

# Applegater

Photo by Linda Kappen | [applegater.org](http://applegater.org)

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

Celebrating  
~30~  
Years

## FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

### Thanks to you, we met our goal!

A big round of applause for all of you who donated to the *Applegater* in November-December 2023. We met our \$15,000 match cap to be doubled by NewsMatch. We appreciate your generosity, Applegaters! In fact, all readers of the *Applegater* appreciate all who help keep it a vital part of our community.

See entire message from the board chair on page 21.

## Applegate Valley loses wine pioneer and entrepreneur Kara Olmo

Kara Lynn Olmo, a key figure in establishing the Applegate Valley as a premier wine destination, passed away on December 14, 2023, in a house full of people who loved her. She is survived by her husband, Greg Paneitz, her four children—Dante and Tazio Dondero and Ellia and Corvin Paneitz—her mother, Susan Olmo, and her brother, Keith Olmo, and his family—Brooke, Arrington, Irelynn, and Greyson.

Born on December 18, 1973, in San Francisco, California, Kara was raised in Marin County. After attending culinary school in San Francisco, she ventured into the hospitality industry in California and Las Vegas before entering the wine world as a farmer-liaison for the Lodi Wine Board. Kara attended Fresno State for its enology program, where she met Greg. The two of them moved to southern Oregon in 2002 and began working at Valley View Winery. They cofounded and ran Wooldridge Creek Winery, which is where they stayed until 2020.



Kara Olmo committed "countless hours and personal resources" to the betterment of the Applegate Valley.

As a pioneer of sustainable practices in grape-growing and winemaking, Kara was always brainstorming ways to grow their business as well as sate her bottomless curiosity. She and Greg started the Oregon kegged-wine trend as the first winery in the state to offer wine to restaurants in that format. With her guidance as one of the first women on the Oregon Wine Board, the OLCC approved the sale of wine in growlers. In 2015, she learned to make cheese and charcuterie, and Wooldridge Creek became the first licensed winery and creamery in the state.

See KARA OLMO, page 2.

## Conserving our legacy The Applegate Open Paragliding Race to Goal returns!

BY TERRI STEWART

Thrill seekers and paragliding enthusiasts, rejoice! The US Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (USHPA)-sanctioned Applegate Open Paragliding Race to Goal is making a triumphant return to grace the skies of the Applegate Valley with vibrant wings once again.

After a brief hiatus due to the pandemic and other challenges, the event is set to take flight from July 2-8, 2024, promising an unforgettable week of adrenaline-pumping competition, breathtaking scenery, and a vibrant community spirit.

See PARAGLIDING, page 28.



Pilot just off the Woodrat Mountain mid-launch heading out in the valley. Photo: RVHPA.

Please join us to  
celebrate the *Applegater's*  
**30th Birthday**  
**4:30-7:30 pm**  
**Sunday, June 2, 2024**  
**Vista 222, 222 Missouri Flat Road**  
Special presentations and entertainment,  
including J.D. Rogers, the *Applegater's*  
long-serving first editor  
•  
Music by Stolen Moments  
Catered dinner by Black Barn Farm  
Silent Auction  
•  
Tickets \$50 each  
Includes one glass of wine  
•  
Complimentary shuttle from  
parking lot to building  
•  
Purchase tickets at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com)  
or contact Diana Coogle at  
[diana@applegater.org](mailto:diana@applegater.org)  
**No one under 21 allowed. No pets.**

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# HISTORY - HERITAGE