



Arriving Happy, Leaving Happy

Treo Lodges entertains both hunters and cyclists

By Jody Foss

In 2009, Phil and Kathy Carlson of Treo Ranches were on their way home from a Sunday church service when they came upon a group of cyclists.

“They were riding uphill, and when we passed them, they were smiling,” Phil says. “I thought, if they are riding uphill with a smile on their face and they liked doing this in our area, some of these people would like to come and stay overnight at our place and come out and ride these roads.”

In 2012, Phil attended a bicycle tourism seminar in Heppner hosted by Travel Oregon. Attendees mingled after speakers finished their talks about the growing tourism and cycling industry.

Phil was introduced to—and subsequently hired—Scott Brickner, a cycling consultant from Portland.

“He got us going in the right direction,” Phil says. “He knew all the right people.”

In 2015, Treo Ranches bought a 14-

passenger bus to provide transportation to and from Portland and Bend, and to serve as a support and gear vehicle in Eastern Oregon for their new venture, Treo Bike Tours. Guests are offered cycling adventures, food, conversation and comfortable lodging in a 3,500-square-foot guest house.

A fourth-generation wheat farmer, Phil followed in the footsteps of his great-great-grandfather Carlson who, in 1883, settled 18 miles away in the Swedish settlement of Valby.

“At that time, you didn’t farm so you could go to Hawaii on vacation,” Phil says. “You farmed so you could live. Everybody had wheat, a few head of cows, pigs and chickens.”

After graduating from Ione High School in 1974, Phil attended Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls for a degree in diesel mechanics with a minor in business. The farm grew, and he returned to help his parents in the business.

Phil met Kathy in Pendleton, and the couple married in 1981. Their daughter,

Jodie, is a nurse in Pendleton. Their son, Kyle, works at the Agricultural Experimental Station in Adams.

“In 1986, the government started the Conservation Reserve Program for farmers and took our farmland away, which also took winter cattle grazing away,” Phil says. “We sold the cattle and started pheasant hunting in September 1987.”

From September 10 to March 31, Treo Ranches guides pheasant and chukar hunters. From May 1 to August 15, the Treo crew transforms the bird-hunting lodge into the bicycle camp.

“It’s remote,” Phil says of Treo Ranches. “It’s probably something you have never experienced before, and it’s fun.”

Everyone on staff works together to ensure both hunters and cyclists have a safe and enjoyable visit to Treo Ranches.

Kathy takes care of reservations and bookkeeping. Rondi Ober keeps the guest house clean. Kim Carter serves as payroll manager for the ranch. Claudia Smythe is Treo’s food safety coordinator, and



LEFT: Phil Carlson steps out of the Treo Bike Tours van to prepare for riders' arrival along the 60-mile cycling adventure.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Cyclists are dwarfed by wind turbines dotting the landscape.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF TREO RANCHES

Connie Thurston is safety coordinator for Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements. Scott Smythe has been guiding hunters since 1992, and Pablo Cisneros has been a guide since 1997. Jody Maddern has been Treo Ranch's sporting clays guide since 2016.

"When they arrive at the lodge, everyone is happy," Phil says. "Our job is to keep them that way."

In preparation for the bike tour business, Phil and Kathy invited local historians and noted geologists for a field trip to educate themselves on the area's interesting, historic and unique places to share with cyclists. They traveled to the Oregon Trail routes in Cecil and Fourmile Canyon, the Painted Hills, ghost towns and abandoned homesteads.

When it's time to kick off cycling season, Phil makes a trip to Portland or Bend to pick up riders and bring them back to the ranch for their first cycling tour of the season.

With Phil as driver of the Treo support van, cyclists are well taken care of on the road. In case there is a breakdown while cycling, Phil is equipped with repair tools and equipment. He drives ahead 10 miles and waits for thirsty and hungry riders, offering energy snacks and drinks.

"Inside the trailer is a little restaurant, the repair shop, everything you can

imagine to keep things going," he says.

Gravel-road riders can cycle right out of the lodge to start their day.

"We ask our guests what they want to see," Phil says. "We go all directions."

Phil usually loads up the bikes and riders and heads for the historic town of Hardman 4 miles from the ranch. The group cycles over the mountains to Kimberly and south to the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center—about 60 miles of pedaling. Less adventurous riders can choose shorter trips of 30 to 40 miles.

Phil sets up lunch and beverages for the riders upon their arrival in Kimberly. After visiting the paleontology center, they load up their bikes and get back in the van for the ride home, complete with cold beer or sodas and lively conversation.

"They love to talk about their bikes and their adventures," Phil says. "Some have ridden all over the world."

A professional chef crew—Lori Sjerset, Ami Bargabos, Cherri Logan and Joey Olson—prepare and serve an evening meal.

The next morning may be a ride from Hardman down to Ruggs, down Rhea Creek to the town of Ione and on to the old historic store at Cecil.

"When they crest the hill, they can see the ruts of the Oregon Trail," Phil says. "The adventure ends at Arlington with a



A pheasant hunter enjoys a successful shot. Pheasant and chukar are often on the Treo Ranch guest house menu.

swim in the Columbia River."

The third day, the group might cycle west to Condon or east over the mountains to Ukiah.

"Maybe it's good I don't ride a bicycle, because I can feel for the person who only wants to ride 20 miles," Phil says, "or just down the hill." ■

For more information on Treo Ranches, call 888-276-6794 or go to www.treoranches.com.



The Dalles Dam, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is the main power supplier to Northern Wasco County PUD through the Bonneville Power Administration. PHOTO BY GILLPHOTO, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Local Power Supply

Northern Wasco County PUD's power sources continue to evolve

By Rodger Nichols

Wasco County's first power plant was a wood-fired steam generator built in July 1888 at Seventh and Union streets. D.M. Smith and J.W. French bought the plant in 1892 and moved it to First and Laughlin streets, where The Dalles wastewater treatment plant sits today.

An old historical calendar notes, "Output was so limited that lightbulbs above 10 watts were not permitted. Customers were allowed to burn as many as 10 bulbs each evening, for a monthly fee of \$1.50."

In 1902, Wasco Warehouse Milling Co. bought the plant and took it out of service when a hydroelectric plant was built at White River Falls, 35 miles south of The Dalles.

Since then, clean, nonfossil fuel hydropower has been the backbone of local power generation, with White River Falls giving way to Bonneville Dam in 1938.

But that's not the entire story. Although Northern Wasco County PUD gets the bulk of its electricity from the Bonneville Power Administration, it's not the only source—and not all of BPA's electricity comes from hydro.

In the late 1980s, PUD board members realized there were opportunities to add their own generators to dams in the region. Those dams had fish ladders. To attract migrating fish onto the ladder, there had to be a channel of water separate from the dam's spillways to provide an encouraging flow at the base of that ladder.

Their vision was that this separate stream could

pass through a turbine on its way to the fish ladder and provide an additional source of electricity. The output from such a generator would be too small of a project for the Corps of Engineers to undertake, with an output of just 5 megawatts as compared with The Dalles Dam's output of 2,100 MW.

The generator at The Dalles first spun in 1991, and a generator twice the size was finished at McNary Dam in 1997. That generation project is jointly owned with Klickitat PUD, with each utility receiving 5 MW.

The output from The Dalles generator was originally contracted to Puget Sound Energy for 20 years. The utility's payments for power paid the principal and interest on the revenue bonds used to fund the construction. When the bonds were paid, the utility had a source of its own generation with no further debt to ratepayers.

"Our mix will continue to change and evolve over the coming years," says Kurt Conger, assistant general manager and director of power resources for NWCPUD.

Nearly all the electricity consumed by PUD customers is either renewable or generated from sources that do not use fossil fuels.

Biomass, natural gas, wind and solar are a small fraction of the bundle of power the PUD buys from BPA. The same goes for nuclear power. BPA buys that from the Columbia Generating Station in Sunnyside.

Kurt notes the nuclear power is carbon free and delivered 24/7.

"Hydro is shaped to the variations in customer demands and variable resources, like solar and wind," he says.

The PUD also dabbles in solar power. A small solar array on its building puts out 8 kilowatts—a tiny fraction of the system's 140 megawatts total peak load.

"If we could repeal nights and winter, solar would be more helpful," Kurt says, tongue in cheek.

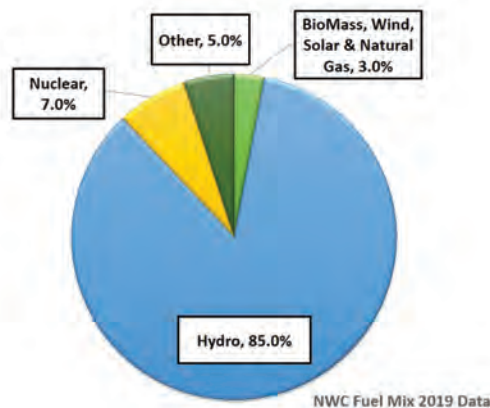
The PUD buys about 5% of its power on the open market.

"We don't always know whether it will be from Calpine Natural Gas at Hermiston, Centralia Coal or some other source," Kurt says.

Prices on the market have been depressed since what Kurt calls "demand destruction by COVID." As businesses closed, industrial customers dropped off, decreasing demand for electricity. In mid-August, a heat wave hit the West and prices on the open market jumped 10% to 30%. They have since lowered some.



ABOVE: A wood-fired steam generating plant in The Dalles, circa 1892. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DALLES CHRONICLE



LEFT: Northern Wasco County PUD's current mix of power sources.

The PUD plans carefully, buying only the power needed to serve the forecasted load, and remaining open to opportunities. For example, several months ago, the utility sent out a request for proposals for sources of additional carbon-free power.

"We got 19 proposals, the best of which were 6% to 10% per megawatt-hour above market price, which were in the range of \$35 per megawatt-hours," Kurt says.

None of the proposals was accepted.

"Northern Wasco PUD has always been, and will continue to be, committed to delivering a steady, reliable, safe source of power at the most affordable price for is owner-ratepayers," Curt says. ■

UMATILLA ELECTRIC

Winners will be announced Oct. 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2020. Complete the entry form below and mail it to the address below, or drop it off at our Hermiston or Boardman offices. You may also enter online on our Umatilla Electric Facebook page. Members need to only enter one time to be eligible for drawings throughout the month.

Fill out the entry form and mail it to:
Umatilla Electric
c/o Member Services
P.O. Box 1148
Hermiston OR 97838



We Love Our Members!



FIRST NAME

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UEC Bill Credit Drawing | Ends Oct. 29, 2020 | One Winning Entry Per Member | You Must Be a UEC Member to Win

MonthlyNEWS

Behind on Your Energy Bill? **Reach Out and Let Us Help**

We appreciate your efforts to keep your account current while collection efforts are paused during COVID-19. For those with overdue energy bills, please contact us. We are here to help, and we have avenues to assist you.

- Our UCARE energy assistance fund helps residential members pay electric bills due to personal family, medical or employment crisis or emergency.
- Our payment extension options allow you extra time to pay your electric bill, should you be experiencing financial difficulties.

Please call 541-567-6414 or visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman to discuss how we can help you avoid a large past-due balance. You are welcome to contact us online as well at www.umatillaelectric.com.

Unclaimed Capital Credits Published Online

One benefit of UEC is our refund (retirement) of Capital Credits. When we can't find those who benefit, we advertise a list of members with Unclaimed Capital Credits. This fall, we are trying to find current and former members whose checks from the years 1998 and 1999 remain unclaimed. These checks have been returned by the postal service as undeliverable or have otherwise been unclaimed.

Notices have appeared in area newspapers and our Facebook page. The reminders will continue through December.

If you had service with UEC during 1998 and 1999, please check names that are published under "My Account" on UmatillaElectric.com, and visit or call us if you are on the list to claim your Capital Credits.

Call our Hermiston office at 541-567-6414 if you, or someone you know, is on the list.



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

Virtual Auctions Save the Day for Youth Livestock Shows

UEC was able to participate as buyers at three shows this year despite pandemic restrictions, at the Milton-Freewater Show, the Umatilla County Fair Auction and Morrow County Fair Auction.

At the Umatilla fair auction, 4-H and FFA students raised a total of \$585,000, just below 2019's record-breaking auction of \$615,000, but 2020 had only 208 lots compared with 265 lots



in 2019. "It is amazing to see the support of our communities throughout the county and beyond," sale superintendent Marie Linnell said in an *East Oregonian* article.

Going Strong at 100

Helen Fischer exercises her way to her centennial birthday

**Story and photos
by Craig Reed**

As the exercise routine continues through the morning hour, Helen Fischer moves her arms, legs and body as directed.

Being on the verge of her 100th birthday does not deter Helen from participating in Rikki Stromberg's class.

Movements include rotating the arms as they are held out to the side, moving the legs out to the side while standing and holding the back of a chair, lifting small weights overhead and lifting the legs while lying face up on the floor.

Helen has done these exercises and many others since the low-impact aerobics class began 25 years ago. While her movements may have become a bit slower through the years, she says she has no intention of letting up even after she hits the century mark October 17.

Helen is a charter member of the exercise class held Tuesday and Thursday mornings at Umpqua Community Center.

"I said I would help get the class started and then I would quit," Helen says with a laugh. "I just never quit."

The class mainly draws women, ranging in age from their 50s to Helen's almost-100.

"Helen motivates the rest of us because she never misses a



Helen Fischer is a charter member of the twice-a-week low-impact aerobic class that began 25 years ago.

class, even at her age with some aches and pains," says classmate Joyce Doig. "She motivates us to get out there. Helen gives it her all. She doesn't complain. She just does the best she can. For everyone else in the class,

it's like, 'If Helen can do it, I can do it.'"

Helen says she enjoys the exercise because it keeps her limber and provides a social time. As participants work through an hour of exercise,

there's talk about families and activities. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Helen and others from the class gathered at Lighthouse Center Bakery & Café for additional socializing.

"I think the exercise is

keeping me in pretty good shape,” Helen says. “Like the old saying goes, ‘Use it or lose it.’”

Asked if she uses a cane, Helen laughs. She has a cane in the car, and a cane and walker in her house, but she doesn’t use them.

“I figure if I keep doing without those, it’s better than having to rely on them,” she says.

Rikki has been teaching the exercise class for 24 years and is impressed with Helen. Rikki says in all those years, she can’t remember Helen having even a sniffle.

“She’s kept herself physically fit,” Rikki says. “She’s maintained her flexibility because of her persistence in coming to class. She’s lived a clean lifestyle with healthy eating, and that’s paid off.”

Helen hasn’t let two recent falls at her house along Hubbard Creek Road keep her from the exercise class.

Last February, she fell while tending to her bird feeders. She didn’t think she needed to see a doctor, but Rikki talked her into a trip to Roseburg, where a scan showed she had fractured her pelvic bone. Surgery wasn’t necessary, just a month of rehabilitation.

After that month—and then three more months after class shut down due to the pandemic—Helen was more than ready to exercise when class resumed in early June.

“She was anxious to get back to class,” Rikki says. “In the first week of July, Helen held a perfect plank.”

Late that month, however,



Helen, who celebrates her 100th birthday October 17, stays active at home by tending to her garden.

while carrying firewood inside to her wood stove, Helen fell again. This time she avoided a return trip to a doctor. Three days later, she attended the next scheduled exercise class.

“Helen is an inspiration to me, and I’m only 54,” Rikki says. “I’m hoping I can do what Helen does if I can make it to that age. There are others in the class who are so much younger, and when they see her trying, there’s no excuse to miss a class. She pushes the rest of us.”

Helen was born to Sadie and Ernest McKinney in Albany, but spent her early years living on her family’s homestead in a cabin 7 miles inland from Yachats. The cabin had no electricity.

To get a better education, Helen lived in Sutherlin for a

few years and graduated from Sutherlin High School in 1938.

After working for several months in California, she went to Alaska, where her parents had moved. She worked at a fish cannery and then at a U.S. Army base, where she met Joe Michel.

The couple married and moved when Joe got Army assignments to the East Coast and California. The couple had two sons. The marriage ended in divorce after 21 years.

In the early 1960s, when Helen’s father needed care, she and her second husband, Ed Fischer, moved to the Hubbard Creek Road house where her father moved upon returning from Alaska.

“It’s just not fair that all my family has moved on and left me here alone,” says Helen,

referring to her parents, her six siblings and Ed, who died 10 years ago at age 93. “I had a couple brothers seven and eight years younger than me. They shouldn’t be gone before me. It’s not fair.”

Her sons, Kenneth and Keith, live on the East Coast and in Seattle, respectively.

Helen says she knows nothing definite about a centennial birthday celebration, but she has heard rumors something is being planned. Joyce says the exercise class is planning a birthday get-together for Helen at the clubhouse of the Calapooya Community Club.

“October is getting closer and closer,” Helen says. “I can’t believe I’ll be 100 already. The days just go flying by. I don’t know where they go.” ■

COLUMBIA POWER



Bella Orr enjoys spending time with her lambs and observing their different markings as her flock develops toward 100% Valais Blacknose. PHOTO BY LAURA ORR

The Cutest Sheep Ever

Local youth leads successful sheep-breeding program

By Jody Foss

At the base of the Matterhorn in the southern Swiss region of Valais, flocks of Valais Blacknose sheep graze in the high and rocky alpine mountain meadows.

Both rams and ewes of this hardy and prolific breed have large, spiral-shaped horns, unique to their breed. Because of their black faces and ears—with black patches on their knees, hocks and feet—they have earned the moniker of “the world’s cutest sheep.”

Fifteen-year-old Bella Orr of Ukiah agrees with that label.

Bella is one of the youngest people in the United States to have her own Valais Blacknose sheep-breeding program. Since taking an interest in the breed at age 12, Bella has worked toward her goal of owning a purebred line.

Documented since the 15th century, there are only 17,000 Valais Blacknose sheep around the world. A dual-purpose breed, they are raised for meat, which has a lower fat content than other breeds, and their course carpet-grade wool.

Bella is no stranger to raising animals. Her grandmother, Norma Barber, and her mother, Laura, are her 4-H leaders. Bella learned to care for livestock as a young girl and has shown her 4-H charges at the Morrow County Fair.

“I was doing research on the internet when I saw the Valais for the first time,” Bella says. “I showed the picture to my dad and said, ‘Look how cute they are. Can I get one?’”

Her father said yes, but told her it was up to her to research the possibilities.

Bella realized it is cost-prohibitive to import the animals from Switzerland due

to regulations and import fees. She learned of Dr. Glenn Erickson of New Frontier Genetics, one of the only veterinarians west of the Mississippi who performs laparoscopic artificial insemination, known as lap AI.

During the past 17 years, Glenn has facilitated the breeding of more than 200,000 animals. He works with goat- and sheep-breeding programs, as well as the whitetail deer industry. He offers two-day courses so breeders can learn the lap AI process for themselves.

“Most of the people who are doing this are older,” Glenn says. “I admire Bella for taking such an interest in getting this breed developed here in the United States. She has done a great job and has had success.”

Blacknose rams weigh 175 to 280 pounds and stand 2.5 to 2.7 feet tall. Ewes are a little shorter and weigh up to 200 pounds. Sometimes, ewes have black tail spots. The sheep are friendly with people and enjoy human interaction.

“I just love hanging out with my sheep,” Bella says. “My dad worries I get too attached to them, but one of my favorite places to be is in the sheep pasture with my animals.”

“It is her business plan—her money, essentially—and she calls the shots,” Laura says. “We advise her a little bit, but she makes the decisions, like what ram she wants to go with and plans for a new sheep barn.”

Bella has applied for a senior year exchange program to Sweden, where her aunt lives. Her parents will take care of the flock and other animals on the farm in her absence. While overseas, Bella hopes to get an affordable flight to the Valais region to visit other breeders and see the Valais Blacknose for herself.

Bella began breeding sheep when her Hampshire-Suffix 4-H lamb she planned to sell for auction didn’t make weight.

“We decided that we would breed her instead to get another market 4-H lamb,” Bella says.

For her breeding program, Bella chose Scottish Blackface—a breed that has some characteristics similar to the Valais—for her foundation ewes. She and her family traveled to Moxie, Washington, to buy the ewes. Bella shopped for frozen semen from a Valais ram in Switzerland.

Semen is shipped to Glenn, who transports it when it’s time to perform the artificial insemination procedure. He works on cycling all the ewes at once so he can perform several AI procedures when he visits the Orr ranch.

“You need six generations to get to 100% Valais,” Bella says. “The first year, we only bred one lamb. We are at 50% pure Valais right now.”

Bella has eight crosses: four ewes and four wethers. About half of the flock has the distinct Valais markings. The others look like the Scottish Blackface foundation ewes.

“It’s the roll of the dice, I guess,” Bella says. “Eventually, they will look more and more like the Valais. It will be 10 to 12 years until we get to 100% Valais.”

“It’s always very exciting to see what they come out looking like,” Bella says. “The Scottish Blackface are kind of crazy and not the friendliest sheep, but their babies are super calm and friendly. They walk up to you to be petted. They are more docile and curious.”

By carefully choosing the ram used in her breeding program and ordering its sperm, Bella can have a better idea of characteristics the offspring will have. She keeps the ewes for future breeding and sells the wethers to pay for the next year’s breeding program.

“4-H has taught me a lot about making plans and goals and following through on them,” Bella says. ■



The 2017 Washington, D.C., Youth Tour delegation poses in front of the White House. PHOTOS BY ERIKA HENDERSON

Youth Tour Provides Opportunities for Teens

By Courtney Cobb

Central Electric Cooperative's Washington, D.C., Youth Tour program gives local teens a new perspective on their world.

"This trip gives you an experience impossible to be obtained in any other way and gives you an incredible perspective of the country and even the world,"

says Michael Dickens, 2016 Youth Tour delegate. "We as a country isolate ourselves to different areas and ideas, but this trip broadens that perspective, and with that comes better understanding."

Many refer to the Youth Tour program as life-changing, not only for the history learned, but for the friendships created and how horizons widened.

"This experience drew me out of my shell, which I needed," says Kelly Huang, 2019 Youth Tour delegate. "It helped me communicate more easily with others. I would recommend this trip to other students because even if this trip isn't life-changing, it will be the best trip you'll ever go on. It is a fun and memorable trip, one you won't regret. Plus, it is a great

Apply for 2021 Youth Tour

Applications are available for the Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Selected participants receive all-expenses-paid trips to the nation's capital. Tour highlights include visits to the National Mall monuments, Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery and the Smithsonian museums.

An application is on page 8. Find more information about the program at cec.coop/community/youth-tour.

Apply by December 11, 2020.

opportunity you may not have again.”

Youth Tour creates a bond within and beyond state boundaries, because the program includes opportunities for socialization.

The teens also learn everyone has a voice and can make an impact.

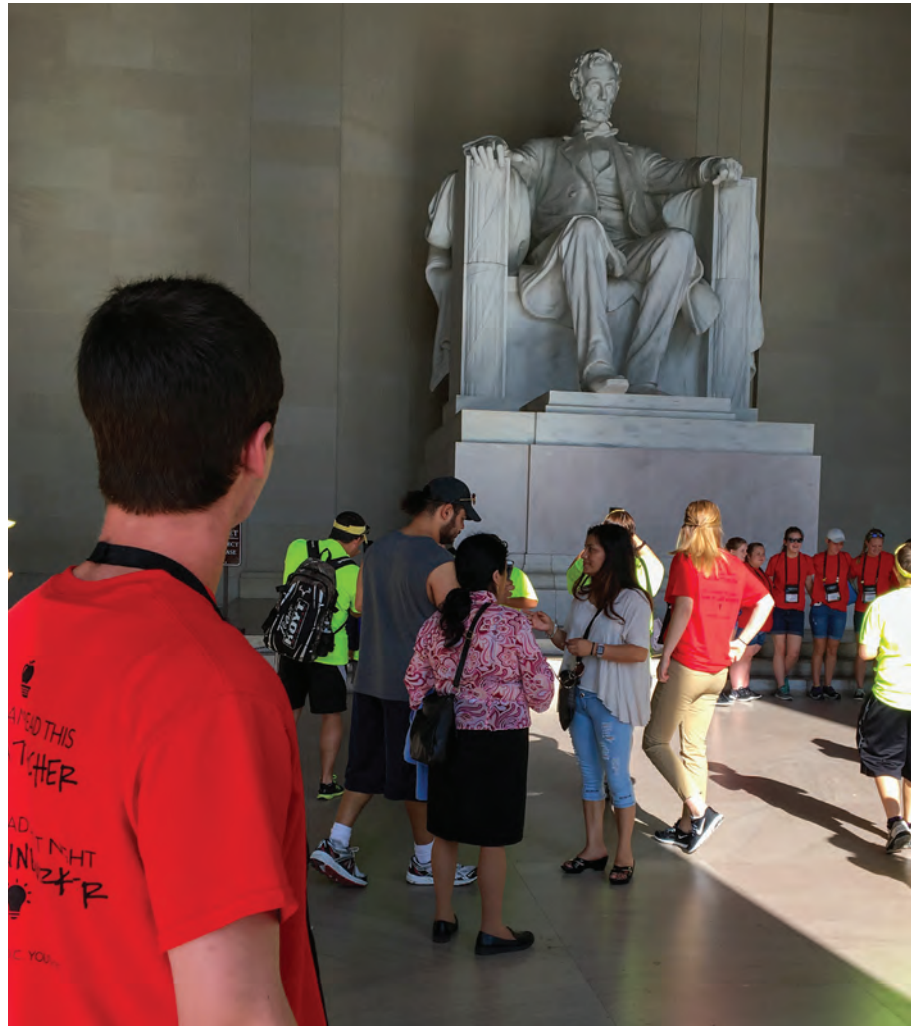
“Youth Tour taught me that I can make a difference,” says Sadie Rose, a 2018 delegate. “It showed me there are opportunities outside my state. I heard many amazing life stories while I was in Washington, D.C., and they all showed me that it is OK to aim high, and there is no reason why I can’t do something incredible with my life.”

Delegate Alena Nore, who went to D.C. in 2015, echoes those sentiments. She says she learned the U.S. is a nation of innovators and creators.

“We can take the knowledge we have gained, get involved with our government and make a positive change,” she says.

After going on the trip in 2017, delegate Ethan Allison says he developed a new appreciation for the United States.

“We are so lucky to live in a country where we can vote for our representatives, have freedom of speech and pursue the American dream,” he says. “The biggest appreciation I brought back with me is gratitude to those who served in the military, making personal sacrifices to defend the United States. At the Korean War Memorial, there is the phrase,



‘Freedom Is Not Free’ engraved into stone, and that has stuck with me.”

After returning from Youth Tour, delegates enjoy sharing their stories and encouraging other students to apply.

Lillie Spackman, a 2015 participant, says writing the required essay and going through the interview process with CEC was a small price to pay for everything she got to see and do.

“It’s a crazy chance,” she says. “Especially coming from a lower-income family, to have everything paid for was such a blessing. It’s such a unique opportunity to meet new kids, go to a lot of different places not everyone gets a chance to see, and the overall experience. I couldn’t imagine not going.” ■

2017 Youth Tour delegate Ethan Allison looks on at the Lincoln Memorial.



The Egyptian Theatre staff has reported spooky activity inside, so be on alert during your next visit.

A Spooky Historic Tour

Take an eerie historic trip through Coos and Curry counties this Halloween

By **Kelsey Bozeman**

Autumn in Oregon is stunning—the perfect backdrop for a jaunt down the Southern Oregon Coast.

Imagine driving Highway 101, enjoying the coastal breeze and rustling gold and scarlet leaves.

While all that sounds lovely, what if you could add a few offbeat historic stops to the trip?

This list is full of all things eerie and historical—a history buff's greatest dream.

No need to travel far. Coos and Curry counties are abundant with mysterious landmarks.

If you are up for the ride, start the car, turn on your favorite playlist and grab your pumpkin-flavored latte as we take you on an unusual and shadowy trip.

The Egyptian Theatre

The first stop is the Egyptian Theatre in Coos Bay, off Highway 101.

This extraordinary vaudeville—era theater is one of the most interesting historic locations in town.

Designed in the 1920s, it resembles King



The two-room Port Orford Jail holds lots of memories, but is no longer open for inmates.

Tutankhamun's tomb and features Egyptian-styled accents.

The styled furniture in the theater hearken to the past and have quite a story to tell.

Preserved and celebrated to this day are two giant bronze statues of pharaohs on thrones.

Story has it, staff and patrons of the theater have observed doors and objects moving on their own. Occasionally, visitors can hear footsteps echoing across the stage and feel a tap on their shoulder.

Port Orford Jail

Further down Highway 101 is the spooky and abandoned Port Orford Jail on the corner of 7th and Jefferson Street.

This tiny two-room historic structure was built in 1936 during the timber boom. It was condemned in 1965.

There are few documented tales of the jail, leaving the imagination to wonder about the secrets contained within.

One jailbreak was reported in the '50s, when the little jail's hospitality was extended to a logger. His friends backed a log truck up to the jail, wrapped

chains around the window bars and yanked them out. However, he was found not guilty as Port Orford had no statute forbidding jailbreaks at the time of his trial.

Mary D. Hume Abandoned Ship

Right off of Highway 101 not far from the Issac Lee Patterson Bridge is the abandoned steamboat, *Mary D. Hume*. Built in 1881 in Gold Beach, it hauled goods between Oregon and San Francisco for 97 years.

In later years, the steamboat was used as a whaler in Alaska and a tugboat in the Puget Sound.

The *Mary D. Hume* was retired in 1977 and remains in Gold Beach, where an accident led to the steamboat sinking.

The abandoned steamboat is on the National Register of Historic Places. However, its slowly decaying presence in Gold Beach provides a glimpse into the history of the boat.

Coos and Curry counties are great places to explore. Lucky for us, when we're ready to take a road trip, there is always something historic, spooky and exciting to see. ■

Self Exams Save Lives

Breast cancer survivors encourage others to be vigilant

By Craig Reed

Christy McCaslin and Denisa Bradley have advice for both friends and strangers: Do not forget to do self-examinations and don't forget to have annual mammograms.

The two women are breast cancer survivors who know what it is like to deal with advanced stages of the disease. They don't wish it on anybody.

Their advice is to catch the disease as early as possible, and the best way to do that is with self-exams and regular mammograms.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month—an annual international health campaign established in 1985 by major breast cancer charities. The purpose is to increase awareness of the disease and to raise funds for research into its cause, prevention, diagnosis,

treatment and cure. Educating people about the importance of early screening and testing is stressed.

"I'm a true believer in early detection," says Denisa, 56. "What I went through, you wouldn't want to go through. A lot of people out there are in denial about this, but testing is definitely there for a reason. You should have a mammogram every year. I won't skip one."

Christy, 46, says she has a few friends who have never had a mammogram because they're scared of the possible positive results.

"I think they're insane," she says. "This month does remind me to encourage my friends to be tested. Don't put it off. Your health is too important. Don't use the excuse of being too busy taking care of your family or



Denisa Bradley, left, with her sister, Deanne, and dog, Oliver.
PHOTO COURTESY OF DENISA BRADLEY

work to get an annual exam and mammogram done."

Christy has a group of friends who regularly have mammograms. They text and congratulate each other after clean results are received.

"Every month is breast cancer awareness month in our house," she says. "It's now a part of our family history, a part of our daily life, so we're very vigilant about it."

Christy says it was a "huge shock" and Denisa says it was "devastating" to receive the phone calls from their doctor offices informing them of the positive results for breast cancer.

Denisa had her annual mammogram in May 2008 and received a clean report. But a few months later, she suspected a problem from a self-examination. Subsequent testing resulted in a cancer

diagnosis in December. In January, she had a mastectomy on her left side.

"They didn't give me options at all," Denisa says. "The cancer was in the lymph nodes. They said the breast would have to be removed to get it all."

A month after surgery, Denisa went through six sessions of chemotherapy followed by six weeks of radiation. She decided to have reconstruction on her left side, but was hit with more bad news during that process. Additional testing came up positive for ovarian cancer, as well as cancer in her right breast.

Denisa had a hysterectomy and right breast removal surgeries on the same day. Eventually, she completed reconstructions of both breasts.



Christy McCaslin with her children, Kellan, and Alex. PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTY McCASLIN

“Going through all that was traumatic,” says Denisa, a 34-year employee of Lane Electric Cooperative. “I went back to work way too fast. I was sore and didn’t feel very good, but it was audit and end-of-the-year payroll time so I needed to be at work.”

Christy’s diagnosis of breast cancer was made following a mammogram in January 2016. One of her first thoughts was of her father, Douglas Vincent, who died at age 61 from bile duct cancer.

“My immediate thought was ‘is this what is going to kill me?’” she recalls.

Christy had a mammogram

eight months earlier and the results were negative, so the positive test was shocking. She had a lumpectomy in February 2016, followed by five months of intense chemotherapy and nine months of less aggressive chemo. During that treatment, she had another lumpectomy in October.

“Once I got the diagnosis and spoke to my gynecologist about the success of treatment, I felt confident my fate wouldn’t be the same as my dad’s,” Christy says. “My surgeon was very encouraging. He made me feel pretty good about the process.”

Both women lost their hair

during treatments. Denisa says a wig was “a lifesaver” for her. Christy says losing her hair wasn’t as much of an issue as she thought it would be and she “enjoyed the thick almost blond and curly hair that initially grew back in.”

Both Christy and Denisa say they were grateful for the support, care and help they received from their respective husbands, Jason and Kevin, and their extended families. Plenty of meals were provided, and there was help with the young children in each house.

To support continuing cancer research, both women have participated in

fundraising events such as Relay For Life and Race For The Cure. Christy is especially proud of completing a three-day, 60-mile walk for the Susan B. Komen Foundation in November 2018.

“It was a really meaningful, great experience,” she says. “My team raised about \$6,000.”

Denisa also became involved with a Young Ladies Cancer Group whose members provide support for others going through cancer treatments.

“I’ve worked through it, but it’s not easy,” Denisa says. “It is just best to be tested. Don’t wait.” ■



Pat and Dick Turanski, right, started GloryBee with a few bee hives and a dream. Now their children RaeJean Wilson, left, and Alan Turanski have taken over running the company that has 150 employees. PHOTOS COURTESY OF GLORYBEE

Sweet Success

GloryBee honey grows from humble beginnings to major enterprise

By Craig Reed

All it took Dick Turanski was tasting one spoonful of pure, raw honey to set a sweet business future for the young man and his family.

Dick was immediately hooked on the honey, and turned it into a business.

With the help of his wife, Pat—and eventually their children—the entrepreneurial couple turned a garage and roadside honey business that was started in 1974 into a major production and distribution business.

GloryBee, now with 150 employees, features the

processing and selling of organic and natural honey, and other healthy food ingredients.

“We started in the fall of 1974 without a good business plan,” Dick says. “But we decided together that beekeeping would be our business. It has worked out, really because of the advice of

the people we met in that first year or two that helped make it a good business.”

RaeJean Wilson, the oldest of the Turanskis’ three grown children, describes her father as “very visionary” and her mother as “very creative.” She says those personality traits plus a college business



A single taste of fresh raw honey turned Dick, above, into a beekeeper and launched their thriving family business.

degree for Dick and a home economics degree for Pat combined to produce a thriving business.

“Dad has always been on the cutting edge with his business thoughts,” RaeJean says. “One example is that he said early on that honey whole wheat bread is the bread of the future and it did become popular. Those thoughts and decisions have been pivotal in building the brand.”

Getting into the honey business was coincidental for Dick and Pat. They were working in Eugene for a Christian organization when Warren Oslund, a board member of that group, invited them to his house. He had a beehive and the couple was able to dig into a honeycomb with spoons and taste real raw honey.

“I then had to have my own hive,” Dick says. “Warren had extra equipment that he gave to us.”

Dick was the beekeeper, starting with seven hives. Pat admits she didn’t want to get stung so she kept her distance.

Initially, it was a hobby business, but after buying 100 more hives and additional equipment, the couple quit their jobs and gave their full attention to the bees and the honey.

“Because I was a Christian, I’d got into the idea of selling an ancient, biblical food,” Dick says. “Honey is mentioned 57

times in the Bible, so there was nothing better than to work with it.”

Dick was looking to develop a sustainable, recession-proof business. He says food is recession proof, and honey is a food that does not spoil.

“Plus, everybody likes honey,” he says.

The business was first named Dick’s Bee Supply, selling both honey and beekeeping equipment. When a friend suggested GloryBee, the couple knew right away that it was a better name and made the change.

“Although the spelling isn’t the same, it has that ‘glory be to God’ similarity,” Dick says.

After a couple years working out of their garage, Dick and Pat leased a 10,000-square-foot warehouse in West Eugene for 10 years. During that time, Dick sold all but a handful of his 300 hives to concentrate on the company’s growth. The company sourced its honey from producers in different floral habitats around the world to get a variety of flavors.

With the larger production space, GloryBee expanded its product line beyond honey to include sweeteners, spices, dried fruits, nuts, oils and other ingredients to natural food manufacturers, bakeries, markets and other stores. Many products were sold under the Aunt Patty label—an extension of GloryBee that recognized Pat’s passion for cooking, baking and experimenting with natural ingredients.

In 1987, GloryBee moved its production operation to a building on Seneca Street.

In the 1990s, the Turanskis welcomed RaeJean and their son, Alan, into the company, after each had earned their college degrees. They both initially worked in sales.

In 2010, the company expanded again, adding a building off Highway 99 that became the distribution facility.

In the midst of its growth, GloryBee was key in establishing the Save the Bee Initiative and creating a partnership with researchers, beekeepers, businesses and

consumers. The initiative’s mission is to protect the honeybee by increasing awareness of the role bees play in providing a healthy food supply, funding research on bees and providing best practices education to those who work with bees.

“The Save the Bee project has raised almost half a million dollars to support bee research since 2006,” Dick says.

Most recently, there’s been a leadership transition in the company as Dick, 77, and Pat, 76, have taken a step back. RaeJean is now GloryBee’s human resources and marketing manager and Alan is president. Dick and Pat are on the board of directors along with RaeJean, Alan and their sister Carole.

“We’re stepping back and allowing them to provide the leadership,” Pat says. “They’re headed in a good direction. They’re committed to the core values we’ve established. It’s people first, then process and finally product. If you value your team, they’re willing to work together through the process and then you have your product.”

“I have confidence in the next generation, in their visions, in their hopes, their integrity and their commitment.”

“I second that,” Dick says. “They’re really dedicated. I have confidence they can continue to do it right.” ■



Garrett Joye enjoyed working with his FFA project pig despite knowing he wouldn't show the animal at the annual Lake County Fair in Lakeview. Garrett sold the animal privately thanks to a pool of money raised by North Lake communities. PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHAD WALDRON

Supporting Student Efforts

North Lake communities give generously to FFA and 4-H

By Craig Reed

North Lake 4-H and FFA students had put too much time and effort into their animals to not get some value out of their projects.

So instead of a county fair and auction ring, money was pooled and private buyers were found to reward those kids who had raised animals.

"We decided we couldn't follow the health guidelines if we went to the fair," says Chad Waldron, North Lake School's agriculture science teacher and FFA adviser. "It was a tough decision. Nobody was happy about it. But we knew we had to take care of our kids."

Under usual circumstances, the North Lake kids take their animals in early September to the annual Lake County

Fair & Roundup in Lakeview, where the animals are judged on conformation and showmanship and then auctioned off.

But 2020 has not been a normal year because of COVID-19 and its related restrictions and guidelines.

Because of the 100-mile trip to Lakeview, overnight stays in close quarters and the difficulty of maintaining social distancing at the fair, the North Lake School Board, the school's administration and Chad agreed the trip needed to be canceled this year.

A key factor in making this decision was the possibility of a student returning from the fair and testing positive for the virus. That scenario would result in people being quarantined and school being halted.

"This was the smart thing to do," Chad

says. "With the fair being a week before our school starts, we didn't want the possibility of a positive case closing down our classes."

Chad and others involved in fundraising were pleased with the response from individuals and businesses throughout the Christmas Valley, Fort Rock and Silver Lake communities that send their children to North Lake School.

Twelve pigs, 11 lambs, five steer, one goat and one turkey were sold to private buyers. The students who raised these animals are members of the North Lake FFA and several 4-H clubs in the area.

Even though the animals weren't judged, their young owners still had to have them in market-ready shape with a healthy look and at a minimum weight or better.

"It was business as usual for the kids in



raising their animals,” Chad says. “They had to do a good job with that and keep records as they usually do. The only difference for the kids was that they didn’t get a week at the Lake County Fair.

“I think most of the kids are extremely grateful they had buyers despite no auction,” he adds. “I think they understand things are different this year.”

Jerald Simmons, a Christmas Valley-area resident, spearheaded the fundraising. He says there was generous support for the kids and their animals.

Jerald has been raising a pool of money and using it to bid on animals raised by North Lake kids at the Lake County Fair for the past 10 years. Harold and Lois Miles started the original pool program because there wasn’t enough participation and, subsequently, financial support for the north county kids at the auction held in the southern part of the county. Harold used the pool money to bid on north county animals at the auction.

The pool ranges from \$15,000 to \$20,000 each year.

“The support is one of the reasons I live here—one of the reasons I moved here,” says Jerald, a retired Midstate Electric Cooperative employee. “It’s rare when I knock on somebody’s door or approach somebody that they say no. It might be only \$20, but it’s usually more.”

Steve Hess, operations engineering manager at Midstate Electric, agrees it is important to support the area kids and their projects.

“We know these kids invested a lot of time, effort and money in their animals,” he says. “With no fair and auction for them, there was no way they were going to recoup their investment, so the communities helped take care of them.”

Midstate Electric—like many businesses that have members and customers in different directions—donated to North Lake kids, as well as to kids who participated in a virtual auction presented by the Deschutes County Fair.

Chad says the kids received as much for their animals as they would have at a live auction and “probably more than they would have from a virtual auction.”

He says the profit is not only important for reimbursing the kids for the expenses of buying their animals and feed, but for buying school supplies and saving for college.

“The communities said, ‘We’re going to do what we have to do to support these kids and we’ll make sure it works out,’” Chad says.

“There are a ton of great people out there and they made this happen,” Jerald says. “We’re really blessed for the support they showed to the kids.” ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Trent Tobiasson raised a goat for his North Lake FFA animal project. Paislee Joye worked with her lamb during the summer. The lamb was sold privately. Cambria Wilson practiced getting her lamb to show a good form.



Jason and Tiffany George created Future Folk Supply Co., a business that designs and produces custom metal and wood furniture. Their work is featured in dozens of restaurants, bars and businesses throughout the Columbia Gorge.

Want Better, Not More

Future Folk Supply Co. joins past and present in artful form

Story and photos by Drew Myron

In a world of fast shipping, fast food and fast fashion, Tiffany and Jason George are slowing the quick-fix factory by building things that last.

In 2014, the entrepreneur couple founded Future Folk Supply Co., a business that designs and fabricates custom metal and wood furniture with heritage and heft. If you eat, drink or shop in the Columbia Gorge, you've likely encountered their work—signs, tables, handrails, lighting, shelving, planter boxes, doors and even bathroom stalls—at such places as Everybody's Brewing, pFriem Family Brewers, Frontier Farms Cannabis and Analemma Wines.

"Anytime we have the opportunity to create something where we get to see it in everyday life, that is really cool," Tiffany says. "When we finished Everybody's and got to take our families there to eat and see all the things we had designed and built, it gave us a

sense of validation for all the hard work it took to get there."

Future Folk Supply Co. started with a small coffee table built for pFriem Family Brewers in Hood River, but the partnership began 20 years ago when Tiffany and Jason were students at Texas Tech University.

"I feel like so much of our life has been one serendipitous moment after another," Tiffany says with a laugh. "I tell people, 'Don't get tunnel vision. You never know, one thing could lead to the next.'"

Eager to experience the bigger world, the couple departed Texas in 2003 with plans to finish college in Colorado, until they were pleasantly derailed.

"Once we got there, we found ourselves driving to the mountain to go snowboarding all the time and figured we would just move closer to the snow," Tiffany says.

The couple moved to the mountains and landed jobs in the

ski and tourism industry.

As a child, Jason was close to his grandfather—a carpenter and homebuilder—who taught the young boy how to work with his hands. In school, Jason took a class or two in welding, but it was while working at two Colorado ski resorts, Keystone and Copper Mountain, that Jason really honed the craft by fabricating metal rails for terrain parks.

Tiffany, who studied art, design and public relations, worked at a local brewery, where she managed special events.

“I think having experience working in restaurants and bars has helped me be a better designer for the food and beverage industry,” Tiffany says. “When I design a piece, I’m not only considering that it will be aesthetically pleasing to customers, but it also has to be functional for the staff.”

While living in Colorado, the couple took a vacation to Oregon and promptly decided to move west. Jason went to work at the terrain park at Timberline Ski Area. Tiffany waitressed at pFrem, and her side hustle of handcrafted candles started drawing attention at local art markets.

While they both enjoyed their jobs, they were eager to chart their own course.

“We wanted to support our own dreams,” Jason says.

“Future Folk Supply Co. was born as a modern approach to folkcraft—the idea of wanting better, not more,” Tiffany says. “Fast furniture and fashion have a negative impact on our planet. We design our furniture to last generations. When we started out doing the maker markets, we used repurposed materials found at local rebuilding centers, thrift stores and estate sales and turned them into modern functional art for the home.”

Deftly matching Tiffany’s design concepts to Jason’s calculated precision, Future Folk quickly outgrew its cramped two-car garage and upsized to a 2,400-square-foot shop just off Parkdale’s main street.

“Jason and Tiffany are really chill,” says pFrem co-founder Rudy Kellner, who commissioned the couple to create signage and lighting of a new production facility in Cascade Locks. “We love their use of heritage materials, but in a modern, updated design language. They spent a lot of time looking for the right raw materials and fabrication techniques that would match our needs, and which would deliver on their design aesthetic. It’s great that we have so many skilled craftsmen in the Gorge. It feels really good to support the local community.”

The Future Folk ethos resonates with Farmers Conservation Alliance, too. In 2019, the nonprofit enterprise moved into the 100-year-old Sheppard’s building that previously housed one of Hood River’s oldest family-owned businesses.

“When thinking about furniture, we wanted to work with someone whose designs and craftsmanship honored the traditions of the past and yet married their designs with modern, clean lines,” says Julie Davies O’Shea, the company’s executive director. “Jason and Tiffany have an incredible vision for furniture. The beauty. The quality. The functionality. It was such a great fit for our office, combining locally sourced reclaimed lumber with the smooth lines of steel.”



Jason spent years fabricating terrain park infrastructure for ski resorts in Colorado and Oregon. Now he uses those skills to build custom furniture for commercial and residential clients.

While the world sometimes seems a whirl of quick production, there is beauty, Jason says, in the solid piece with a history.

“There’s soul in having somebody create something by hand,” Tiffany adds. “We create with intention. When you support a local maker, you are supporting and investing in your local community. And when you choose a maker that is creating with intention, then you are supporting the planet as well.”

Closer to home, the couple is building a future for their two daughters: June, 8, and Wylie, 2.

“I’m excited,” Jason says, “for our kids to be able say, ‘My dad built this.’” ■

Future Folk Supply Co. is at 7253 2nd St. in Parkdale. Go to futurefolksupplyco.com for more information.

In Search of Natural Solutions

Anna's Naturals features soaps ideal for those with sensitive skin

By Lauren Brown

Anna Wilson first learned to make soap because she wanted something to use on her sensitive skin. She learned the basics seven years ago and has since gone on to make four batches of soap a week, selling it through her Etsy shop, Anna's Naturals.

"It was really the only thing I found that soothed my skin," Anna says. "I started out just making it for myself and my children because we all have sensitive skin and eczema, and then I started giving it as gifts to co-workers and friends."

She started selling the soap locally in salons, shops and farmers markets, but now sells it primarily through her Etsy shop. She also makes candles, lotions and bath bombs.

Anna uses an old-fashioned cold process method to make her soap and incorporates only the highest-quality natural ingredients. Her soap recipe is superfatted, which means she uses olive oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter and mango butter, depending on the kind of soap she is making.

She also makes beer soap using locally grown hops.

"The hops in the beer give out a really good moisturizing lather," she says. "I don't ever use animal fats. My recipes are vegan, and I try to always use fair trade and sustainable oils and butters that support our local farmers."

In addition to buying hops from a local brewery and locally grown lavender to infuse in her soap, Anna buys some of her other supplies from Oregon Trail Soap Supplies.

"This company has been around a long time," she says. "They are a small company out of Rogue River, Oregon. I buy a lot of oils and butters from them."

A typical batch of soap using her cold processed method takes Anna four to five hours to make.



Anna Wilson learned to make her own soap—the only thing that soothed her sensitive skin. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANNA WILSON

"I keep all my temperatures low to preserve properties that I put in the soap," Anna says.

She lets the soap cure for six weeks. She tests each batch on herself before selling it.

"Everything I do will produce a really mild soap with a rich lather that's really soothing and moisturizing," Anna says.

For holidays or special occasions, she makes gourmet and artisan soaps using



fancy piping or special molds that take a little more time. For Halloween, she makes a witches' brew soap topped with a decorative witch hat.

"It's really fun, but those take two to three days to make," she says.

Anna has been making thieves soap since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Thieves is an essential oil blend. The name was inspired by French thieves in the 15th century who wore a blend of rosemary, clove and other antiviral botanicals to protect themselves from sickness while they robbed the dead and dying. Anna says her thieves soap has antiviral and antibacterial properties.

Finding the time to make soap can be challenging. Anna works full time as a preschool teacher at the Early Childhood Center in Burns and is raising four children as a single mom. Her oldest son recently graduated and started a career in welding.

Anna moved to Harney County when she was 10 years old. Although she has moved away a few times over the years, she is happy to be back.

"This is home to me," she says. "My dad has a ranch, and I love to help around it. Branding is my favorite. We ride horses and help during haying season. I wanted to raise my kids here. I'm really so fortunate to be able to live here. It's like a little piece of God's country."



Anna enjoys the positive feedback from customers who like her soap and acknowledge it has soothed sensitive skin and helped with eczema.

Anna says making soap that is chemical-free and full of natural ingredients that won't irritate the skin gives her joy.

"It's a hobby that I'm really passionate about," she says. "It's kind of like therapy to me, creating something that I know is going to benefit my family and others." ■

To see Anna's products, go to www.etsy.com/shop/AnnasNaturals. Harney County residents can use the coupon code "no shipping" to waive the shipping fee.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: In addition to soap, lotion and candles, Anna makes and sells bath bombs through her Etsy shop, Anna's Naturals. Her soaps—including these loofah soaps—are made in a variety of scents, using all vegan ingredients. Fall soap scents include mulled cider and apple cinnamon berry. For holidays or special occasions, Anna makes artisan soap, such as this witches' brew soap.



Volunteer Bill Lindburg answers visitors' questions in the control room at the Yankee Fork Gold Dredge. PHOTO BY DIANNA TROYER

Preserving a Local Landmark

Historic Yankee Fork Gold Dredge lures Mackay volunteers who are linked to its past

By Dianna Troyer

Mackay residents Bill Lindburg and his sister, Peggy Vaden, are fascinated by and drawn to the historic Yankee Fork Gold Dredge 22 miles east of Stanley—like their Uncle Roland Lindburg was.

Roland helped deliver the dredge to the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River, named for a former Yankee soldier who was among the early gold prospectors there.

Resembling a tall ship stranded in a river channel, the dredge was used to mine gold and silver starting in 1940. It is among the best-preserved gold dredges in the continental United States and has a four-and-a-half-star rating on Tripadvisor. About 4,500 people tour it every summer.

Recognizing its historical significance, Roland, who died in 2000, was a founding member of the Yankee Fork Gold Dredge Association in 1979. Members restored

the dredge and maintain it. Roland often vacationed in the scenic mountains near the dredge.

As first-time dredge volunteers this past summer, Bill and Peggy gained a new appreciation for the contributions Roland made to its construction and preservation as they answered visitors' questions on self-guided tours.

Roland, his father and his brothers, hauled most of the 988-ton dredge in 60 loads from Mackay to the Yankee Fork, where it was assembled from May to August 1940.

Bill says he was impressed with the Lindburgs' ingenuity and perseverance while delivering it.

"They had no cranes," Bill says. "They used jacks, rollers, pry bars, horses and their own manpower to transfer those heavy loads from the train onto their trucks. They never seemed overwhelmed. To them, it was just another job they had to figure out how to do. People in that era had a tremendous work ethic.

"You think of those who designed and built the dredge with no computers—just pencil, paper and a slide rule."

Peggy, who works in the dredge gift shop, says she imagines what it was like when the dredge was working.

"It was so noisy that people in the dredge camp a mile away could hear it," she says. "They said they got used to the sound as background noise and didn't notice it until it quit. Then they knew something went wrong."

Her husband, Gordon, also a volunteer, says he was amazed at the dredge's safety record.

"No one got hurt during its construction and operation," Gordon says.

Roland wrote about the formidable job of delivering the dredge in his book, "My Early Life in the Lost River Valley," available on Amazon.

He was 25 when he and his father and brothers—who ran Lindburg Trucking Co.—hailed it from the railroad station in Mackay to the Yankee Fork. They traveled a slow, arduous route about 170



The Yankee Fork Gold Dredge mined \$1 million worth of gold after it began operating in 1940.

miles round-trip along steep, narrow Spar Canyon Road north of town.

"You think of them driving trucks built in the late 1930s, hauling all that freight and wonder how they did it," Peggy says.

Roland wondered a few times, too. He wrote about the harrowing delivery of one of the heaviest loads: the spud. It was a nickname for a giant spike that was 3 feet square and 35 feet long. The solid 17.5-ton spud anchored the dredge in place while gold-laden gravel was scooped from the riverbed and processed inside the dredge.

In Mackay, townspeople turned out to watch the Lindburgs unload the spud from three flatbed rail cars onto a customized trailer Roland had built. To be able to navigate tight turns, they placed two 12-inch-square, 8-foot long timbers crosswise—one on the truck and the other on the trailer.

"Spectators were betting I wouldn't make it out of town at two right-angle turns," Roland wrote. "It pivoted on the timbers as we thought it would. I swung real wide on both turns and was on the highway."

He left his load there until 7 p.m., preferring to drive during the cool night to avoid overheating the brakes. By midnight, they had reached the top of Spar Canyon, but still were not halfway there.

Shortly after sunrise, they stopped for breakfast in Clayton, erroneously thinking the most dangerous part of their journey was behind them.

At 9 a.m., Roland was halfway up the Yankee Fork Hill when he realized he had lost traction.

"We were stuck," Roland wrote. "I kept from rolling back by running the engine and standing on the brakes as hard as I could while my helper found big rocks to block all the wheels. It seemed forever before he had them blocked."

Roland's father had left Mackay that morning in a car to accompany them. Luckily, their four-wheel drive truck was parked nearby from an earlier trip.

"Dad walked to get it, and with the two trucks pulling together, we made it up the hill," Roland wrote.

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Preserving a Local Landmark

Continued from page 5

When the dredge was assembled, it stretched 112 feet long, was 54 feet wide, and stood 64 feet high. Employees aboard the floating boat scooped up gravel, ran it through a trommel and processed it with mercury to extract gold and silver. The metals were melted into bars on site.

The bars—about the size of house bricks—weighed 34 to 48 pounds. They were wrapped in paper and tossed in the official company vehicle, a 1949 brown Chevy pickup truck. When the mail truck was scheduled at the Sunbeam Post Office 5 miles away, the dredge master drove there to mail the bars uninsured to the U.S. Mint in Denver.

“I was amazed they were so trusting that no one would steal the bars,” Gordon says. “But at the time, only the government was permitted to own large gold reserves.”

Dredge employees worked a 5 ½-mile claim along the river. When it closed in 1952, \$1 million worth of gold and \$14,000 in silver had been mined.

Its final owner, agribusiness magnate J.R. Simplot, donated it to the U.S. Forest Service in 1966.

Reflecting on her volunteerism, Peggy says, “It was entertaining to meet people from throughout the U.S. who wanted to learn about it.”

She and Gordon had time to volunteer since retiring from owning and managing Mackay Lumber.

“It was great to be up there in the mountains and away from the news for a while,” Gordon says.

Bill said every time he walked around and explored the dredge, he learned something new about it.

“We’re all glad we volunteered,” Bill says. “We’ll be ready to do it again next summer.” ■

Find out more about the story behind the dredge at yankeeforkdredge.com.



Inside the rotating trommel, where water was sprayed under high pressure to separate the gold and waste gravel.



LEFT: Peggy and Gordon Vaden volunteer at the gold dredge, sharing their love of its history with visitors from across the country. PHOTO BY BILL LINDBURG
RIGHT: This image of Roland and Helene Lindburg hangs at the dredge site. Roland helped haul the dredge to the Yankee Fork and was a founding member of the Yankee Fork Gold Dredge Association in 1979.



Successful Completion of Stuart Creek

The Stuart Creek project was originally a line extension request from Alyeska to connect commercial power to several existing facilities located between Mile 45 of the Richardson Highway and Thompson Pass. A new substation was built and connected to CVEA's existing 138kV transmission line to reduce voltage down to the 25kV distribution voltage, then 21 miles of underground distribution cable was run from the substation to serve these facilities.

The project was scheduled to take two seasons to complete. The first year consisted of engineering design, permitting, and construction of the substation and distribution facilities, including trenching and boring of the 21 miles. Over 95 percent of this work was completed in the first construction season, leaving only a couple difficult bores remaining.

The remaining bores, pulling the remaining conductor, and installing the primary and secondary services for the community

of Serendipity were completed in the second season. At the writing of this article, the project is on target to be completed by the end of October of this year.

By far, the biggest difficulty was boring under multiple rivers and Alyeska block points (extremely steep slopes along the pipeline corridor).

At any given time, between 10-20 people worked on the construction of the project to include electrical and telecom linemen, equipment operators, surveyors, engineers, project managers, utility cable and pipeline locators, boring contractors and support staff. A majority of the work was completed by CVEA employees or local contractors.

During the design and scoping of this project, construction concerns, ease of year-round access, and ongoing maintenance were considered. Serendipity Subdivision, located at 46 mile of the Richardson Highway, was determined to be the location best

sited for the substation. The substation at this location provides the added benefit of commercial power service to the Serendipity community and Tsaina Lodge. Additionally, Copper Valley Telecom installed fiberoptics into the same trench CVEA was placing the distribution cable, further expanding the benefits of the project.

There were four partners for the Alyeska extension portion of the project: Alyeska, Tsaina Lodge, CVT, and CVEA. The partnership of these entities contributed to the overall success of this project. Ultimately, Alyeska can now utilize commercial power and no longer has to operate and maintain generation facilities at numerous locations along the pipeline corridor. Tsaina Lodge, after many years, can use commercial power and eliminate the cost of expensive diesel generation. The cost of doing this was not feasible without the partnership of Alyeska. Similarly, the community members of Serendipity had been trying to figure out a way to get commercial power to their community. With the location of the new substation, this is now possible.

Most of the community members in Serendipity worked together to come up with the needed funding to install the primary distribution in the area. In true cooperative spirit, all future CVEA members in the community will pay the same price for a primary service drop on their property, regardless of their distance from the substation.

This project not only benefits those directly involved, it provides benefit to all CVEA members. As a cooperative all members share costs for operating and maintaining the utility. Having more members on the system, helps spread out those costs. It may not show up as large savings on your power bill, but every little bit helps.

Additionally, although this project was not originally designed to improve reliability for the Membership, through diligence and careful considerate design of the substation, it will now allow CVEA to isolate smaller sections of the transmission line. This keeps more members connected during maintenance projects and outage events.

If you have additional questions regarding this or any CVEA project, please contact Sharon Scheidt at 935-7005, or email sscheidt@cvea.org. ■





HomeGrown farm stand in Nehalem opened this spring in honor of community member Shelly Bowe.

Roadside-Stand Charm

Multiple flavorful, colorful options abound in Tillamook County

Backyard Blooms

A small, painted desk sits alongside a neighborhood road in Bay City. Flowers in jars are stocked in the open drawers and across the top. "Fresh Cut Flowers \$5" is painted on the side.

Backyard Blooms—a one-woman, fresh-cut flower business—is one of several roadside stands found in front yards, alongside the road or adjacent to farms where local shoppers can seek out produce and products from their Tillamook County neighbors.

Sayde Walker, who runs the stand, has been growing flowers from seed in her backyard for two seasons.

"I think local flowers are important because we are helping support those bees that are supporting your immune system," Sayde says. "It's why I only grow flowers I know the bees will like, so even if they don't

sell, they're still giving back to the ecosystem."

Every Sunday and Thursday through September, passersby find Sayde's stand stocked with a variety of flowers that changes from week to week and season to season. Cosmos, daisies, sunflowers, crocosmia, Love-in-a-Mist and calendula can be found in the mixed bouquets.

"I think road-stand shopping is a great way to explore your neighborhood, or other nearby communities, and just discover things you never knew were there," Sayde says.

Backyard Blooms is on Tillamook Avenue, Bay City.

HomeGrown

In north county, the HomeGrown farm stand popped up last spring in the parking lot of Kendra's River Inn Food & Lodging in Nehalem.

Story and photos
by Chelsea
Yarnell

“When I got here and bought the place five years ago, I had a vision for a farm stand,” says inn owner Kendra Hall.

That vision grew out of inspiration from community member Shelly Bowe. Shelly was known in the area for founding Food Roots, a nonprofit that helps build connections among community members to strength the local food economy.

“She loved gardening,” Kendra says. “I just adored that woman.”

At the roadside stand, shoppers find both local and regional products.

“The whole idea is it’s homegrown,” Kendra says. “It’s things from our garden. It’s local, and people want to support their neighbors. They don’t have to drive far, and they can come here and have their shopping experience all by themselves. I have people who come by every other day because the inventory changes that much.”

The stand is open seven days a week year-round. Payment for goods is run on the honor system.

“It seems to very well perceived,” Kendra says. “I’ve been amazed at what has flown off the driveway. Everything out there is labeled, and then we pay the growers.”

As winter approaches, the stand will be stocked with pumpkins, wreaths and Christmas trees.

HomeGrown is at 34910 OR-53, Nehalem. Call 503-368-7488.

Pitch & Plow Farms

In Tillamook, almost any type of produce imaginable is sold at Pitch & Plow Farms.

“We’re a certified organic farm that concentrates on vegetables,” says owner Amy Malta. “We start everything from seed.”

Amy and her fiancé, Joseph McNamara, have run the farm—which includes a custom-built farm stand—for the past seven years.

“Supporting local farmers is always a good thing,” Amy says. “Customers know what they’re getting with us. We don’t treat anything with chemicals. They know they’re getting healthy food. It’s just a great thing for a community to come to our farm and know that they’re getting good produce.”

Pulling up to the farm stand off South Prairie Road, shoppers can often find plant starts or their custom produce order.

“We have people who like to walk up the street and buy bunches of onions or pick up something,” Amy says. “Right now, with COVID-19 going on, I encourage my customers to call ahead of time and I can tell them what I have. I put it together and put it on the stand for them. We have an honor box, and



Look for organic produce and vegetable starts at Pitch & Plow Farms’ roadside stand off South Prairie Road in Tillamook.

they can put their check or cash in there.”

Potatoes, radishes, beets, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplants, squash and broccoli can be ordered throughout the growing season.

“It’s grown with a lot of love and care,” Amy says. “I would never ever put out anything old. It’s always going to be fresh produce.

“We just like being a part of this community. It’s wonderful when I’m outside working. I see someone I know pull up at the stand and they’re happy with what they’re getting. It makes us feel good.”

Pitch & Plow Farms is at 8310 S. Prairie Road, Tillamook. Call 310-266-1747.

Trent Family Farms

Further south, locals can pick up a dozen eggs on their way home.

At Trent Family Farms in Cloverdale, a small refrigerator sits on the farmhouse’s front porch stocked with eggs ready for purchase at \$4 a dozen.

“We’ve been doing it for 10 years that way,” says owner Mike Trent. “My granddad started the farm in 1928. About four years ago, we sold most of the land. I kept 55 acres of it. It went from my granddad, to my parents, to me.”

Mike suggests calling the farm ahead of time to ensure the porch refrigerator is stocked.

“I’ve met a lot of neat people through selling our eggs,” Mike says.

Trent Family Farms is at 35905 Jenck Road, Cloverdale. Call 503-801-1456. ■

Green Star: The Recycling People

By Kris Capps

Every high school and middle school student in foster care in the Fairbanks North Star School District has their own laptop, thanks to a recycling program by Green Star of Interior Alaska.

The program is changing lives.

“The achievement gap between youth in care and the general population is staggering,” says Linda Fraini, foster care liaison with the Fairbanks North Star School District.

With laptops in hand, students can keep in touch with teachers, collaborate on assignments with their peers outside of school, conduct independent research, complete homework assignments and write from the comfort of their foster homes.

“When you think about it, it’s pretty amazing,” Linda says.

This important program is one of several operated by Green Star of Interior Alaska.

Green Star formed in the mid-1990s as a committee with the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce. In 1998, it became its own nonprofit agency and began to take a closer look at the needs of the community. Today, Green Star is committed to reducing waste and increasing recycling opportunities in Interior Alaska.

The Fairbanks North Star



A Green Star team with cans for recycling after an event.

Borough operates the Central Recycling Facility on Marika Drive. Think of Green Star as the educational arm of recycling in the Interior.

“We want to be known as the recycling people,” says board member Andrea Miller.

Green Star has its own warehouse where recycled electronics are sent for processing, whether for refurbishment and resale or sometimes charitable donation.

“It has really developed over the years,” Andrea says. “We try and resell things that will provide funds to help support our nonprofit and the program.”

“We try and break things down in ways that make the most sense. We want to make sure everything gets recycled or reused safely and properly.”

Green Star works with ComputerWerks Inc. to refurbish computers that are still viable and sell them at a deeply discounted rate to

people who need them.

“People get low-cost computers and we get more life out of the electronics,” Andrea says.

When the opportunity arose to provide laptops for students in foster care, Green Star did not hesitate.

“That was really special to know we were making an impact,” Andrea says.

Green Star is also the Interior Regional coordinator for the village Backhaul Program, which brings in electronics from remote communities. The agency partners with a company called Backhaul Alaska. Since 2011, Green Star has worked with 16 Interior villages, bringing out more than 56,000 pounds of electronics.

“That’s been a really great partnership,” Andrea says.

Green Star also offers educational curriculum for grades 6 through 8, and provides the Fairbanks Recycling Guide to regularly

remind residents what can be recycled and where to recycle.

“Recycling has never been really that easy in Fairbanks or Alaska in general,” Andrea says. “We try and make it a little easier and make sure people have the information.”

Green Star is probably most visible at events, such as the Tanana Valley Fair or the Midnight Sun Festival, where the group sponsors recycling efforts.

“A lot of what we do is digging through piles of old electronics, digging cans out of garbage at the fair,” Andrea says.

All of those programs makes small improvements in the community every day.

“We’re just happy people are interested and excited about recycling,” Andrea says.

These programs sometimes change lives. The program providing computers for foster students has expanded to include other youth in need and organizations focusing on adults, such as the Fairbanks Resource Agency and The Bridge in Fairbanks.

Overall, Green Star has donated an estimated 100 computers to foster kids to date.

“I just can’t even speak highly enough of what Green Star did for our foster care youth,” Linda says. “The kids themselves were really amazed.” ■

For more information, see www.iagreenstar.org.



A geologist encourages students to dig in and discover what lies beneath their feet. PHOTOS COURTESY OF JON POWELL

Students Dig Into Learning

Fossils fill students and adults with wonder and the joy of discovery

By Dianna Troyer

Imagine creatures living in a vast sea in northern Nevada 300 million years ago before they became fossils.

To help second graders on a field trip understand such a long-ago age, geologist Jon Powell tells them to envision a stack of paper.

“Take 300 million pieces of paper and put them on top of each other,” says Jon, Nevada Gold Mines’ principal geologist for Carlin Exploration in Elko. “How tall do you think it would be? They’re awestruck when I tell them 20 miles high.”

For 23 years each fall and spring, Jon has led fossil field trips for second graders in Elko County, sharing his love of geology and Earth’s transformative history.

Students explore and dig at Fossil Hill about 5 miles north of Elko on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

“It’s one of our most popular programs and has been offered for about 30 years,” Jon says. “It’s not just me. We have a lot of other Nevada Gold Mines geologists leading trips too.”

Before traveling to Fossil Hill, Jon tells students how arid northern Nevada was once a giant sea teeming with life. Creatures thrived and died, became encased in mud, turned to stone and are today’s fossils.

“He and other geologists make the trip suspenseful and build up the kids’ enthusiasm,” says Cindy Elquist, a



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE: Geologist Jon Powell shares students' enthusiasm at finding fossils during a field trip. Examples of Fossil Hill's ammonites and clams are displayed at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City. PHOTO BY GUY CLIFTON/TRAVELNEVADA. **Elated students share their discoveries.**

fourth- grade teacher at Wells Elementary School who has also taught second grade. "They're so excited, showing fossils to each other."

Jon says when the students are at Fossil Hill, "They tell us it's the highlight of their year. Some parents who volunteer as chaperones tell me they remember going on it when they were in school. Adults love it as much as the kids do. We all wonder what we'll turn over in the rocks."

Geologists provide rock hammers, and each student gets a bag to fill. Jon tells them what they are likely to discover and might want to take home.

- Ammonites resemble a nautilus with their ribbed spiral shell.
- Bryozoans, nicknamed moss animals, built exoskeletons similar to coral and lived in colonies.
- Brachiopods look like scalloped shells.
- Crinoids are animals but resemble a plant with a stem and fronds.
- Clams are bivalve mollusks.

Although there will be no formally organized field trips for Elko County School District students this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, families can explore Fossil Hill near Mountain City Highway at their leisure. Charter school students and home schooling families have contacted Jon about field trips this fall.

"My students have told me that Fossil Hill is their favorite field trip," says Jenny Driver, a second-grade teacher at Wells Elementary School. "We love getting out and exploring, looking for fossils and filling our bags."

She says her favorite fossil is the ammonite, "probably because it is a rare find."

At Carlin Elementary School, second-grade teacher Chiara Cross says it is unfortunate their field trip was canceled last spring and this fall.

"It's the field trip that second graders look forward to the most—even the parents," Chiara says. "Whatever fossils

the kids find, they're happy to take them home."

During the field trip, students not only learn about fossils, but what geologists do during their workday.

"Learning about science, especially geology, is exciting," Jon says. "We tell students about the careers they can pursue at our gold mines."

He recalls working with a college intern majoring in geology.

"She told us she remembered taking the fossil field trip," Jon says. "You never know what impact it will make on someone."

By the end of the field trip, most students will have not only filled a bag with their fossils, but will also have collected lasting memories.

"There are so many fossils there," Jon says. "We'll never run out." ■

To schedule a field trip, call Jon Powell at 775-778-4710.



Ma'Lena Wirth, ESL family liaison coordinator/interpreter-translator of Baker School District, safely delivers a Spanish-language preschool packet to the Cisneros family during the pandemic.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Who Powers You?

OTEC members go the extra mile to make a difference during the pandemic

By Susan Parrish

Every October, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative celebrates its members in its four-county service area during Member Appreciation Month.

This year, OTEC is highlighting a member, business or nonprofit organization in each county that has gone above and beyond to make a difference in their community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although many more deserve mentioning, here are those selected.

Ma'Lena Wirth • Baker County

When the pandemic caused Baker School District to switch to online learning last spring, Ma'Lena Wirth—the district's English as a second language family liaison coordinator, interpreter and translator—was charged with providing access to the district's Hispanic students and their families.

Ma'Lena translated all communications into Spanish and made many phone calls to parents to ensure they knew what was happening with schools regarding COVID-19. She even made house calls.

“Especially with limited English language, face-to-face communication is the best—including helping parents learn to navigate the system,” Ma'Lena says. “I've connected more with my families during the pandemic. I checked on my students and their parents. I drove into their driveways to deliver books and Spanish-language preschool packets. Sometimes I yelled across the distance to provide instruction.”

One of her most pressing tasks was helping Hispanic students access adequate internet service so they could participate

in online classroom instruction and do their schoolwork. The district distributed Chromebooks, but some families live in areas that lack internet access or it is cost-prohibitive to connect to the internet. The school district ordered internet hotspots, but as of this writing, they haven't arrived.

To keep from falling behind in school, students began using their cellphones as internet hotspots. That resulted in high cellphone bills that pinched family budgets.

Community partners stepped up to provide financial support to Hispanic students and their families. Two high school staff members paid the families' monthly internet costs. A community partner offered to pay Hispanic families' most pressing bill, either food, fuel or internet. Most families chose their internet bill.

"The families were grateful," Ma'Lena says. "Most people don't realize how much we take for granted. I'm always overwhelmed by the privileges we have here, and by how generous our community is."

Sherrie Rininger • Grant County

Sherrie Rininger's shop, Etc., A Unique Boutique in John Day provides space for about 20 Grant County artists and artisans to market their work. When the pandemic closed her shop in March, Sherrie quickly pivoted to online sales to boost a new income stream for artists and her shop.

"The premise of my business is to help local artisans," Sherrie says. "During the pandemic, the shop was closed, but I did a video walk-through of the shop's merchandise, took photos and posted merchandise on our Facebook page."

Sherrie offered online sales and mailed merchandise across the U.S. She says she was humbled when the artists donated part of their income so she could cover the shop's expenses and keep the shop going when her doors had to close.

John Day businesses—including Etc.—lost revenue when the pandemic canceled or curtailed events such as the Grant County Fair and Cycle Oregon's Ride the Painted Hills. Since reopening her doors



Sherrie Rininger, owner of Etc., A Unique Boutique in John Day, moved her shop online when the pandemic closed her doors. In mid-May, she safely opened her shop again, following social-distancing and face-covering guidelines.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

in mid-May, Sherrie says new customers have supported her business and artists.

"We need our mom and pop businesses," says Sherrie, who is president of the Grant County Chamber of Commerce. "I give kudos to our community for sticking with us. I've only lived here for six years, but I've found the people here to be helpful, generous and friendly. We support each other."

Brenda Smith • Harney County

When the pandemic closed businesses throughout Eastern Oregon, High Desert Partnership in Burns stepped up and did what the nonprofit does best: collaborated with many partners to tackle a challenge. In this case, they applied together for pandemic-related grant funding.

Brenda Smith, executive director of High Desert Partnership, learned there was \$3 million in grants offered by Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency. The funding is part of the state's pandemic response and allocation of federal CARES Act funding.

Brenda reached out to Harney, Baker, Union, Wallowa and Malheur counties, as well as the Burns Paiute Tribe, with an

idea to collaborate on a grant request for technical assistance to local businesses.

"Things are different in Eastern Oregon, so let's work together on this," she told them. "It will make us stronger."

Serving as the conduit between the local organizations and the grant, High Desert Partnership was awarded \$300,000 to be divided evenly among the partnering agencies. The grant will help businesses access capital, market to new customers, reframe business models due to COVID-19, access specialized legal and human resources assistance and more.

Harney County is using grant money to increase the hours of Harney County Economic Development and its business adviser, who can contact more local businesses about funding available to them. The grant also will pay for a college intern and a high school intern to help get the word out about the grant money.

"We can't afford to lose any businesses in Eastern Oregon," Brenda says. "Some businesses are just hanging on during the pandemic. This grant money will help."

Continues on page 6

OREGON TRAIL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Who Powers You?

Continues from page 5

Marco Rennie • Union County

Every day before Marketplace Fresh Foods in La Grande opens its doors for business, employees have a morning huddle to talk about the previous day's sales and what employees are hearing from customers.

Marco Rennie is co-owner of the store.

"As COVID got closer and closer to home, we kept hearing about our customers' concerns and fears," he says. "In the beginning, there was a lot of misinformation out there. As we continued talking through that in our morning huddle, we asked, 'What can we do for our community during this time of confusion? What can we do to help take away the confusion and begin to change peoples' tones towards each other?'"

The store decided to honor local emergency service workers, including firefighters and those at the hospital, police department and sheriff's office, by naming specialty sandwiches after specific emergency service personnel. For every sandwich sold, the store donated \$3 toward that organization's nonprofit partner.

"Our employees came up with clever names for the sandwiches," Marco says. "We advertised it on Facebook. Customers came in and said, 'I want that sheriff's sandwich because I want to contribute to that.' You could feel the change in the store. I was proud of the employees for coming up with that idea and supporting it."

Every month, the store donates its close-to-expiration food to Community Connections in La Grande to be distributed to local people in need.

"It feels like the right thing to do," Marco says. "I'm thankful to live here in Eastern Oregon. The people here show respect for each other." ■

Nominate a local hero making a difference in our community and they could win \$5,000. The #whopowersyou contest honors cooperative members who are giving back to the neighborhoods OTEC is proud to power. Learn more and nominate a local hero at <https://otec.coop/who-powers-you-nominate-local-hero-your-community>



High Desert Partnership in Burns brings people together to talk face to face to solve problems. When the pandemic closed businesses throughout Eastern Oregon, High Desert Partnership collaborated with many partners to apply for grant funding. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Donate by Eating

Advertisement for "Donate by Eating" featuring a sandwich and logos for Market Place Fresh Foods and Union County Sheriff's Department.

For Every Prime "Time" Rib Philly Cheesesteak Sandwich bought, Market Place Fresh Foods will donate \$3 towards the Union County Sheriff's Department!

Show Your Support Today!

During the pandemic, Marketplace Fresh Foods in La Grande honored and donated to local emergency services organizations via its Donate by Eating campaign. CONTRIBUTED ARTWORK



2006 Ford F550 Super Duty



2008 Dodge 2500 Mega Cab



2011 Altec 37G



2011 Ford Escape



2012 GMC Denali

OTEC's Surplus Vehicle Auction

- ▶ Thursday, October 22, and Friday, October 23, 2020
- ▶ Vehicles can be viewed from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- ▶ 4005 23rd St., Baker City, Oregon
- ▶ For auction details, go to otec.coop or Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's Facebook page.
- ▶ For more information, contact OTEC Purchasing Manager Todd Nice at 541-524-2844.

Celebrate National Book Month With Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

For nearly three years, OTEC has helped provide free books for local children

By Lisa Jacoby

Once a month, Hadley Koehler takes a book out of her mailbox in Baker City—a book addressed just to her from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

"She loves them," says Sierra Koehler, Hadley's mom. "She's obsessed with reading, and she loves getting mail. She gets super excited."

Hadley, 4, has received books for about five months. She will get a free book monthly until she turns 5.

"I think the books are great," Sierra says, noting one in particular stands out: "The Little Engine That Could."

That is the first book mailed to each

child who is enrolled, regardless of age.

"I remember reading that one as a kid," Sierra says.

Having access to books is imperative for early childhood literacy skills. According to Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, a baby's foundation for language skills is developed in the first year of life. In the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second. Higher cognitive function is achieved by age 5.

According to zerotothree.org, access to books—from reading to infants to a 3-year-old turning the pages of her own book—helps develop language and literacy skills that lay the foundation for learning to read and write.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library puts books in the hands of children at no cost to parents or caregivers.

Dolly Parton launched Imagination Library in 1995 in her hometown of Locust Ridge, Tennessee. Every child enrolled in the program receives age-appropriate books each month until age 5. Books are mailed directly to the home, addressed to the child. There is no cost to families.

As of August 31, 2020, the program has gifted more than 143 million books.

Aletha Bonebrake, Charlene Chase, Bob Cargill and Wayne Overton—all members of the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative Board of Directors—were instrumental in bringing Imagination Library to Eastern Oregon.

Aletha first learned of the program from Jan Rippey, a philanthropist who brought the program to Wilsonville.

To provide Imagination Library, a partnering entity is required to register local children and provide funding for

books, which is \$25 per child per year.

For several years, Aletha brainstormed ways to fund the program. She feared that depending on donations wouldn't be a stable source of funding. During a road trip, Aletha and Charlene started talking about Imagination Library. Aletha mentioned the hurdle of stable funding, and Charlene suggested asking OTEC.

"Part of the OTEC mission is to support the community," Aletha says.

The board approved the project, making OTEC the first electric cooperative in the United States to take the leading role in bringing Imagination Library to citizens in its service territory, which includes Union, Baker, Grant and Harney counties.

Funding comes from OTEC's scholarship fund, which consists of unclaimed capital credits. Providing Imagination Library does not affect electric rates for OTEC members.

OTEC's funding of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has been heralded as an example nationally by Touchstone Energy—a cooperative-owned marketing organization that provides cooperatives such as OTEC with outreach resources.

Lea Gettle, senior manager of administration and foundation at OTEC, has talked to Touchstone cooperatives, explaining how OTEC launched the program in Eastern Oregon. She emphasizes the community partners—from libraries to schools to daycare centers—that volunteer to run the program and have helped spread the word about Imagination Library.

"The community engagement has been the key to making this program successful," Lea says.

The local program is also supported by the James and Shirley Rippey Family



Four-year-old Hadley Koehler of Baker City reads the latest book she received for free through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. PHOTO BY SIERRA KOEHLER



OTEC member Rheann Weitz reads a book to her 1-year-old son Caden, who is enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. PHOTO BY LISA JACOBY

Foundation, which offered to pay 50% of the cost for new Imagination Library programs that started by June 2018 in rural Oregon counties with a population of fewer than 100,000. That original offer was good for two years. OTEC recently received notice the Rippey Family Foundation extended the 50% match for another year due to the success of the program.

As of September 2020, 1,452 children are enrolled across Baker, Union, Grant and Harney counties. In those same areas, 799 children have graduated from the program. That means 2,251 children have received books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library—just more than half of the eligible population.

Every child living within the county is eligible for the program, even if their house is not served by OTEC.

"We supply the books to every child in the county where OTEC has a presence," Aletha says.

Erica Jaensch, marketing and community relations coordinator for OTEC, promotes Imagination Library throughout the four counties. OTEC advertises the program on the radio, and places ads in movie theaters, local newspapers and on social media. Information is also available from any of the community partners (see the list at right).

Any caregiver—parents, grandparents or others—who has a child younger than 5 in his or her household is eligible to register for the program.

Given restrictions due to COVID-19, Erica recommends registering online at otec.coop. From the main web page, click on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library under the Community tab. That brings up a short video. The "sign up" button connects to the Imagination Library website.

Those who do not have Internet access can register by calling Aletha Bonebrake at 541-519-3255. ■

Community Partners

Baker County:

Baker County Library District
 Eastern Oregon Head Start
 Building Healthy Families
 Childcare Resource & Referral
 Department of Human Resources
 Eastern Oregon Preschool Promise
 IMESD Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education
 St. Luke's Eastern Oregon Medical Associates Women, Children and Infants
 Baker County Local Community Advisory Council
 Pine-Eagle Community Preschool
 Baker School District 5J ESL program
 Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City
 YMCA Preschool

Grant County:

Grant County Library
 Grant County Health Department
 Sunshine Christian School
 Families First Grant County
 Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary
 John Day Center
 Umatilla Morrow Head Start
 Grant County Childcare
 Grant County Chamber of Commerce
 Little Sprouts
 Growing Tree Infant and Toddler Daycare

Union County:

Mt. Valley's Reading Council
 Department of Human Resources
 Grande Ronde Hospital
 Cook Memorial Hospital
 Union Public Library
 Haven from Hunger
 Babies First/CaCooN
 Elgin School District
 Center for Human Development
 Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub
 InterMountain ESD
 Union County Health Department
 Childcare Resource & Referral

Harney County:

Harney County Library
 Harney County Library Foundation
 Early Childhood Center
 Harney County Health Department
 Little Blessings Preschool
 Laughing and Learning With Miss Liz
 Treasure Valley Community College
 Harney District Hospital

Helping Businesses Navigate COVID-19

Columbia County's economic development organization refocuses during the pandemic

Story and photos by Scott Laird

COVID-19 and the economic downturn that has resulted has been hard on business, especially on small, local businesses in Columbia County. But a ray of hope has come from the Columbia County Economic Team.

“COVID has changed things—and they’re not going to be a lot better anytime soon—but I feel like we’re getting stronger,” says Paul Vogel, CCET’s executive director. “I know it may sound counterintuitive, but I think things are better here than they have been in a long time. We’re really well positioned physically, geographically and in terms of assets.”

Paul was named interim executive director of CCET in March and hired as executive director in September. He has had his hands full since taking over for Chuck Daughtry, who retired.

COVID has proven to be a catalyst for changing the way the organization interacts with local businesses. Prior to Paul’s arrival, CCET was deeply involved in the development of the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center—a research and development campus in Scappoose—while also concentrated on business recruitment, especially larger industry.

“We’ve made a real hard pivot toward small business with a mission of retention, growth and recruitment of business,” Paul says. “Under COVID, business retention took on a whole new meaning from ‘Let’s make sure they stay here,’ to ‘Let’s make sure they survive.’”

CCET changes have been multi-pronged.

“First, it was a perfect time for a reset, with the change in leadership,” Paul says. “It’s also an opportunity because of the available resources. There’s money available



Paul Vogel’s experience working in small, rural communities and counties is a big asset in his role as executive director for the Columbia County Economic Team.

to help small business right now. It’s a great time for us to make the transition from recruitment to recovery and resilience. And there’s a great opportunity for us to develop relationships with small businesses and introduce ourselves to our stakeholders and our communities.”

In many ways, CCET fills the role of a typical chamber of commerce in other communities.

“Our chambers mostly don’t have paid staff, but they are made up of very loyal and committed business owners who really stick together, especially through COVID,” Paul says. “I was on a phone call with the Clatskanie Chamber members recently, and

there were almost 30 people taking part in that meeting. We’re not trying to replace chambers; we’re trying to fill gaps. It’s been really tremendous to watch how people in this county have responded and learned how to collaborate under COVID.”

Paul grew up in Arizona. He moved to Oregon to attend Lewis & Clark College, where he earned a political science degree.

During a varied career, Paul has worked for several elected officials focused on community issues such as transportation, energy and infrastructure. He moved into economic development after taking a position as general manager of the Port of Coos Bay for five years.

“That’s a tremendous trade and transportation asset down there, but it’s isolated,” Paul says. “It was also a great opportunity for me to learn what it means to do economic development in a rural community.”

After leaving Coos Bay, Paul returned to the Portland area, where he worked for several agencies before starting his own consulting business focused on public affairs and communications. He has done some work for Ruralite and rural electric cooperatives. He has also worked for Pacific Power.

“The best part about that job was that Pacific Power serves 243 communities in Oregon, Washington and California,” Paul says, “and only one of them is large: Portland. The rest are small and rural communities like Coos Bay, where it’s difficult to get to resources and be relevant in the large policy discussions.

“So, if there’s a theme across my career, it’s that I’ve been focused on rural communities and finding what I can do to help with communication, with policy, and with marketing and branding issues.”

Paul doesn’t do all the work at CCET, but it is a small organization. The only other employee is Office Manager Wela Negelspach. Wela was born in Hawaii and moved to Oregon with her husband. She has worked in several industries, including nuclear power and transportation, and has been a stay-at-home mom and community volunteer. She joined CCET in 2018 and has worked on the Columbia County Tourism Initiative.

“It’s impossible to capture what Wela does and means to this organization,” Paul says. “She was a key part of the difficult transition when Chuck left. Wela is the glue that holds us together. She knows who our stakeholders are and what’s worked in the past.”

Under Paul’s leadership, CCET has taken a strong role in acting as an information resource and clearinghouse for COVID information through a new website (Small BizHub.ColumbiaCountyOregon.com) that focuses on health guidelines, changes in lockdown regulations and business requirements, and updated government orders.

A newly created electronic newsletter



CCET Office Manager Wela Negelspach, left, helps Deana Olyer as she takes advantage of CCET’s weekly personal protective equipment distribution at Columbia County Fairgrounds.

containing content to help businesses think creatively and adapt to changing marketplaces is distributed daily.

“Part of it is helping businesses recognize they are a community and they are not alone,” Paul says. “Even if there isn’t a business that does exactly what you do, there is somebody else out there like you that you can connect with or learn from.”

CCET put together a proposal to use county-collected cannabis funds to buy personal protective equipment in bulk, store it and distribute it at cost to small local businesses. The program has been running for several months, with regular pick-ups at the Columbia County Fairgrounds on Fridays.

“Another benefit is that some of the products we’re purchasing are made locally, including masks from USIA in St. Helens,” Paul says. “Having this distribution site has also allowed us to meet and get to know local business owners.”

The county qualified for emergency small business grant funding through the state, which has distributed more than \$210,000 to 52 businesses and nonprofits in Columbia County through CCET, in

coordination with the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District.

Even with the hardships COVID-19 has created for local businesses, Paul says he believes Columbia County’s economic future remains bright. Small businesses are getting access to the tools and resources they need while the county remains an attractive destination for businesses looking to relocate.

“We’re 25 minutes from downtown Portland, 40 minutes from Portland International Airport and we have an executive airport in Scappoose,” Paul says. “We’re scenic and natural. We have the Columbia River and the foothills of the Coast Range. We have space, but we’re also adjacent to the largest metropolitan area in the state.

“Right now, businesses are trying to get out of Portland because they are challenged by a lot of things, and we’re a very close and attractive alternative. We have an opportunity right now to be very intentional about the kinds of companies we recruit here and make sure they are good fits in our communities.” ■

On Your Mark, Get Set

RACE DAY



From left, Nightmute runners Richard Anthony, Levi Dull and Lewis Post are all business during the race.

Every year, junior high and high school students from Toksook Bay and Nightmute compete in a two-day cross-country event, with races held in each community. The varsity high school students compete in a 5K run and the middle school competitors race 3K. Athletes and family from both communities travel about 14 miles by boat to compete or cheer for the racers. The boat ride takes 45 minutes to an hour. Sometimes sketchy weather and water conditions add extra excitement.

“These students are some kind of miracle kids,” says Caitlyn Tully, who coaches the Toksook Bay Islanders. “They run 3 to 5 miles per day to build up their endurance. My assistant coach, Jessica Carpenter, has been extremely helpful, and I also appreciate our volunteer photographer, Jimmie Lincoln.” ■



LEFT: Coach Caitlyn Tully encourages Rosie Carl to hang in there as she nears the finish line.

BELOW RIGHT: From left, Gordon Pika, Zachary Angaiak, Kennythia Henry, Gillian Alikar, Charlotte Patrick and Rosie Carl take off from the starting line.

BELOW LEFT: Zachary Angaiak runs down a dirt road.



LEFT: Ashlyn and her mom, Naydene Carl, watch the racers run by.

FAR LEFT: Myra Woods with her children.

PHOTOS BY JIMMIE LINCOLN



Misery and Miracles

As communities in rural Oregon grapple with unimaginable tragedy from deadly wildfires, electric co-ops band together to restore power—and hope.

By Ted Case

On the evening of Monday, September 7, 2020, the power went out at the home of Steve and Kathy Keable, who live in the town of Blue River, in the McKenzie River Valley outside of Eugene. They saw a glow across the river, and Kathy—a director at Lane Electric Cooperative—checked a scanner app on her phone. The Holiday Farm Fire was fast approaching.

After alerting neighbors—and with embers raining down on their property—the Keables grabbed their cats and fled to an evacuation site near Eugene.

They were not alone.

That evening, thousands of Oregonians across Western Oregon had similar stories

as deadly wildfires—fanned by east winds and a drought-stricken landscape—created a path of unprecedented destruction. The fires, which have scorched more than 1 million acres throughout the state, spanned from the state’s southern border to the coast and just outside of Portland.

Rural areas served by Oregon’s electric cooperatives in the mid-Willamette Valley faced significant damage, not only from fires but from high winds that caused widespread outages.

At a press conference September 9, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced the conflagration “could be the greatest loss in human lives and property in our state’s history.”

She said the towns of Detroit, Blue River

and Vida, which included full or partial service by electric cooperatives, were “substantially destroyed.” At least eight Oregonians were killed in the fires, with a dozen still missing.

Leaders of Consumers Power Inc., based in Philomath, knew early on there was significant damage to the community and the co-op’s infrastructure in the Santiam Canyon, which includes the community of Detroit, a small tourist community east of Salem.

As the Beachie Creek Fire raced through their territory, covering about 500 feet a second, CPI CEO Roman Gillen gave a sobering account of the situation.

“We’re not sure we have any customers up there to serve,” he said.



LEFT: Blue River Reservoir in Lane County. PHOTO BY ZECHARIAH ENGLISH

OPPOSITE PAGE: The staggering fire damage in Detroit, where preliminary numbers suggest 75% to 80% of structures are destroyed. PHOTO BY THOMAS ELZINGA

When CPI crews were allowed to enter the Detroit area, they found what was described as a war zone, with few structures left standing. A crucial substation, however, survived the blaze after a Caterpillar created a fireline around the perimeter.

CPI immediately set out to restore power to the area and put out the call for additional crew from Oregon co-ops.

“The response was immediate and tremendous,” Gillen said, as linemen from Salem Electric, Midstate Electric, Oregon Trail Electric and Hood River Electric cooperatives arrived to help.

Just more than a week later, power was restored to the area.

“This is nothing short of a miracle,” Gillen said.

Lane Electric faced a similar catastrophe in the McKenzie River Valley. Shocking video footage showed the town of Blue

River reduced to ash, rubble and twisted metal as the Keables waited for news of their home.

The co-op’s focus on restoring power to their members ran headlong into the forces of wind and fire.

“There are broken poles like I’ve never seen before,” said Lane CEO Debi Wilson, noting that restoring electricity was difficult even days later when “parts of our system are still on fire.”

Lane Electric, along with two other electric co-ops—Blachly-Lane and West Oregon—also faced a new reality that made it difficult to fulfill their mission to keep the lights on: Energized power lines could exacerbate the situation if trees, felled by wind or fire, fell into the lines.

The co-ops deliberately shut off power to keep their communities safe.

Less than a week after the fires, Lane Electric brought a 2-megawatt generator

into the McKenzie River Valley, navigating a small state highway with debris and logs breaking loose from the hillside.

With line crews operating in warm temperatures and the worst air quality in the world—during a pandemic—Lane Electric was able to energize all of its lines east of Blue River, a full day earlier than expected.

“We are incredibly proud of our staff and crew for the ‘can-do’ attitude and grit that made this all possible,” Lane Electric tweeted on September 15.

State officials said more than 500 homes and buildings were destroyed by the Holiday Farm Fire.

Days after the fire swept through the McKenzie River Valley, Steve and Kathy Keable received confirmation that while other homes in their area had been incinerated, their home had survived the fire. ■