



Celebrating the park

BY TOM CARSTENS

Anniversary party

Cantrall Buckley Park began the summer with a bang. On June 4, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the community's rescue of the park from closure. One of the county commissioners from that era, Sue Kupillas, was in attendance. The Young Marines of Southern Oregon opened with a flag ceremony and the pledge of allegiance. Everyone enjoyed the delicious scones donated by **The Honeysuckle Cafe** and all the homemade cookies baked by members of the park committee.

Many of the community leaders who pitched in to save our park were recognized. A bench was dedicated to **Jack Shipley**, who organized the effort in 1996. Jack told the crowd that it was among his proudest achievements in his long service to the Applegate Community. Jack served on the Park

Committee for 18 years. Jack, who heads the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council, told the crowd of that group's plans for blackberry removal in the park.

Another bench was dedicated to **David Laananen**, who served as Park Committee chairman and president of the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation (GACDC), the nonprofit under which the park is managed. Dave volunteered from 2004 to 2014. Under his leadership, the park received three-quarters of a million dollars in grants and donations.

Also recognized was **Neil Ledward**, the first supervisor of Jackson County Parks. In the early 60s, Neil conceived, designed, and built the park, principally from land purchased by the county from Harlan Cantrall, a local rancher. Neil told the crowd how pleased he was to see the growth of the trees he had saved.

Finally, **Michelle LaFave**, who first dreamed up the idea for the new playground, officiated over the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Her children, Arianna and Brennan, assisted; they were among those who helped with the design of the park's newest facility. The beautiful playground was made possible by donations from throughout the Rogue Valley.

New barbecues

In other news, citizen donations enabled the purchase of 16 new barbecue grills. Hats off to **Matt and Donna Epstein, Ted and Mary Warrick, Judy Crowe, Greeley Wells, Karen Engelhardt, Carey Chaput, and our July Fourth picnickers** for their generous contributions to the park.



Benches were dedicated to Jack Shipley (top photo) and David Laananen (bottom photo) at the 20th anniversary celebration of Cantrall Buckley Park. Photos by Tom Carstens.



Neil Ledward, Jackson County's first parks director, passes on some Cantrall Buckley history at the anniversary celebration. Photo by Tom Carstens.

History: Cantrall ford becomes a bridge

Prior to the 1960s, a lot of old timber was growing in the hills west of Ruch. Trouble was, loggers had no way to get it to market, as there was only a small ford across big Applegate River just above the old swimming hole on the Cantrall Ranch. That is, there was no way until Rodney Keating, president of the Oregon and California Railroad Land Grant Committee, sold the idea of a bridge to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Jackson County. He convinced Harlan and Margaret Cantrall to grant the easement for a bridge across their property.

The BLM began construction of the bridge in 1960. At a total cost of \$46,000, the single-lane bridge was dedicated on a sunny Sunday on June 3, 1962. A big crowd gathered on the new bridge that day for the opening ceremony, which was attended by many in the Applegate community and by the Jackson County Commissioners.

Joanne Cantrall, the eight-year-old daughter of Harlan and Margaret, formally cut the ribbon while Ross Youngblood, the BLM's district manager, officiated. Rodney Keating spoke and referred to the crossing as "my bridge." Frank Ross, president of the Southern Oregon Pioneer Society, paid tribute to all the early pioneers who had to ford rivers over tough boulders. He told the crowd, which included descendants



Built in 1960, the single-lane bridge over the Applegate River was dedicated in 1962. Photos by Tom Carstens.

of those pioneers, that "they had no snorting bulldozers nor concrete, but would be pleased if they could see the progress of today." Now all that timber could be brought to market.

A year later, Jackson County would see the wisdom in taking full advantage of that bridge and begin planning for a park just on the other side of the river. Cantrall Buckley Park was born. Luckily, Jackson County decided not to harvest the trees, which is why we have such a lush, shady park today.

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Art mural

The new art mural is progressing on schedule. Upper Applegate artist **Jeremy Criswell** has been hosting numerous tile-making sessions with our residents and school kids. The mural mosaic is entering its final stages and will be installed in the fall following renovation of the day-use restrooms. Thanks go out to **Clint and Mary Driver** for a generous donation that enabled the addition of beautiful eye-catching glass. The \$20,000 mural mosaic project is now fully funded! Heartfelt thanks go out to the entire Applegate community. Our park could not exist without your support.

Free trip raffle

As a fundraiser for the park, we are repeating our free trip raffle this year. You could win a free round-trip air ticket for two anywhere in the continental United

States! This raffle raised almost \$3,000 last year. Winner Annette Parsons and her husband Jim Clover chose to go to the mountains of North Carolina, and they had a great time. If you feel lucky, you can participate in the raffle by going to the GACDC website at gacdc.org and hit the button to contribute to the raffle. The raffle drawing will be held at **Wooldridge Creek Winery** on Saturday, September 10. You can also contribute on that day. Good Luck!

More help needed

If you'd like to help out with the new campground RV upgrade, please feel free to send donations to GACDC, PO Box 335, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

And if you'd like to join our Park Committee, please give me a call.

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Tile makers for the soon-to-be-completed mosaic mural for Cantrall Buckley Park are hard at work. Photo by Jeremy Criswell.