

## OBITUARY

## Arthur Coulton

February 13, 1938 - January 20, 2018

My very dear friend and neighbor, Arthur Coulton, died on Saturday, January 20. His wife, Kristi Cowles, and his community of close friends gathered to pay their respects and assist in his burial on the mountainside above his home next to his beloved deceased wife, Linda.

Arthur was born in Toronto, Canada, on February 13, 1938, into a large, close-knit Latvian Jewish family. When Arthur was 13, his parents moved their immediate family to Palm Springs, California. After a number of years living in southern California, where his children were born, Art moved to the Rogue Valley with his second wife, Linda. They started a leatherworking business, Country Spirits, with a primary focus on handmade shoes, sandals, and boots. They also designed and created handbags, belts, pouches, and other leather goods, and marketed their products at fairs throughout the western states for many years. Arthur and Linda were juried artists at the Oregon Country Fair beginning in 1978 and were well-known throughout that venue. Local people who own their products may still remember Art and Linda 20 years from now because the craftsmanship they put into their shoes ensured that they would last a very long time. Art often joked that his products had a lifetime guarantee: his lifetime!

In 1984, Arthur and Linda moved into a yurt on their property on Humbug Creek, quickly establishing themselves deep in the Applegate community while building their home and leather shop. When Linda died of cancer in 2006, Art was so grief-stricken that few thought he would survive. But the old dog got on



the internet and learned new tricks, almost immediately finding Kristi, a Wisconsinite. Love blossomed, and, in October 2007, Kristi sold her bed-and-breakfast in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and moved to the Applegate. During their first year together, Kristi surprisingly “took to the shoe shop,” becoming a welcome addition to Country Spirits.

In the last months of Art’s life, as things became difficult, their community came

together to care for both of them. Praise is due to all those whose selfless efforts helped to comfort these two elder hippies through that time.

Because of my own efforts in assisting Art and Kristi, a good friend referred to me as “a true mensch.” I do aspire to be such a person, but I mentored with the one who personified that description—Arthur Coulton, a true mensch (“someone to admire and emulate, someone of noble character, someone with rectitude, dignity, and a sense of what is right, responsible, and decorous”).

Arthur is survived by his loving wife, Kristi, a brother, three sons, six grandchildren, and a host of Canadian cousins. This quote from his son speaks volumes: “My dad always viewed the world as what it could be, not what it is, and sought to live his life in a way that exhibited those values. His wisdom, perspective, and insight will be sorely missed.”

Arthur lives on in our hearts and minds and on our feet, so comfortable in our Country Spirit shoes.

Paul Tipton, in collaboration  
with Kristi Cowles  
ptipton@frontier.com



Land Steward students learn about trees and forestry during a field-based class.

## Living on Your Land 2018

BY JACK DUGGAN

More than 100 years ago the Agricultural Extension system was created to spread the knowledge of land-grant colleges to rural farms, helping to improve food production. Soon farmers’ wives wanted to share in the knowledge, learning how to process those crops into food for the table. Children joined in with the establishment of 4-H. Today the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC) offers a wide range of affordable learning—covering topics like farms, orchards, livestock, forests, food preservation, and gardening.

In 2009 the local extension began offering a holistic program to guide people in managing their land to achieve environmental and personal goals. The 11-week Land Steward Program covers everything from pastures to forests, wildlife, fire, water, and more. Each year the programs fills up with some 35 students.

But not everyone can afford the time to take this program, so in 2011 the Land Steward Program started offering a one-day conference, Living on Your Land, covering a range of diverse topics for landowners.

This year’s conference will be held at the Grants Pass Rogue Community College

(RCC) campus on Saturday, April 14, 2018. The Land Steward Program has partnered with the Rogue River Watershed Council to offer a selection of classes on How Streams Work, Riparian Restoration, Water Rights, Fish Biology, Water Quality, Rainwater, and Springs. The ever-popular Funding Panel will return with a host of agencies sharing how you can get help to accomplish tasks on your land.

Classes on geology, irrigation, native plants, dehydrating food, citizen science, fire ecology, weeds, tree diseases and insects, weed management, and fruit trees are also included.

There will also be a panel on Neighbors, the Good, the Bad, the Legal. Panelists include a real estate broker, a landowner, law enforcement, and others who deal with neighbor issues.

Informational materials and a complete list of classes, with descriptions, are still being developed as the *Applegater* goes to press, but you can get on the list to receive a mailed brochure by calling SOREC at 541-776-7371. Registration will be online through RCC.

Jack Duggan  
541-899-7310

An interview with Mary Jacks,  
Sunshine Plaza owner

BY DON AND DEBBIE TOLLEFSON

For 41 years, Mary Jacks has owned and managed the Sunshine Plaza in Ruch. She has been a fixture in the Applegate Valley since the 1970s, and many businesses owe their success partially to her and her late husband’s pioneering commercial shopping center in our valley. Here is her story.

**Where and when were you born?**

I was born Mary Estremado on June 6, 1930, in the family home on Galls Creek Road in Gold Hill. My parents had two boys and three girls. Two of my siblings, Jean and James, are still living in Gold Hill. I was raised on the family farm and went to school in Gold Hill. Twelve grades were in the same building from the basement to the second floor. I graduated with the class of 1948 and, in 1952, I married Robert (Bob) Wesley Jacks.

**When did you come to the Applegate Valley?**

Bob was into logging, road-building, and construction in the area with many private and federal projects. He had



Mary Jacks, long-time owner of Sunshine Plaza in Ruch. Photo: Don Tollefson.

the opportunity to purchase property in Ruch from Hunter & Best, the McDough Brothers, Archie Pierce, and Wes Lincoln. In 1976 the beginnings of Sunshine Plaza started with the construction of the grocery store, now Ruch Country Store. Red Bowman was the contractor. The second phase started in 1977. The shopping center was built for the original tenant, Western Auto and Hardware, and took a total of

four years to construct. In 1979, after the center was completed, Bob died. **When Bob died, you were left with a daughter, property, and a business to run. At that time, and as a woman, was that a lot on your plate?**

It wasn’t easy, but many of the original businesses are still operating, though some with different owners. We still have a grocery store (originally Ron’s Market, now Ruch Country Store) and a restaurant (originally Lumberjack Café, now Honeysuckle Café).

Current and past businesses include a real estate office (Applegate Valley Realty), a resale shop (Born Again), a beauty shop (Salon 238), Applegate Christian Fellowship, a movie rental house, an exercise studio (Body and Soul), a chiropractor (Applegate Chiropractic and Wellness), a massage therapist (Haley May LMT), a tax accountant (Applegate Tax Service), and many more over the 41 years of my ownership.

Don and Debbie Tollefson  
debbie.avrealty@gmail.com

3rd Annual  
Williams  
Propagation Fair

The Third Annual Williams Propagation Fair is coming up soon!

The event will be held on Sunday, March 11, from 11 am - 4 pm at the Sugarloaf Community Association park shelter at 206 Tetherow Road, Williams. The Williams Grange will hold their seed swap earlier that morning.

The fair is a free event, with scion of many different fruit trees provided free to the public. Grafting scions to rootstock provided for sale will also be available.

Scion is the fresh year’s wood-growth of a fruit tree. When trees are pruned in the winter, scion is collected, labeled, placed into the refrigerator, and sealed in plastic until spring, when rootstock becomes available. The scion (which determines the variety) is then grafted onto the rootstock that has the desired size, soil preference, and disease-resistant characteristics.

There will also be a potluck and educational opportunities at the fair. This is your chance to share your own scion as well as extra food-plant cuttings or divisions.

This propagation fair is 100 percent volunteer-driven.

For more information, visit [scionexchange.wordpress.com](http://scionexchange.wordpress.com).