

Applegater



**Help us
create a
new logo!**
See below

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world
... Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

— Margaret Mead

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Connie Willson Young to say farewell to the Applegate

BY BARBARA HOLIDAY

When Connie Young, née Willson, was born in Grants Pass in 1937, little did she know that she still would be living, some 70 years later, on the same property on which she was raised. Now, with that property on the market, life as she knows it in the Applegate Valley will be coming to an end.

Connie reminisced about the days gone by, which included bank and train robbers hiding out nearby (see page 13), as we chatted in her home on a perfect spring day with husband Lon (who is "still my best friend after 48 years of marriage") at her side, her chickens clucking about, her dog napping, and her beloved tractor within sight (see photo).

Connie's parents, Clif and Lois Willson (see photo), operated the Willson Dairy Ranch near Provolt. They purchased the ranch from Clif's parents, who had moved there from Big Springs Ranch east of Yreka in 1913 when Clif was just five years old. About 120 head of dairy cows were milked twice a day for 37 years on that ranch. Connie, younger sister Jeanne, and two younger brothers, Willy and Doug ("Shorty"), were raised there. (Willy, a trucker, still lives on the farm close to Connie; Jeanne is a Wimer



Connie starts her Massey-Ferguson 265 tractor and will pull a big trailer to load hay, then bring the hay into the barn. She's already taken care of 50 acres of hay; another 50 acres will be cut and baled soon.

resident; and Shorty died at 46 of a heart ailment after working for the Rural Fire Department for more than ten years.)

Fifty-six cousins from both sides of Connie's family also lived in the Applegate. Connie's maternal grandmother, "Grandma Gray," after whose family Grays Creek Road was named, believed that Murphy School would have closed without her family during the 40s, 50s and 60s. And Grandma was right—Murphy School closed just a couple of years after her death around 1976. (The building is now headquarters of Three Rivers School District.)

"I was always Daddy's right-hand 'man,'" Connie said proudly. One of her

jobs at the dairy was to raise the baby calves. That consisted of training the calves to suck on her milky fingers in order to learn to drink from a pail until they were weaned at three months. After graduating from Grants Pass High School in 1956 and spending a year studying music and religion at Multnomah Bible College in Portland, she returned to the ranch to earn money to continue her studies. She would help spread manure in the fields in the morning, then go to work as a practical nurse at the long-gone Osteopathic Hospital in Medford. It was at the hospital that she met Lon, who was visiting a friend's mother. There ended Connie's plans to return to college.

See YOUNG, page 12

Help us create a new logo part two—

One more chance to become world-famous!

Thank you to all of you who submitted a logo for the *Applegater*. We very much appreciate your efforts.

We're still looking, though, for that perfect piece of artwork that depicts what the Applegate Valley is all about. Besides an apple, a gate or a bridge as we mentioned last issue, how about agriculture, animals, artists, rivers, wineries, sunshine, incredible views of valleys and mountains, community. And, you are welcome to design the masthead, which incorporates the name "*Applegater*" plus all the miscellaneous information above the date/issue bar.

We hope this will get those creative juices flowing!

Here is a more detailed list of what we need:

- Dimensions: Logo only—6" wide x 3.25" high
Masthead—10.25" wide x 3.75" high
- Full color
- High-resolution (300 dpi) digital file, either .tif or .jpg format
- Hard copy original
- Deadline: August 1

Email to gater@applegater.org or mail to *Applegater*, 181 Upper Applegate Road, PMB 308, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

Questions? Contact Barbara Holiday at gatergraphics@aol.com or 541.218.8606.

We look forward to receiving your creations and announcing our new logo and its designer in the next issue.

Thank you!

McKee Mercantile opens at McKee Bridge

BY RUTH AUSTIN

A new destination for visitors to enjoy near the site of the historic McKee covered bridge built in 1917 is McKee Mercantile (yes, it is spelled the old way with two Ls). This newly renovated and decorated shop is centered between

the covered bridge and McKee Bridge Restaurant and Store, and offers one more treat for a relaxing summer's day. It is just a stroll away from the cool waters of the Applegate River and swimming area, and a stone's throw from the picnic

area with the old picnic shelter so well made from river boulders in the 1930s.

Rose Marie Leever, the creator of McKee Mercantile, is one of the valley's "new pioneers"—her Upper Applegate home was built in the 1950s. She created McKee Mercantile, decorating and filling it with attractive gifts and home decorations that have an Applegate flavor. There are paintings, prints, glassware, and various artworks. A children's section is included with books and gifts. It will please locals as well as visitors. The most important aspect of the Mercantile is this: all of the hard work, preparation, and energy that went into the shop will be returned to the community. Profits from the sales will be donated to improve and benefit the children of our valley through an educational facility that Rose will designate. Rose confided that "children are my life. I feel strongly how we teach our children."

Many years ago, Rose's parents, Gertrude and Martin Heitkamp, loved the

See MERCANTILE, page 13



Photo: Maggie Shreve