

Applegater

Photo by Dakota Kappen www.applegater.org



SPRING 2015
Volume 8, No. 1

Applegate Valley Community Newsmagazine
Serving Jackson and Josephine Counties — Circulation: 10,500

Celebrating
20
Years

Family Fun & Food!

Joint benefit for
the *Applegater*
and Cantrall Buckley Park

Sunday, May 31
3 – 6 pm
Applegate River Lodge



LIVE MUSIC
Lora Lyn Band
Rainy and the Rattlesnakes

FACE PAINTING
and other kids' activities

FOOD & BEVERAGES

BBQ hot dog, cowboy beans and potato salad \$1
Complimentary chips and lemonade
Wine and beer
available for purchase



\$15 Adult
\$5 Kids

RAFFLE PRIZES

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
Applegate Store • Hidden Valley Market
Ruch Country Store • Ray's in Jacksonville

Joshua Morton: Hard-working artist-teacher gives back

BY DIANA COOGLE

A Williams resident since 2007, Joshua Morton, artist and wrestler, Grants Pass High School art teacher and wrestling coach, is proof of Jimi Hendrix's declaration: "If there is something to be changed in this world, then it can only happen through music."

The status of art scholarships was something that needed to be changed, at least in the world of Joshua's community. The few art scholarships available were of \$100 or \$150 value. It was music that made Joshua act on that need.

Joshua loves live concerts—the crowd, the waiting in the parking

lots, the people he meets before the show, the festival atmosphere: "the whole amazingness of it all," as he puts it. "It's like Christmas—everyone is in a better mood. Everyone is more helpful, nicer." That atmosphere of generosity at the music concert made him want to be like that in the real world.

So three years ago he started the One Sweet World Fund, under the umbrella of Josephine County Educational Fund, for an annual scholarship to be given to a Grants Pass High School graduating senior who has taken an art course from

See JOSHUA MORTON, page 23

Look Who's Reading the Gater!



Dinner at Tony's Taverna in Malibu, California, was followed by a leisurely and thoroughly enjoyable read through the *Applegater* by none other than, left to right, Tony, the owner of this Greek restaurant, Josh Bratt, Greg Bratt, and Benjamin Bratt, movie and television star (seen recently in *Modern Family* and *Private Practice*).

High extinction risk for Applegate coho

BY JAKOB SHOCKEY

In November 2014, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released their final recovery plan for our region's coho salmon. These southern Oregon and Northern California coastal coho, often referenced as the "SONCC Coho" to avoid top-heavy sentences, inhabit only the watersheds of our mythical State of Jefferson. The plan is heavy with nomenclature and population recovery modeling, and I've already had to use two acronyms in as many sentences just to introduce it. However, it is also the story of a survival struggle—within our watershed, on our properties, and by a neighbor whose family has lived in the area much longer than we have.

Talk to an old-timer or read historic field journals on the Rogue Basin, and you will hear the stories of salmon "so thick you could walk on their backs and fish with a pitchfork." As this Final SONCC Coho Recovery Plan states: "Not long ago, these watersheds provided conditions that supported robust and resilient populations of coho salmon that could persist under dynamic environmental conditions." However, both inadvertently and by design, we have changed the conditions of our region's watersheds over the past 150 years, and today these populations have reached a tipping point.

This point, labeled a *deposition threshold* in the NMFS plan, can also be called an *extinction spiral*. This is when a species goes from "limping along" to a dramatic decline, when the numbers of returning coho spawners are so few they can no longer find each other in our tributaries to mate. The deposition threshold for the Middle Rogue and Applegate Rivers is estimated at 734

spawners, while a healthy run would be at least 2,400. Two of the last four years surveyed have been well below that 734 spawners threshold, and there has been an 11 percent annual population decline for the past 12 years. These and other data led NMFS to classify the Middle Rogue/Applegate River population of SONCC coho as at "high risk for extinction." We are witnessing the tipping point for this region's native coho salmon.

What went wrong? Salmon, after all, are known for being tough, resilient, and independent. In this, they have come to signify the spirit of the Pacific Northwest. Yet salmon are dependent on a functioning riparian habitat, and therein lies the problem.

It's hard to visualize how much we've changed this habitat as we have settled into this watershed—how much our baseline for what a creek looks like has shifted over the generations of settlement. The native Takelma people once called the Applegate River valley "the beaver place." These beavers were trapped out and their ponds, once grouped along our streams like beads on a thread, disappeared.

Gold mining further altered the hydrology of our streams, and conifers were cut away from the creeks as the most accessible timber. With agriculture came levees to straighten and contain our river and streams, and dams to divert water.

Woody debris was cleaned out of the creeks to prevent logjams, while invasive species slowly crept into the riparian forests, choking out young trees and thus eventually increasing sunlight on the creek. The water heated up. Nitrogen runoff from fertilized fields, septic systems and cattle

See COHO EXTINCTION RISK, page 2

Nonprofit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit #125
Medford OR
ECRWSS

Local Postal Customer

Hurrah! McKee Bridge is restored!

BY ROBERT E. VAN HEUIT

The restoration of McKee Bridge was completed in the middle of February. The bridge is now open to pedestrians who can better observe the beautiful Applegate River from its interior. The 98-year-old bridge underwent a facelift, structural repairs and improvements that will extend the bridge's life for a considerable number of years.

The restoration effort began after an inspection of the bridge by Oregon Bridge Engineering Company (OBEC) in the fall of 2011 found that a portion of the north truss that supported the bridge had begun to fail. After meetings with OBEC, Jackson County Engineering, McKee Bridge Historical Society (MBHS) and the Oregon Department of Transportation, McKee Bridge enthusiasts decided to apply to the federal government for a grant to restore the bridge.

In August of 2012, the federal government awarded a grant to Jackson County (the owner of the bridge) in the amount of \$547,048. MBHS agreed to raise the required \$56,202 in matching funds and did so with major assistance from Preserve Oregon and the Kinsman Foundation, which provided grants of \$20,000 and \$10,000, respectively. The remainder was raised with contributions mostly from local friends of McKee Bridge. By the end of 2013, MBHS had the



The restored McKee Bridge is now open to pedestrians.

necessary funds in hand to proceed with the restoration.

When the final plans were completed, though, the total cost exceeded the amount of available funds. MBHS and the county frantically looked for additional funding and found that the Oregon Transportation Enhancement Fund might provide it. A successful application for a \$62,000 grant was made, and MBHS was able to raise the \$6,200 in required matching funds in short order.

The Board of Directors of MBHS wishes to thank all of the members and friends of McKee Bridge for their support and generous contributions that enabled us to restore the bridge. Without your help and support we could not have completed the project.

Robert E. Van Heuit, President
McKee Bridge Historical Society
541-499-6132
rvanh2000@yahoo.com

The Applegater welcomes two new board members: Richard Goodnough and Heather Murphy



Richard Goodnough

Born and raised in Lakeview, Oregon, Richard Goodnough earned a BS degree in applied science at Southern Oregon College (now Southern Oregon University). In 1973, he moved to his current location on Humbug Creek, making kitchenware pottery in winter and fighting fires and doing controlled burns for the US Forest Service in summer. At some point he tired of being a poor artist and started doing handyman work and residential building contracting in the Applegate.

Richard has served as a firefighter and EMT for our local fire department for over 30 years and served on its board for ten years. He was also a member of the board of Headwaters (an environmental organization dealing with local forestry issues) for around five years.

After having lived here for some time, Richard learned through his family that his great-grandfather, a traveling preacher, wintered at Missouri Flat on his travels from Idaho to southeastern Oregon. While here, he performed marriages for

such names as Slagal (sic) and Kubli. A baby, Richard's grandmother, was born to the preacher and his wife on April 4, 1885, giving Richard pioneer roots in the Applegate Valley. One month later the three of them continued on their trek.



Heather Murphy

Heather Murphy, a native of Pennsylvania, has been calling the Applegate home since 1993. She studied literature and the craft of writing at Penn State University and currently facilitates a weekly writers' workshop at the Applegate Library that is open to the public.

Heather is also a member of a poetry group, the Applegate Poets, which was assembled by Oregon's fifth poet laureate, Lawson Inada. The Applegate Poets perform public readings on a regular basis at local venues.

Heather resides with her family on Thompson Creek Road.

(Don't miss Heather's article about the history and controversy of "open range" on page 5 of this issue.)

COHO EXTINCTION RISK

FROM PAGE 1

increased algae blooms and decreased oxygen in the water. Clear-cutting in the 1970s and 1980s sent large plumes of sediment into the waterways, further degrading water quality. Finally, Applegate Dam was built with no passage for salmon, cutting off 96.12 miles of the highest intrinsic potential habitat for coho.

All of these physical, biological or chemical stresses are identified in the Final SONCC Coho Recovery Plan, and they have had the cumulative effect of weakening the Applegate's coho. We've pushed the coho to their limit, and without addressing these problems on a large, watershed-wide scale, we can expect these fish to disappear from our region. The good news is that these are on-the-ground issues that we can work to fix, and the majority of these issues are on private land. This means that the coho are reliant on us, not the government, to fix up their creeks.

Many times, making small

changes in your land management around the water can have big impacts for the wildlife that relies on it. If you own property along the Applegate River or any of its tributaries and want to consider what you can do to improve coho habitat, give me a call, and we can walk your stretch. The Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council is nonregulatory, nongovernmental, and nonprofit. Often, we can apply for grants to help fund habitat restoration work or connect you with a local contractor. If you live here because of this valley's beauty, consider doing what you can to protect it.

Jakob Shockey • 541-890-9989

Riparian Program Manager

Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council
riparianprogram@apwc.info

Note: For a map of the current extinction risk of coho salmon in our region, please go to the home page of our website at www.applegater.org (under "Latest Issue").

Get published—and support a good cause!

The literary arts are flourishing in the Applegate Valley. Have you noticed? Vibrant library programs, books being published by Applegate authors, well-attended prose and poetry events, readings by the Applegate Poets group, working writers' groups, a new showcase of books by local writers at Art Presence Art Center in Jacksonville with readings by featured authors at the opening art reception—there's a lot going on.

Taking notice of all that, the *Applegater* hatched an idea. We want to publish a book of Applegate authors, called *From the Heart of the Applegate: Essays, Poems, and Short Fiction by Applegate Valley Writers*. The purpose is to publish a rich, interesting anthology of works by literary masters in the Applegate.

So we're looking for submissions. Interested? Here's the scoop:

- Writers must be current Applegate Valley residents.
- Submissions can be in three categories:

poetry, short fiction, and creative nonfiction.

- Writers may submit up to three poems and/or one prose piece. Prose pieces should fall between 800 and 2,500 words.
- Submissions should include an author's bio and photo.
- Photographs to accompany the submission may be included but are not required.
- Photos must be of commercial print quality (high resolution).
- There is no restriction on the topic.
- Previously published works are not eligible for inclusion.
- Copyright reverts to the writer after publication.
- Send submissions to gater@applegater.org.
- Deadline for submissions is June 30, 2015.

All proceeds will help support the *Applegater*. If you have any questions, please email gater@applegater.org. We look forward to receiving your submissions and getting this unique book out to the world!

Handcrafted 'Applebrates' for sale

The *Applegater* has a trade secret that we are about to divulge. No, we not announcing a revolutionary patent, but we have developed and organized a manufacturing process to market a product. We're hoping our idea will bring some much-needed cash into our nonprofit coffers to help fund the production and distribution of the *Applegater* newsmagazine.

Our plan is to build beautiful planter or multi-use boxes called "Applebrates," using donated local small-diameter wood and volunteer labor. All proceeds from sales will help sustain the *Applegater*.

You can see these beautiful, sturdy, useful and long-lasting Applebrates at Applegate Valley Realty at 935 N. Fifth Street in Jacksonville. We are looking for additional outlets in the valley to display and sell our Applebrates and for customers to buy or order them. Check the *Applegater's* Facebook page and website for outlet updates.

The price of a stock planter box (see photo), which is 12" wide x 24" long x 12" deep, is \$60. Applebrate designs can also be customized. To purchase one, get more information, or volunteer to help, call Chris Bratt at 541-846-6988.



Handcrafted Applebrates available for purchase now.

Introducing... Greeley Wells, moviemaker

As Greeley's involvement in time-consuming video projects expands, he has had to relinquish other activities. So it is with regret at his departure and gratitude for his service that the *Applegater* Board of Directors accepts Greeley's resignation from the board to allow him to focus on his latest artistic endeavor. (To view his videos, visit www.greeley.me.)

The *Applegater* board salutes Greeley, our first chairman of the board, with undying thanks and kudos for all that he accomplished during his long reign from 2008 to 2015.

Greeley will still write his popular "Starry Side" articles and continue his association with the Gater's editorial committee.

Thank you, Greeley—we wish you great success.

The *Applegater* Board of Directors

