

Applegater



Photo by Linda Kappen

EXTRA EDITION
November 2023

Applegate Valley Community Newsmagazine
Serving Jackson and Josephine Counties — Circulation: 13,000

Celebrating
~29~
Years

Extra edition for an extra special cause: Keep the Applegater coming!

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We're sending out this extra edition of the *Applegater* to give you more time to take advantage of a special opportunity: From November 1 through the end of the year, your donation to the *Applegater* will be doubled!

We rely on your donations to cover the lion's share of the costs of publishing the Gater. Now, thanks to the *Applegater's* membership in the Institute for Nonprofit News, we qualify for its annual NewsMatch program. National funders interested in supporting community publications will match local individual donations (up to \$1,000 each) made in November and December.

Especially helpful are ongoing donations to the *Applegater*. Pledges of even \$5 a month go a long way toward ensuring stability in Gater operations. Plus, during the NewsMatch period, if you make a recurring pledge, NewsMatch will match the full annual value of your pledge—a 12-to-one bonus! (Just hit the donate button on the applegater.org home page, then click on "Make this a monthly donation.")

Four times a year, 24 pages of articles appear in more than 12,400 mailboxes throughout the 700 square miles of the Applegate Valley, bringing you news and information about the neighborhoods you live in. More copies are distributed to dozens of local businesses. All for free.

What makes that possible? You do. The *Applegater* is published by a nonprofit organization—Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc.—established by Applegaters, for Applegaters, and supported by our generous donors and advertisers.

Whether you donate online with a credit card or write a check and use the envelope included in this issue to mail it to the *Applegater*, we appreciate your support for the only news source covering the many communities of the Applegate River watershed—providing information about your neighbors and your neighborhoods you won't find anywhere else.

To keep the *Applegater* coming, please send your check—made out to the *Applegater*—to PO Box 14, Jacksonville,

OR 97530, and mail it in the reply envelope inserted in this extra edition. **Be sure to date your check between November 1 - December 31.** (If your check is dated prior to November 1 or after December 31, it cannot be doubled.)

Credit cards are accepted at applegater.org. Look for the yellow "Donate" button on our home page (or click on the "Support the Gater" link at the bottom of the list in the far left column).

Thank you!
You are the Gater.
With much appreciation,
Applegater Board of Directors
gater@applegater.org
applegater.org

Sandy Shaffer retires from the Applegater

Sandy Shaffer has been part of the *Applegater* team almost since the beginning—not only as a regular

contributor of fire-related articles but also as an editorial committee member. She

See SANDY SHAFFER, page 2.



In 2011, Max Bennett presented Sandy Shaffer with the Community Service Award in honor of her "outstanding contributions to community wildfire planning and protection in southern Oregon and beyond." Photo: Applegater archives.



New owners of "The Station," formerly the Applegate Store, from left to right: Will Siemon, Amelia Sorensen, and Elise and Jeff Higley.

More details about plans for the old Applegate Store and Cafe Part 2: The Station is coming

BY JAMES "BUCK" REINDERS

When I first reached out to Elise and Jeff Higley about the contract they hadn't yet signed, Elise seemed surprised at how quickly word travels the grapevine

(welcome to wine country). I was perhaps overeager to find out what was to become of the one and only storefront property

See THE STATION, page 2.



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■ **SANDY SHAFFER**

Continued from page 1

is stepping down to focus on some well-deserved downtime.

Accomplishments

Sandy co-led the development of the Applegate Fire Plan—the nation’s first Community Wildfire Protection Plan, covering all lands in the 500,000-acre Applegate Watershed. The fire plan addresses fire suppression and protection, fuels reduction, and emergency communications. Sandy and other volunteers on the fire plan team convened 40 public meetings in ten months. Ultimately, the development of the plan involved 28 different partners, ranging from government agencies to community groups. The team was awarded a National Fire Plan grant in October 2001, and the plan was printed ten months later—an impressive accomplishment. Some results of the fire plan: Over 18,000 federal acres were treated, 600-plus homes have defensible space, and 50 neighborhood telephone trees were set up for emergency communications.

Sandy was also active in the development of the Jackson County Fire Plan, including the Jackson-Josephine local coordinating group, the outreach and education committee, and fuels committees. Another effort was her leadership of a survey of Wildland Urban Interface residents in portions of Jackson County that produced some valuable insights into resident attitudes and activities around wildlife.

Sandy served on the Western Governor’s forest health advisory committee and several subcommittees in the early 2000s, helped with the National Fire Plan’s ten-year implementation plan, and worked with a team to devise a cohesive national wildfire strategy.

In addition to all the above, Sandy served as president of the Applegate Valley Fire District board of directors.

We will miss Sandy’s incisive and educational articles as well as her high standards, which contributed to the quality of the *Applegater*. We wish Sandy safe travels and offer some heartfelt words from fellow editorial committee members, past and present.

“I always appreciated Sandy’s keen eye for assessing articles, and I grew to respect very much her opinions about what should and should not be accepted in the *Applegater* and her candid approach. Hers was a long-time voice on the editorial committee. I will miss it sorely. Actually, I will miss the friendship aspect of serving on the committee with her, as well.”

—Diana Coogle, *Applegater* chair, editorial committee member

“It’s hard to say which is deeper: Sandy’s experience in the Applegate Valley (especially regarding firefighting) or how deeply she cares for the valley. What is easy to say is that both—combined with her readiness to share her recommendations—made her an invaluable member of the team furthering the *Applegater’s* mission. Her contributions made it a better paper. Thank you, Sandy!”

—Bert Etling, former *Applegater* editor in chief, now executive editor of the *Ashland.news*.

“Sandy is a demon typo-spotter! More than that, though, she had strong and valued opinions about every article submitted to the *Applegater* over the decades she spent on the editorial committee. That’s devotion above and beyond. I will miss her candor, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness. I wish Sandy, her husband, and Maggie the best. But I also hope Sandy will continue to inform us with an occasional article about fire.”

—Barbara Holiday, *Applegater* editor in chief; chair, editorial committee

“I believe Sandy has done more than most people realize in working on fire issues between federal and state agencies and the public. Her work on the fire plan for the Applegate watershed was indispensable, and her fire articles for the *Applegater* were some of the most educational pieces we ran. Sandy’s dedication will be hard to replace.”

—J.D. Rogers, former *Applegater* editor in chief

• • •
Message from Sandy
Earth, air, trees:
I guess it’s just kismet

After nearly 23 years of writing articles for and sitting on the editorial committee of the *Applegater*, I’m finally pulling back to have a bit more time to spend with Don, my husband of 48 years, and our Akita dog, Maggie. As well, we are planning some more traveling soon.

Don and I met almost 50 years ago when we both were working part-time at a take-out pizza store in southern California. When the phones were slow for orders, we talked a lot about what we wanted for our futures. Neither of us wanted to have children. We “clicked” all the way, and were married in 1975, shortly after he finished college. Soon after, Don was offered a position in the San Francisco area, and we jumped at the opportunity. We purchased a house in California’s East Bay.

Over the years we did a lot of traveling, mainly up and down the western coast. We both loved the state of Oregon (Don was born in Oregon!) and started looking where we might like to settle down in the future. We particularly liked the Applegate Valley and the large, forested properties for sale. After visiting the town of Jacksonville, we decided to find our forever home in this area. In 1992 we purchased a 20-acre forested property in the Applegate and designed and built our home here. And we’ve never looked back.

So now we’re in our seventies and still on our 20 acres. Both Don and I are healthy; those walks with Maggie up and down the hills keep us in good shape! We want to travel more (one trip is already planned) and see more of the Northwest.

I do thank all of you *Applegater* friends for putting up with my sometimes strange articles! I blame my mother, who also liked to write.

Sandy Shaffer
sassyoneor@gmail.com

■ **THE STATION**

Continued from page 1

in town, home of the now shuttered Applegate Store & Cafe. Elise met my enthusiasm, however, and when the property had officially sold, Elise and Jeff agreed to meet me there.

On the appointed day, not only was the smoke thick, but I misjudged my five-mile commute and arrived too early. The “Open” sign was not lit. I parked in my usual spot, killed the engine, and savored the fleeting traces of AC as I exited my truck.

Just as heat and oxygen deprivation were setting in, another car arrived. Through the haze, a young, attractive, well-groomed, *smiling* couple emerged from the vehicle. These folks were either a mirage or some very confused tourists. In actuality, I was about to meet the new managers: Elise and Jeff’s son, Will, and his partner, Amelia.

Inside the store, things were cool and quiet. It was nice to be back, sitting down and chatting, even if nobody was offering a menu. Will and Amelia had recently

moved home after a few years in New York City, where Will worked as a bartender and barista and Amelia picked up serving jobs between acting gigs. When COVID put a damper on things, their visits here to the “Little Apple” got longer and longer. Then a very serendipitous opportunity arose.

By now, Elise and Jeff Higley had arrived. Jeff’s a tall, laid-back dude. While he got comfortable by using some barstools behind him as armrests, Elise jumped right in. “We pass by the store a lot, and we’ve always dreamed of things we wished were here in the community. When we saw that this property was an option, we were definitely excited.”

“But it was still just a daydream,” Will added. It wasn’t until family friends offered to partner on the project that the dreams became real. Their partners are technically the new owners of the property, but they have entrusted management and oversight to the Higleys. Elise summed it up this way with a laugh: “They had the capital to put down, and we have sweat equity.” Their friends were willing to place a big bet on them, and rightly so. As the owners

of Oshala Farm, now a 290-acre certified organic herb farm in the Applegate, Elise and Jeff have the credentials.

They are still dreaming up the final vision, but Will and Amelia’s priority is to get the store and café, to be called “The Station,” back up and running as soon as possible. Already the demand was clear—hungry passersby came banging on the door like zombies and interrupted our interview more than once.

Jeff explained this phenomenon: Along the road now known as Highway 238, a man and his horse never had to go more than eight miles or so from one outpost to the next. Provolt, Applegate, and Ruch are all spaced just right. But with one store out of service, there’s a seed missing at the core. And to think that even in the modern era a fellow is forced to travel a dozen miles without a chance to refresh himself with a cold drink...well, that just doesn’t sit right with the Higleys. Yes, there will be beer. Gasoline too. They’re striving for all

the essentials. But the valley is home to a diverse crowd, so expect a wide range of options—from a six-pack to a local merlot or a cup of joe to an excellent cappuccino. The Higleys want The Station to be a place for all locals, so they’ve created a website for you to let them know what you want. To input your wish list of products you’d like to see at the new market and café, scan the QR code below.

There’s a long wooden sign that still hangs above the cash register. I noticed it for the first time on my way out. In big block letters, it says, “See you later, Applegater,” and still reads true. I’ll see you at the Station soon.

James “Buck” Reinders
james.b.reinders@gmail.com

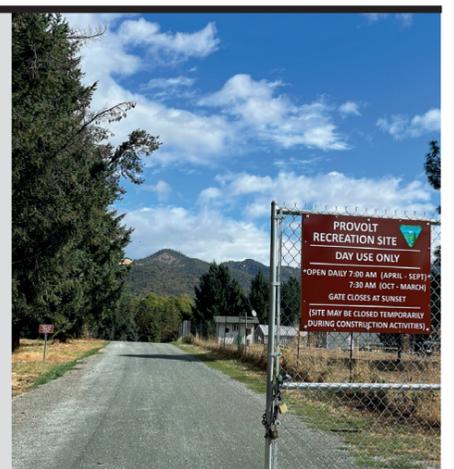


Scan this QR code to send your wish list for The Station to the new owners.

Recreation site now open every day

Walkers and runners, equestrians, and nature lovers rejoice! Thanks to a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Land Management and a dedicated team of community volunteers, the Provolt Recreation Site is now open every day of the week. Located across from the Provolt Store on Highway 238, the site gates are now open daily for winter hours from 7:30 am to sunset.

Liz Shen, Chair, Provolt Volunteer Team
liz_shen@hotmail.com



~ **IMPORTANT REMINDER** ~

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Increased response times are critical—
vote yes on Measure 15-220**

For those of us who live and own businesses in the Applegate Valley, the renewal of the Applegate Valley Fire District levy is especially important.

At present, response times for medical or other emergencies are too long. As a result, many of us have found it difficult to renew fire insurance in this wildfire-prone area. Response times and the availability of response crews are key criteria that insurance companies use in deciding whether to cover a given property.

Measure 15-220 will renew the levy and add only 20 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. This increase will benefit all of us because the district will be able to add supporting staff and thus shorten emergency response times.

Many businesses and residents of Jackson and Josephine counties are supporting this measure (see the Friends of Applegate Fire District ad in this issue of the *Applegater* for a partial list of supporters).

And please join us in voting *yes* on Measure 15-220.

Sincerely,

Ted and Mary Warrick

Wooldridge Creek Winery and Vineyard

Vote yes on Measure 15-220

On a warm, windy day in August came the call that everyone dreads: a fast-moving grass fire was rapidly approaching Missouri Flats homes and nearby dry oak forest. Engines were immediately dispatched for the roughly 20-minute drive from the Applegate Valley Fire District headquarters in Ruch, where, historically, the district's sole response crew has been based. But that day, for the first time in district history—thanks to a recent grant—there was a second (full-time 24/7) crew on duty at Station 51 in Applegate. Because of their central location in Applegate, nearer to the western portion of the district, this crew arrived in less than 10 minutes—just in time to stop the fire from catching the nearby oak forest. A real catastrophe was averted, thanks to the shortened response time.

In addition to responding to fires, this new, second crew provides essential and timely medical emergency response needed for the great majority of calls to the Applegate Valley Fire District.

While this story underscores the value of a second response crew at Station 51, it is important to understand that the grant that funds this crew is *for only three years*. Measure 15-220 will support the balance of the costs to make sure that we have ongoing paid staff in this central location. To protect our community, please vote *yes* on Measure 15-220!

Liza Crosse

Member, Friends of the Applegate Fire District

lizacrosse@comcast.net

**Williams community pulls
together to fund new library**

BY DIANA COOGLE

As the *Applegater* looks to the community for financial support at this time of year, we take heart from the experience of the New Williams Library Project to build a new library in Williams. Residents responded with enthusiasm and generosity to the request for donations, raising \$140,000 and proving what can be done through community responses.

The library opened its door on October 7 with ribbon-cutting, speeches, and tours of the building and grounds.

After more than four decades with only a tiny building for a library that had neither running water nor restrooms, Williams now has a building with 1,000 square feet of library use and a designated children's area—as well as the usually-taken-for-granted restrooms and running water. There is more room for books and updated technology.

Sara Katz, a Josephine Community Library Foundation board member, a Williams resident, and a generous donor to the project, says, "Libraries are the heart of a community. So I couldn't be more thrilled about our new library in its perfect location, between the General Store, the Grange, and the Sugarloaf Community Center, only a short walk from Williams Elementary School."

To be exact, the new library is at 20140 Williams Highway.

The *Applegater*, too, is at the heart of our community. Like Williams community members pouring in funds for their library, residents all over the Applegate are poised to shower funds onto the *Applegater* these next two months.

Just as individual donations didn't carry the whole financial burden of building a new library, neither does the *Applegater* depend solely on individual donors. The New Williams Library Project received help from Josephine County's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), the Four-Way Community Foundation, and the Oregon Community Foundation, among others, and for the *Applegater*, NewsMatch, a program of the Independent News Network, matches each donation during November and December, doubling the impact of each.

The *Applegater*, of course, also receives the support of numerous businesses that advertise in the paper. If you, in turn, support them in addition to donating to the *Applegater*, the whole community benefits. Just ask the Williams librarians.

Diana Coogle
diana@applegater.org

OPINION

**A yes on Measure 15-220
will provide essential emergency
services in the Applegate Valley**

BY JULIE BARRY, BABETTE RAPP, AND THOMAS CROSSE

As representatives of three volunteer organizations that support the operations of the Applegate Valley Fire District (AVFD), we want to send a unified and wholehearted message about the importance of Measure 15-220. If approved by the voters on November 7, Measure 15-220 will provide essential funding to support the necessary staffing, facilities, equipment, and programs of AVFD. Please help us help—vote *yes* on Measure 15-220!

Yes vote

Your *yes* vote on Measure 15-220 will provide substantial community benefits and address critical concerns within the fire district, including:

- Reduce response times to AVFD's western neighborhoods, including North Applegate, Kubli, Thompson Creek, and Humbug Creek Roads.
- Build staffing capacity to respond to overlapping calls.
- Reestablish a strong fire prevention and education program focusing on assisting community members with protection of homes and property, providing local expertise, pursuing grant funds for homeowners, chipper programs, stewardship programs in local schools, and more.
- Strengthen the volunteer program to continually improve AVFD services.
- Ensure that AVFD keeps pace with rising costs of staffing, facilities maintenance and equipment, and modern technology and communications.

The Applegate Valley Fire District is facing several key challenges. Historically, AVFD has had one staffed response crew, located at its headquarters in Ruch. This location on the eastern side of the district results in long response times to the western portions of the district. In addition, shifts in demographics have resulted in a substantial reduction in volunteers, adding to the workload of AVFD's limited paid staff. In the past five

years, not only have call volumes increased by 25 percent, but also approximately 20 percent of calls are overlapping, meaning that when you call for help, there is a one-in-five chance that responders are already out on a call. Because of these compounding responsibilities, the over-taxed staff has been forced to reduce important fire prevention and community assistance programs.

Thanks to the efforts of AVFD's board and Chief Chris Wolfard, your tax dollars are being stretched with the aggressive pursuit of grant funding. A recent grant has provided student staffing to support a response crew at Station 51/Applegate, but these funds end after three years. Another three-year grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office added two firefighters and partial funding for a new Fire Prevention Coordinator/Fire Marshal. Measure 15-220 will provide the funds to match these grants, continue staffing at Station 51, and sustain essential prevention programs throughout the next five years.

No vote

Unfortunately, a *no* vote would result in reduced services, including:

- Cuts to paid staff and reduced financial capacity to match state grant funds for supplemental staff.
- Reduced response to medical and fire emergencies.
- Increased response times.
- Substantially reduced fire prevention and preparedness programs.

Please join us in voting *yes* on Measure 15-220 to sustain excellent emergency services in the Applegate Valley.

Julie Barry, Board Member

Applegate Valley Fire District

Babette Rapp, President

Friends of the Applegate Fire District

brapp5@aol.com

Thomas Crosse, President

Applegate Volunteer

Firefighters Association

*** REMEMBER TO VOTE BY NOVEMBER 7 ***



COVER PHOTO

**of a colorful dogwood tree shot by Linda Kappen
in her Applegate backyard.**

Happy Thanksgiving!

BOOK REVIEW

Jacksonville's Emerald Necklace

From Goldmines to Woodlands Trails

Larry B. Smith

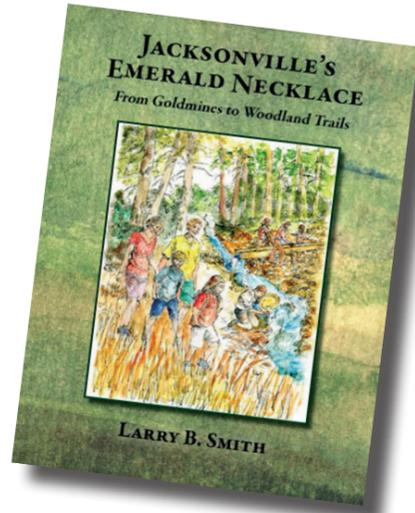
Jacksonville Woodlands Association 2022

BY JEANETTE LETOURNEUX

A gem of a story! At 408 pages and more than 400 photos, this multifaceted book should appeal to wide and diverse audiences.

Jacksonville's Emerald Necklace tells the stories behind the formation of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association (JWA) in 1989 and the amazing 20-year efforts of individuals, students, private organizations, government agencies, legislators, landowners, and the City of Jacksonville to purchase 21 parcels to create the Jacksonville Woodlands, almost 300 acres and 16 miles of trails bordering 70 percent of the town. The Oregon State Parks Department calls the Jacksonville Woodlands "the most unique and successful preservation project of its kind in the whole state." The details of the project will warm your heart and inspire you to explore this beautiful "emerald necklace."

Author Larry B. Smith weaves the pioneer history and stories of ownership of



the 21 parcels to the eventual acquisition by JWA and the ensuing trail building. Tales abound about the discovery of gold at Rich Gulch in 1852, which started one of the largest gold rushes in the West; about the Britt, Beekman, Zigler, and other pioneer families and landowners; about the transformation of Jacksonville from a virtual ghost town and a "rural slum" in the 1920s and 1930s (due in part to poverty preventing property owners from demolishing the downtown

buildings) to its designation as a National Historic Landmark; and about the many luminaries and eccentrics who have shaped Jacksonville's past and present.

The most endearing stories are about the impact on the kids. Larry, who taught fifth grade at Jacksonville Elementary School for 33 years and has led thousands of students trekking, researching, and working on the woodland trails, says he is most proud of this enduring legacy.

His students were a vital element of every aspect of the preservation project—building trails, raising money, giving presentations, and convincing many landowners to sell or donate their parcels through intense letter-writing campaigns and personal appeals. A yearlong correspondence in 1993, between the fifth-grade class and Zelia Zigler (granddaughter of early settler Sarah Zigler), led to Zelia donating a parcel of land running from Britt Gardens west along Jackson Creek. Zelia performed the ribbon-cutting on the resulting Sarah Zigler Trail, which was designated a National Recreation Trail in 2000.

There are many other incredible successes and fun stories. Eleven-year-old Brian Mulhollen (now fire marshal

of the Applegate Valley Fire District) negotiated the purchase of a ten-acre parcel from Medford. In 1993 Brian received the Jefferson Award, the highest community award in the United States. The "talking tree" campaign culminated in the designation of the Britt Sequoia as an Oregon Heritage Tree in 1998. Students received national awards from Sea World, the National Park Service, and Amway Corporation, among others. They took trips to Washington, DC, and Florida.

Many of the writings and pictures of fifth-grade students are juxtaposed with current remembrances and pictures of those students, now grown, hiking the trails with their own kids and families.

Permeating these stories are certain ideals—the love for community and the natural world, the bonds and inspiration that develop between teacher and students, and the faith in people, young and old, to do the right thing, to pull together, and to accomplish big, important goals. These principles, instilled in generations, are a true treasure that will hopefully endure as long as the shining green spaces that dedicated volunteers and others have so valiantly preserved.

Jeanette LeTourneux
jetlet10@gmail.com

David Dobbs departs

It is with deep regret that the *Applegater* Board of Directors announces the resignation of our over-the-top dedicated treasurer, David Dobbs. We already miss his meticulous attention to our financial affairs and the many other things he did for the *Applegater*. We'll need two or three more board members to fill his shoes!

Good luck, Dave, in your future, and we look forward to seeing you at the next Gater function.

(More information will appear in the winter *Applegater*.)

~ IMPORTANT REMINDER ~

In order to assure that your donation is doubled, please be sure to date your check no earlier than November 1, 2023, and no later than December 31, 2023.

Thank you for your support!

◀ Extra Edition November 2023 ▶

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Happy Holidays, from your Neighborhood Store

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Applegate Valley Wines
Craft Beers



VOTE YES ON MEASURE 15-220!

APPLEGATE FIRE DISTRICT LEVY
PREVENTION...
PREPAREDNESS...
PROMPTNESS...



MEASURE 15-220 has been endorsed by:

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Robin and Nick Borrow
June Byrne
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Tom and Kathy Carstens
Carey Chaput
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Tim and Liza Crosse
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David and Lauri Dobbs
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