

Applegater

Photo by Liz Butler

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Applegate Valley Days to be celebrated in June

BY DAVID LAANANEN

Be sure to circle June 22 - 24 on your calendar so you don't miss the biggest event held in the Applegate Valley in recent times! Applegate Valley Days will offer a weekend of fun for everyone, whether you're four or one hundred and four. The weekend will be filled with events that you won't want to miss. With such a wide variety of activities, everyone who comes will find something special to enjoy.

Many of the events will be held at Cantrall-Buckley Park:

- Educational activities showcasing the history of the area will include displays of old logging equipment, antique farm machinery, and antique cars, as well as demonstrations of gold mining.
- A vendors' area for local products,

including arts and crafts, quilting, genealogy, period dressers, and a variety of outstanding local produce and food.

• A winery pavilion will offer a variety of Applegate wines as well as the opportunity to purchase wine and beer to accompany the delicious food that will also be for sale. Of course, nonalcoholic beverages will be available as well.

• A special children's area will be devoted to play and learning. An animal exhibit is being planned, as well as a dog agility event.

• The entire family will enjoy spending time outdoors in this beautiful setting, walking around the park, strolling along the river, and picnicking. It will be difficult to resist the mouthwatering aroma

of barbecue and other treats.

- Local musicians will provide entertainment throughout the day.
- Our local emergency service providers will be on hand to show what they do and how they do it.
- Car clubs will hold poker runs to wineries, historic sites, and other Applegate Valley areas

of interest. The Medford Porsche Club was the first to sign up.

Outside Cantrall-Buckley Park, additional events will be held throughout the valley. The Rat Race Paragliding Competition will bring around 175 pilots from all over the world. Pilots will launch their parachute-like crafts from Woodrat Mountain above Ruch in a weeklong series of competitions from June 17 - 23.

Have you ever tried geocaching? Geocaching is a high-tech treasure-hunting game. Players try to find hidden containers, called "geocaches," using GPS-enabled devices. As part of Applegate Valley Days, the Amazing Geocache event will combine "Amazing Race"-type activities with the treasure hunt of

geocaching. Everyone who completes the course will receive a participation prize and be entered to win a handheld GPS device. Go to www.geocaching.com to learn more about this sport.

A new event under development for Applegate Valley Days is a biathlon, usually associated with the Winter Olympics. Unlike the winter biathlon (a part of Norwegian Army training), no skis are required to compete in the summer version of the event. Originally conceived as a training mechanism for winter Olympians, the summer biathlon typically consists of a three- to six-mile run with two shooting stops. The course is divided into three legs with prone shooting following the first leg and standing shooting following the second leg. For both shoots, competitors have five rounds to hit five targets. Also unlike the winter biathlon, rifles remain in the shooting range. As this will be the first such event in the area, this novice (sport class) competition will be shot from 25 meters. Instead of penalizing for shots missed, this competition will reward racers

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Rat Race organizers and pilots generous to local community

Largest paragliding event in U.S. flies into the Applegate in June

BY BARBARA HOLIDAY

It all began as a "gaggle" (a group of paragliders hovering high in the sky) more than ten years ago at a fun fly-in near Bend, Oregon, when paraglider pilot Mike Haley decided to break from the gaggle to start a friendly race and led the way for 15 other paraglider pilots to follow in pursuit. His wife Gail and a friend picked up the pilots along the way, which wound up being a 21-mile course. At the time, Mike said, "Someone should plan a real race, but they need to be trained." That "someone" turned out to be Mike and Gail.

Today the USA 2012 National Rat Race Paragliding Competition, still organized by the Haleys, is the largest of its kind in the United States, drawing its maximum of 175 pilots from around the globe, and is considered to be among the best five events in the world.

Because the Rat Race is also a training event, the competition attracts more *new* pilots than anywhere in the country. Those new pilots are matched with experienced mentors, including top Rat Race pilots

who compete internationally. "Top pilots like to give back. They used to keep their secrets to winning to themselves, but now they're mentoring others," Mike explained. Rat Race mentors have an average of three mentees each.

The Rat Race will be held June 17-23, coinciding with the three-day Applegate Valley Days event on June 22-24. Launching from Woodrat Mountain as usual, this year the Rat Race is adding some impressive "firsts":

• The National Champion—both men's and women's—will be crowned. For the first time, Mike applied for and was awarded the "National" moniker for the Rat Race from the US Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (USHPA).



- Some of the US World Team will be chosen from this year's participants.
- The annual fundraising dinner will be held at Fiasco Winery and will be open to the public and *free of charge*.
- Video feeds at Jacksonville wineries—Fiasco, Fly High/Longsword, Valley View and Red Lily—and other locations such as GoodBean Coffee in Jacksonville, will allow the public to view the competition live.



Photos, from left to right: paraglider pilots suited up for take off from Woodrat Mountain (photo by Gail Haley), and solitary pilot with paraglider billowing and ready to fly (photo by Andrew Zochbauer).

• The local club, Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (RVHPA), is involved this year and will be providing breakfast for the pilots one morning.

Among the Haley's ongoing goals is to "constantly get better." This year's goals include improving the results of the World Team, and continuing to raise funds for charitable donations.

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