

KALLBERG: Served many years on the chute gates

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a community that instead takes action and conquers. The timing of his move to Sisters was part of that perfect storm.

In 1996, the father of two attended a school board meeting that was focused on overcrowding in the elementary school. The prospect of ugly modular classrooms seethed through the meeting. There wasn't a budget to construct more classrooms.

A character who likes simple solutions, Kallberg asked, "Why don't we just build them?" His question shoved a snowball off the crest of the mountain.

The following morning, he got a telephone call from Sisters School District Administrator Steve Swisher. "Do you really think this could happen?" was all Swisher had to say. The confessed adrenaline-junkie jumped in as the catalyst to satisfy the school's need. Kallberg naturally became the informal project director.

"So many people and businesses got involved," Kallberg recalled. "It was the greatest bunch of people. They rolled up their sleeves and did what was good for the community." There were far too many people, contractors and businesses to list, he said, his eyes sparkling with appreciation.

"I met Bill Willitts at this time, and this project cemented my friendship with Bill Reed, whom I had met socially when we moved here in 1990."

The three men became partners in a development project focused on a vision for the future of Sisters.

Four new classrooms were ready in five months, finished for the winter term

of 1997. It was accomplished with donated labor, materials, equipment and fundraising.

"One volunteer's wife brought us chocolate chip cookies at least once a week," he said, drifting momentarily with the memories of that project. He had seen the best in citizens emerge, in daily surprise and wonder, to get something done.

Kallberg was raised in Gresham, Oregon. He and his father frequented the racetracks in Portland, which created his life passion. The lover of speed built his first car, a 1968 Camaro, in 1971. As soon as he was 18, he got his racing license and has been on racetracks all over the nation since.

There are more trophies than he can remember. When co-racer and reporter Erik Dolson asked him about a specific turn on a Portland speedway, Kallberg responded, "It's not bad ... until the car comes back to the ground."

In the summer of 2016, he was invited to race at the Indianapolis Speedway, every car-guy's dream.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Curt Kallberg in his element.

"We got to kiss the bricks," he said.

And then he raced against Al Unser, Jr. and Bill Elliot in the Indianapolis Historic Race. They drove Cobras, Corvettes, and Mustangs.

Qualifying 18th, Kallberg finished in eighth place.

"Not bad for a rookie on that track," he gleefully

added.

The world of wild horse racing opened to the young man when he and friends in a Portland saloon talked about forming teams in 1983. They formed racing teams, competing in rodeos all over the Northwest.

"When you're waiting for that gate to open and the horse to come out, you're so pumped up," he explained. "Then, in the rush of saddling a wild horse and finishing, you just want to go back and do it again."

His team competed at Pendleton four times, and won at Crooked River Roundup, Sweet Home, and the Deschutes County Fair and Rodeo. In 1988, he suffered a leg fracture, which ended his wild horse racing career.

He became a member of Sisters Rodeo Association in 1990. He has been a chute boss since. He was elected to the rodeo board of directors in 1995. He served as vice president until he retired from that position in 2014.

In 2015, chute boss Kallberg was pummeled by a bull after a ride, knocked to the ground and then butted by the bull while bullfighters and arena crew tried to draw the gigantic animal from his prone body. He suffered more contusions and abrasions than he'd ever suffered in wild horse racing. Even that hasn't kept him out of the arena.

An icon of enthusiasm, Kallberg said, "Between rodeo and racing, that's where my friends are. Racing is not nearly as important as the fellowship," adding that both experiences have introduced him to people who find a way to work hard and have fun doing it.

Kallberg is a third-generation carpenter and contractor. His grandfather was a carpenter, and his dad owned a construction company.

"I followed him to the



PHOTO BY JEFF SPRY

Curt Kallberg is a builder – and car guy.

race tracks and into building," he said. "None of us had much sense."

He has built many commercial buildings in Central Oregon, along with Craftsman homes. His son, Dustin, is on his crew, making this a four-generation endeavor.

His daughter, Lauren, has been a summer fixture at Richard's Produce since she was old enough to work. Lauren is finishing her college studies in California after also attending college

in Australia.

Kallberg shares a home in Madras with Patty Cordoni, now board member of Sisters Rodeo. The large farm required a major remodel of a dilapidated old farmhouse. His business keeps him in Sisters most of the week.

If he's not working at the farm or on the rodeo grounds on his weekends, Kallberg is behind the wheel of a racecar on a fast track of a life lived fully charged, pedal to the metal.

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