooms and replaced all fluorescent tube lights with brighter, energy-saving LED lights. Overall, Prairie City School District paid about \$92,000 for the improvements and is receiving more than \$38,000 in rebates.

## **The Seven Cooperative Principles**

OTEC operates under the guidelines set forth in the Seven Cooperative Principles:

- ▶ Voluntary and Open Membership
- ▶ Democratic Member Control
- ▶ Members’ Economic Participation
- ▶ Autonomy and Independence
- ▶ Education, Training and Information
- ▶ Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- ▶ Concern for Community

For details, see <https://otec.coop/what-cooperative>.

“We did an LED light retrofit for every light in our school district,” says Casey Hallgarth, the district’s superintendent and principal. “The difference in lighting in our sports gym is amazing. At our first volleyball tournament this year, the lighting was so much better than previously. We’re producing more light for less money.”

He explains that in calculating savings, the district’s equation includes not just lower electricity use, but labor hours to replace fluorescent bulbs. The new LED lights are expected to last for 10 years.

“It would be great if everybody saw the cost management of these kinds of projects,” Casey says. “That’s important, especially when dollars are tight in small school districts. You spend a little bit up front, but then you save a ton. It was a smooth process the whole way.”

### **Member Appreciation Event**

OTEC hosts a Member Appreciation Day Friday, October 18, in recognition of National Cooperative Month.

To celebrate this special occasion, there are refreshments and giveaways for members who visit one of the local OTEC offices from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. See you there! ■

# Taking Education Outdoors

*Mount Rainier Institute offers outdoor classroom for students*

**By Rick Stedman**

Not far from dozens of South Puget Sound classrooms is a special learning environment that features no desks, lockers or hallways. You could say it's a breath of fresh air.

Since 2014, the Mount Rainier Institute, an outdoor classroom setting in Eatonville, has hosted more than 6,000 children, many from the South Puget Sound area.

"Mount Rainier Institute provides outstanding nature-based educational experiences that are rooted in science and help nurture the next generation of environmental stewards and leaders," says MRI

Director John Hayes,

The University of Washington operates MRI in partnership with Mount Rainier National Park. The year-round programs take place in the 4,300-acre Pack Forest and Mount Rainier National Park in the heart of the Nisqually watershed in Eatonville.

According to John, this opportunity for youth to learn about environmental science in a unique nature setting focuses on students from fourth through twelfth grade. Programs range from three to five days in length at a cost of about \$300 per student. Scholarships are available for those with limited resources.

Given the growing popularity of Mount Rainier Institute, teachers and students are also raising money so they can attend a program. A good example is Melanie Wyckoff and Bryan Kirkevold, who are seventh grade science teachers at Baker Middle School in Tacoma.

"For the last five years, we've been bringing about 50 kids each summer to MRI," Bryan says. "In order to do that, the science teachers and students at our school raise funds throughout the year. We all look forward to attending the MRI program in order to capture the numerous science and social learning experiences."

"We love MRI because of its ability to take the classroom and move it to Pack Forest where students can make real world applications to the science learned in the classroom," Melanie says.

While at MRI, students are chaperoned during their overnight stays in one of the historic cabins or the dormitory above the dining hall.

This first-time exposure to Mother Nature and Mount Rainier is a huge eye-opener for these kids.

"Most of our students are urban and haven't had the opportunity to experience visiting a forest or Mount Rainier," Melanie says. "Every year after they attend this program, students realize their role in being a part of conserving and respecting our natural environment. They develop a greater appreciation for the ecosystem and alter their beliefs about the natural world. Students also learn to disconnect from their digital world and connect with the natural world together. New friendships are made and new social/emotional mindsets are created. Many students discover a new happiness and really express themselves positively."

Kathy Hall, a teacher at Jason Lee Middle School in

**Mount Rainier Institute students work together to study the environment.**

Photos courtesy of Mount Rainier Institute





**Above and right, students expand their horizons by exploring, observing and analyzing soil their surroundings above and below.**

Tacoma, has been bringing taken students to MRI since it first opened.

“My students always return from camp with a stronger connection to the natural environment,” she says. “For some of them, it’s their first experience camping and spending time in the woods. They are city kids and their families do not necessarily go to the mountains or seek out wilderness experiences. But after they return from camp, they want to take their families hiking and up to Mount Rainier National Park.”

#### **A Team Effort**

In addition to MRI director John Hayes, several others play important roles in the success of the program. Amy Wilson serves as the MRI education coordinator, along with several seasonal environmental educators on staff. They lead youth and adults through field science investigations, and teach a variety of topics such as biodiversity, natural history, forestry, resource management, and

cultural history of the Pacific Northwest.

“All of the Mount Rainier Institute staff including John and Amy, the environmental educators, and even the kitchen staff is incredible with the kids, and create an amazing learning environment for all students,” Melanie says.

Kathy Hall sees the spark that’s ignited in these kids, which motivates her to continue doing what she can in order to take students to camp each year.

“I do this because I believe the hope of our planet’s future lies with today’s youth,” she says. “It is imperative for youth to make a strong connection with the place they live and the ecosystem they are a part of, making this connection inspires people to want to care for and protect our planet. Living in a city doesn’t provide kids with the opportunity to make this connection with the natural world. But getting to experience even a small slice of it at camp can make all the difference in a person’s life.” ■



# Train Enthusiast On the Right Track

*Steve Hughes' appreciation for trains remains strong*

By Anne Herman

Steve Hughes of North Bend has loved trains since he was a little boy. Growing up in Wichita, Kansas, his god-uncle used to take to the train tracks and let him play with the signal arm where the tracks crossed the road.

"It was one of the old banjo arms, and when I moved it, it went 'ding, ding, ding!' and it stopped the cars," he says. "I liked that."

Shortly after that, he got interested in model trains. His first train set was made of wood, complete with tracks and blocks. From there, he progressed to a Lionel electric train set his parents gave him for Christmas, along with a table his dad built for it.

When he was old enough to go to the real train tracks on his own, Steve would stand and watch Mr. Nichols, the switcher, go by.

"He took a liking to me, and one day he said, 'Go get your father,'" Steve says. "When my father arrived, Mr. Nichols said, 'Is it OK for him to go with us?' And I got to ride along on the train. It was so cool!"

While attending school in Kansas City—a major train hub—he volunteered to be a train host.

"I would shepherd people to their seats, get them water and make them comfortable," he says. "It was really fun."

When he had a son, Steve took him to a park in Johnson County, Kansas, that had miniature steamer trains.

Along the way, Steve's fascination with engines expanded to racing cars. Because of his mechanical skills and his detailed knowledge of the track, he became a driver and then a member of the medical crew for a racing team.

After several years, he decided to quit his job and go to medical school to become a family practice doctor. Looking for a place to practice and raise his son, he researched areas of the country. He liked the Pacific Northwest.

"I thought I'd like to go to a small town and take care of all kinds of people," Steve says. "Snoqualmie was that place."

He became a family practice doctor in Snoqualmie in 1990, and immediately volunteered to be the doctor for Mt. Si. High School's sports teams. For 22 years, he cared for the teams and taught parents about concussion injuries. Steve says he never accepted a penny for it.

Through all the changes, Steve's love of trains stayed strong. These days, he builds and collects model locomotives. He has three models of historic coal-fired steam engines in his shop. They are all one-fifth scale and can weigh as much as a thousand pounds each—much bigger than a Lionel train set.

His first model was a Rio Grande Southern No. 20—a locomotive originally built in 1899. He built it from a kit.

"It was way beyond my skill level, but if you like a challenge, you do that sort of thing," Steve says.

While still working on that first



project, he heard about a model of a Colorado and Southern No. 22—one of six identical locomotives that used to run through the mountains of Colorado hauling silver from the mines. None of the original engines survived, but Steve found a model of it built by a dentist in Florida.

"It was my kind of locomotive," he says, "so I bought it."

When the government stopped buying silver, some of the trains began carrying mail to earn their keep. It was expensive to run the big, heavy engines, though, and the railroad companies were still searching for a way to cut expenses.

In 1931, the Rio Grande Southern Railroad found a creative solution. It adapted the body of a Buick Grand Master touring car to make a



**Above, Steve Hughes' first model train was a Rio Grande Southern No. 20, which he built from a kit. Right, Steve bought a model Colorado and Southern No. 22**

locomotive. The lighter body was easier and more cost effective to propel, and paid for itself within two months. It was so successful, six more were built. They became known as the Galloping Geese.

Steve became so interested in the Galloping Geese that he decided to build one. The original was built without drawings, so all he had to work from was two photographs. He ordered a few parts, but fabricated most of the engine by hand.

"I like to take them to Great Northern Days up in Skykomish and run them around on the tracks," he says. "It's one of the few places that let you burn coal." ■

