

Selig nurtures preschoolers for SPRD

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

The smile on Valerie Selig's face as she talks about her three- and four-year-old Grasshoppers in the Sisters Park & Recreation District preschool program speaks volumes about her, her work, and the children.

"It's not really work, and they pay me for it!" Selig said. "It is what I love."

A naturalized U. S. citizen who was born and raised outside of London, England, Selig graduated from college in England, trained to work in children's residential homes. She quit her first job to spend three months traveling in the U. S. and Australia. Returning home, she got what she thought would be a temporary job at Christmastime at Zale's Jewelers, where she stayed for five years.

In 1985, Selig transferred with Zale's to work in the states for two years. The two years became five, and she met her future husband, Guy, never returning home permanently to England. They have visited, as Selig still has a long-time friend there as well as two brothers and their families.

"I have never regretted it," offered Selig. "I have no desire to go back."

With their young son, Aaron, they were living in the Bay Area in California and Selig used her early childhood education to start a co-op preschool for the local parks and recreation district, a position she had for seven years.

After visiting a friend who lived in the Spokane Valley, Guy and Valerie decided to leave California. They investigated towns in several different states and with a stay at the local KOA campground, they fell in love with Sisters. It was 2006 when they went home, quit their jobs, sold their home, and moved to Sisters.

Aaron entered the seventh grade at Sisters Middle School. He is now 25 years old, working in Grand Junction, Colorado, for the Bureau of Land Management. Selig attributes that career choice to Aaron's participation in the IEE program at the high school. She said he participated in a number of the programs at SPRD including camps, skiing, and the after-school programs.

Guy worked for the Sisters School District in all three schools for 12 years, as a subcontractor for maintenance at SPRD, and now works at The



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Valerie Selig is the director of SPRD's preschool program.

Lodge in Sisters assisted-living facility doing "whatever needs to be done."

Upon first arriving in Central Oregon, Selig had a fun year working in a private Bend preschool which "was very different from the co-op and had everything I wanted," Selig said.

She began at Sisters Organization for Activities and Recreation (SOAR) in 2008 in their after-school program and later substituting for the preschool teacher. She also worked for four years as a paraprofessional at the middle school.

When a local preschool closed its doors in 2010, then-SPRD Executive Director Ann Heath gave the green light and SPRD opened up a classroom for a small preschool program with a teacher and aide. Establishing the preschool was a collaborative effort, with parents

See **PRESCHOOL** on page 27

Edie Jones excited to join board

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

Edie Jones was selected among three finalists for the open position on the Sisters School Board at the monthly meeting held Wednesday, January 8. Her appointment fills the vacancy of Amanda Clarke who left the Board in December.

Jones will complete the remainder of Clarke's term, which is set to expire in June 2021.

Jones, who ran for the Board in 2013, is a strong advocate of early childhood education and authored a book on the subject called "Raising Kids with Love, Honor and Respect." She spent two decades working with the Together for Children organization.

Jones and her husband, Ted, moved to the area in 1991 and owned and managed Camp Tamarack west of Sisters on Dark Lake for 11 years. In addition, Edie has been a longtime contributor to *The Nugget*. Ted Jones passed away in February 2019 at the age of 86. The couple shared 56 years of marriage.

"Ted was always my biggest cheerleader," she said. "He encouraged me to run for the School Board back in 2013."

Jones lost that election to Melvin Herburger, but continued to be involved in a variety of education-related activities and now is thrilled to have a chance to serve.

"I'm excited," she said. "When Ted passed away, I

spent some time just being at home and spent some time getting things, including myself, settled to this new part of my life. Realizing that, as much as I miss him, life really does go on and it's important for me to go on in a good way."

Jones considered many ways in which she could still contribute. "I thought I could volunteer at Habitat for Humanity or ASPIRE or Circle of Friends — those sorts of places," she said. "I was trying to figure out where I could find a place and feel like I am making a commitment and a difference that is significant. The more I thought about it I knew it had to do with kids."

When she discovered the opening on the School Board, she knew it was what she wanted to do.

"I have the time and I still have the passion, so I am very glad the Board chose me for the position," she said.

Jones has kept up with the news on public education in Oregon and feels lucky to be joining the Board at a time of growth and improved funding, including the Student Success Act. She is becoming more familiar with the School District's mission and vision work and likes the direction things are going.

Obviously as someone who spent many years running a camp for youth that included Outdoor School, experiential learning is something Jones believes in deeply. In addition, she is appreciative of the community partnerships that



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

Edie Jones was appointed earlier this month to fill a post on the Sisters School Board.

the schools have with organizations like the Sisters Folk Festival, the Sisters Science Club, the aviation program and Together for Children.

"I am pleased how Together for Children is partnering with Parks and Rec since there is an emphasis there for early childhood and how we can help parents be the best they can be," she said.

Jones understands that students need practical, skill-based learning in addition to academics. "Not all of our students need to go to a four-year college," she said. "In addition to what we are already doing here, we need to make

See **JONES** on page 22

YEAR-ROUND FIREWOOD SALES
KINDLING
SISTERS FOREST PRODUCTS
541-410-4509
SistersForestProducts.com

Gypsy Wind CLOTHING
Sweater sale!
All 50% off
Open Wed., Thurs, Fri. & Sat., 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Closed Sun. - Tues.
351 W. HOOD AVE., SISTERS

SISTERS COFFEE CO.
Open 6am-6pm Coffee Roasted Daily 273 W Hood Ave. Sisters, OR

SPRD SISTERS Park & Recreation DISTRICT
NIGHT AT THE ORIENT at The Belfry
February 23, 4:30-6 p.m.
Youth and adult tickets available
Entertainment by Oregon Tai Chi Wushu

View activities & classes, and register online!
www.SistersRecreation.com
1750 W. McKinney Butte Rd. | 541-549-2091

SNO CAP MINI STORAGE
Sisters Industrial Park
157 Sisters Park Dr. • 541-549-3575
www.SistersStorage.com

- State-of-the-art Security Technology
- Sizes from 5x5 to 12x40
- Individual Gate Codes
- Long-term Discounts
- On-site Manager