

# KIDS IN PRINT

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## Fostering Community in Camp Sherman

By the middle school students of Black Butte School

**NOTE TO PARENTS:** This story contains material that younger children may find sad or difficult to process emotionally. We invite you to read it before sharing it with them.

Students in Camp Sherman interviewed Sylvia and Leon Foster, a retired couple that helped build and manage Central Oregon's iconic ski areas and resorts.

In Part One, published last month in *The Nugget*, readers learned that the Fosters helped build the early chair lifts and facilities at Mt. Bachelor ski area. Then the Fosters moved to Hoodoo Ski Bowl, where they lived in the original lodge with their kids and their German shepherd dog.

### The Fire

By Ace Chew, Weston Dean, Lily Henderson and Kellen Petke

A fire blazed around Hoodoo in 1967 and destroyed the first double chair lift in North America. This fire became known as The Santiam Airstrip Fire or the Big Lake Airstrip Forest Fire. The lodge, where the Fosters had lived nearly 10 years, remained safe.

The following year, another fire raged. This time, it wasn't a forest fire. The lodge caught on fire while the family was in Bend at a doctor's office. "It was the day after we'd closed for the summer," Leon recalled.

"The lodge was burning from the north to the south—it was a big lodge," he said. "We had fifty rooms, plus a big cafeteria and lobby, plus a ski shop. There was nothing left but ashes."

According to *The Albany Democrat-Herald*, the fire was discovered by a mailman. "The blaze," the newspaper reported, "fanned by a light breeze, burned the lodge to the ground shortly after noon Tuesday."

Luckily, no one was injured. The Fosters had almost nothing left after the fire; they lost their dog and everything. "We didn't even have clothes or tooth brushes," their son Mark Foster said.

"When the lodge burned we lost everything," said Sylvia. "We were temporarily



PHOTO BY TL BROWN

Student reporters interviewed Leon Foster (standing center, back row) and Sylvia Foster (center, seated) about their long life in Central Oregon.

living in Bend with my folks. My mother would go to Sisters and pick up the children and bring them home [from school]. And when they come laughing in the door in the house, I knew everything was going to be all right."

The Fosters described the fire as one of their most life-changing events. "It's hard to explain—but I'd go to the laundromat, and I didn't know which clothes were ours," Sylvia said. "The children were all just wonderful about it. The only thing that they were brokenhearted about was the dog."

### The Community

By Audrie Niemann

Leon and Sylvia Foster moved to Camp Sherman and bought the Cold Springs Resort in 1968 after the devastating fire that destroyed their home. When they moved to Camp Sherman, they had nothing.

"I was lost. I didn't really know what to do next," said Sylvia.

Leon said that he had wished that it was all just a nightmare and they would wake up and everything would be back to normal, but that wasn't how it all worked out.

The community changed their lives when they moved to Camp Sherman. "People just gave us so many things that it was just a real blessing," said Sylvia.

"One couple gave us a German shepherd pup," Leon remembered.

During the interview, Joseph Yoder, a 6th grade student at BBS asked, "How do you help the community?"

Sylvia answered, "Promoting the community would be the best way, hon. Greet people, make sure people feel welcome when they're here. Show them around, tell them they can go see the river, the head of the Metolius, and see where the river comes right out of the ground."

The Fosters helped the community in many ways over the years. Leon said

*"The Community" continues on next page.*

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Bring your original illustrations, paintings, stories and poems to *The Nugget Newspaper!*

442 E. Main Ave.; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. Include child's name, grade level, and school or homeschool. You can use a full name or first name with last initial. Submissions can be emailed to [kidsinprint@nuggetnews.com](mailto:kidsinprint@nuggetnews.com).

Due to space limitations, publication of submissions is not guaranteed. We seek to showcase a wide range of ages, styles, and abilities that represent the diverse talents of the youth of our greater Sisters community.

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