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# Applegater

Photo by Teya Jacobi

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Celebrating  
~23~  
Years

## Grand plans for McKee Bridge Centennial Celebration

On Saturday, June 10, 2017, from 11 am to 3 pm, the McKee Bridge Historical Society will host a grand centennial celebration on the bridge and in the park with a variety of activities and events. After two years of not holding the traditional McKee Bridge Day due to restoration work and an aging committee, we are pleased to offer a special celebration of the bridge this year on the one hundredth anniversary of its construction.

In 1917, after much discussion and attempts by early Jackson County movers and shakers to create a rail line into the Applegate to facilitate moving copper ore down from the Blue Ledge Mine (in the Upper Applegate drainage above Elliott and Joe Creeks), it was ultimately decided to build the McKee Covered Bridge to provide safe crossing of the river. The land was donated by “Deb” McKee and his wife, grandparents of Evelyn Byrne Williams, our beloved local historian. Jason Hartman and Sons built the bridge, which has withstood numerous floods, as well as decay and aging, and has required many restoration efforts over the past century. It still stands proud today because of the support of the local community.

**At the celebration,** featured musicians will be the Old-Time Fiddlers, playing from 11 am to 1 pm, followed by cowboy poet and balladeer Butch Martin and singer-songwriter Christina Lynn Martin presenting original works relating to the bridge

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McKee Bridge (left photo) in 1930 after damage from a big storm and major flooding, and (right photo) in 1927. After 100 years, it remains a beautiful historic marker in the Upper Applegate. Photos courtesy of Evelyn Byrne Williams.



## Applegate inns abound

BY SHELLEY MANNING

As locals, we know what fun activities abound in our area. So how about taking a “staycation” right here in our own backyard?

Take your sweetie to the Britt Festival and surprise her with a romantic stay in Jacksonville. Enjoy the country life weekend in Applegate Valley’s wine region. Find out what tickles your fancy in any of these Applegate inns.

### Applegate River Lodge

Joanna and Richard Davis built the lovely Applegate River Lodge from the ground up. With Richard’s design, Joanna’s decorating skills, local and imported logs, and lots of community participation, the Applegate River Lodge opened in May 1997. Ideally located on the Applegate River, the lodge has

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## The Applegate mourns the loss of vintner Jim Devitt

A stellar wine maker, an uncommon intelligence, a ready smile.

These apply to Jim Devitt, owner of Devitt Winery, who died on Friday, January 27, at 83.

Often heralded as one of the best winemakers in the valley, Jim and his wife, Sue, opened the tasting room at Devitt Winery on Highway 238 in Jacksonville in 2003. In the past his winery produced between 2,500 and 3,000

cases a year. He wanted to keep his operation small and manageable.

Jim previously owned and operated Pope Valley Winery in the Napa Valley from the early 1970s until the late 1990s. His son Steve grew up working at Pope Valley Winery and went to the University of California, Davis, to study viticulture and enology. Steve is currently vice president of wine making at Darioush Winery in Napa.

With his engineering background, Jim developed new systems for the wine industry. Jim and Devitt wine maker Brendon Butler (Jim and Sue’s grandson) collaborated on the Auto Topper, a wine



Tasting-room visits with Jim Devitt at Devitt Winery were always fun and educational. From left to right: Brooke Nielsen, Jim Devitt, Carlen Nielsen, and Mikell Nielsen.

system for filling wine barrels without overflowing and spilling. And, as Jim told the *Applegater* a couple of years ago, he enjoyed experimenting with many grape varieties, including cabernet, syrah, viognier, zinfandel blends, merlot, and a dessert wine.

Tasting-room visitors at Devitt Winery received more than generous pours—Jim was also generous in sharing his extensive knowledge of wine making.

The winery will remain open with Brendon at the helm to continue Jim’s legacy. Jim is survived by his wife, Sue, and his children, Steve, Bob, Susan, Victoria, Jeff, and Doug.

### Applegate Valley history

## Hippy communes revisited— Part 1

BY DIANA COOGLE

I, too, was a hippy. I know communal living—the women in braids and long skirts, the men in long hair and beards, all the beads, headbands, homemade clothes. And the music! The drumming and guitars and singing. Hanging out at the pond, full-moon festivals, gardens, potluck gatherings, dancing naked by the river in the full moon.

“It was our golden years, for sure,” says John Hugo, co-founder of East Side House, one of four communes in the Applegate: Laser Farm (1969) on Thompson Creek Road; East Side



A May Day celebration at Trillium Farm. Photo courtesy of Chant Thomas.

House (1973) on the Applegate River; Molto Bene (1974) on Slagle Creek;

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