

Pacifica 2.0

BY GERI LITTLEJOHN

On April 20, Pacifica: A Garden in the Siskiyou celebrated 20 (20!) years as a nonprofit. To acknowledge this major milestone, the board decided, during a retreat in December, to hold a Celebration Day highlighting Pacifica’s varied aspects. At the retreat our board also recognized that Pacifica might not be able to exist for another 20 years, let alone thrive, without making some significant changes. We decided to use the celebration to kick off a year-long process of deep listening, dynamic strategic planning, collaborating with other local nonprofits, and shifting to a membership-based organization that focuses as much on the community aspect of our mission as on the arts, nature, and education.

We are calling this process of strengthening our infrastructure and refining and refocusing our mission, “The Birthing of Pacifica 2.0.” As we honor our history of programming and stewardship, we begin setting our sights on realizing the potential of what Pacifica can truly become over the next 20 years.

Pacifica was originally established when circumstances made it possible to purchase Steve Miller’s 420-plus acre property, move ForestFarm Nursery onto the back of the property, and convene an all-volunteer board to focus members’ passions around plants, nature, and the arts via community offerings and educational programs. Every spring our Caterpillar program entertains and educates thousands of students in nine school districts. Additionally, our property hosts thousands of students on-site for

field trips, Oregon’s outdoor school, and summer camps. Our Arts Guild activities have ebbed and flowed over the years, but the board holds strongly to the dream of vibrant arts programming and community studio spaces.

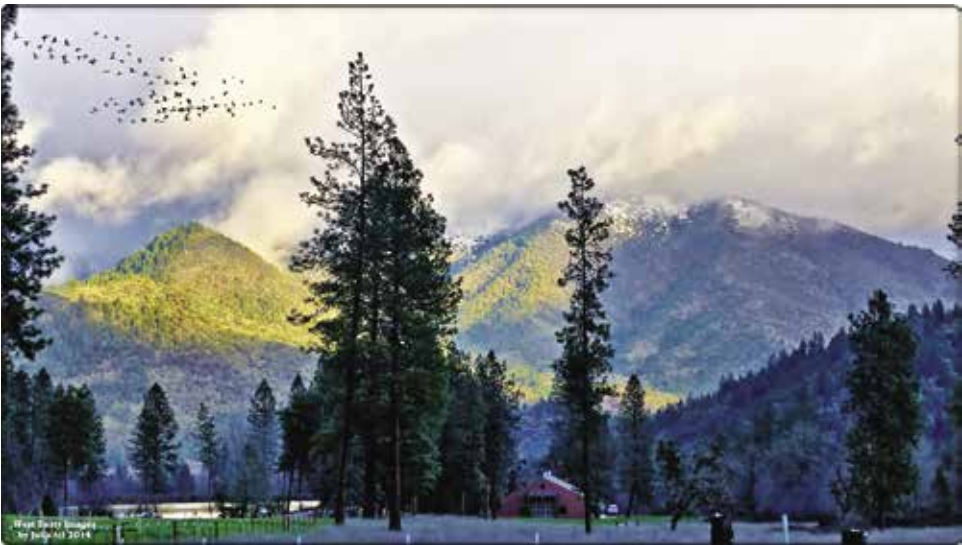
Like many nonprofits that start as small endeavors begun by passionate people, Pacifica is so busy doing what we do (maintaining the large property and many buildings on the land and offering hands-on natural science education to regional schools), we find that we have grown in size and scope without having grown sufficient supporting infrastructure. As a result, we are undercapitalized and understaffed.

So, now we turn to you, our community, with the desire to engage our collective resources and talents to refine and strengthen how we fulfill our arts-nature-education-community mission. (When we say “community,” we include the whole Applegate Valley.) Where we direct our energies will be a combination of the passions and energies of the board as well as our community’s perceived and expressed needs and interests.

Seeking new volunteers

We are currently seeking new active members, energetic volunteers, enthusiastic board members, and email addresses for our newsletter. If you have nonprofit management skills, IT expertise, event-planning experience, or other skills you are willing to offer, *please* let us know!

Heading into our 21st year as a nonprofit, Pacifica needs help with



Pacifica photo by Julia, West Forty Images, 2014.

updating our website to make it easier for you to learn about the good community work we do, the interesting expanded opportunities we will be offering, and the options for involvement.

We also imagine an online membership platform to make it easy to join, enroll in classes, and purchase event tickets online (with membership discounts).

Building on the success of our 20th Celebration Day with hikes, classes, and demonstrations, Pacifica will begin offering bimonthly Pacifica Days. These Sunday events will offer numerous opportunities to enjoy this gem of a property, try your hand at an art or craft, be a part of a work party, help with tending and expanding the gardens, and enjoy local food, music, and a day of community. There will be opportunities to meet with board members, learn more about Pacifica, and participate in listening sessions. The first Pacifica Day is scheduled for June 16 and

coincides with our ribbon cutting for the newly completed Blue Sky solar array.

A planning committee is currently working on a new annual Harvest Faire. Be sure to save the dates, October 19-20. Welcome to Pacifica 2.0!

Geri Littlejohn
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Save the dates!

- **June 16:** Pacifica Day/Solar Celebration
- **August 11:** Pacifica Day
- **October 19 - 20:** First Annual Harvest Faire featuring local food, local music, local arts, and local nonprofits.

For more information, email info@pacificagarden.org or visit pacificagarden.org or Facebook Pacifica: a garden in the Siskiyou.

Go fly a kite!

BY LAIRD FUNK

“Go fly a kite!” That was the direction given to participants of the Williams School springtime after-school activities program—even though there were no kites. But Greg Cox, the activities volunteer, and his wife, Jessica, a Williams School volunteer and substitute, knew that was not a problem but an opportunity—an opportunity to learn, build, and play. All they needed to do was help the kids make their own kites, something none of them had ever done before!

Begun in winter 2016, the after-school program, coordinated by Amber Guient,

was intended to introduce kids to fun and interesting activities. By welcoming any child, Williams student or not, it also introduces new families to our local school, the center of many Williams activities. The second part seems to be working: the school’s enrollment has increased since the program began.

The group has tackled a different project each term. Once it was leather working, where students made wallets, purses, and even a knife scabbard. Another time it was establishing a seed-saver group to teach kids where food comes from and how to save seeds for future crops. Then they designed and built accurate scale-model houses with working electric lights.

The program has been funded entirely by deposit bottle collection drives and donations. No school money is involved. The latest drive by the Williams Viability Committee netted over \$150!

During my visit on March 10, students were busy assembling kites from components they had made at earlier meetings. That day was meeting number five, with the sixth and final day to be the actual flying day. In previous meetings students had cut and assembled the skins for the kites and had cut sticks to size for the bracing. Greg incorporated a recycling lesson by using plastic covers from building materials in the kite skins. Another time students made kite-string spools from recycled PVC pipe and wound them with the flying line.

As the kids gathered to assemble their creations, Greg, Jessica, Kayla and other parent volunteers circulated from group to group and assisted with some of the more troublesome tasks, like holding the sticks in place while the builder tied them into position. Within 30 minutes those who had finished their kites were trying them out, even though it was a very calm afternoon. By the end of my visit, the kids had assembled most of the kites, and anticipation of next week’s flying day was raising their spirits.

On March 18, the group gathered at the school, and Greg made an effort to take care of a few last details to get everybody’s kite airworthy. Unfortunately, one of the first things noticeable was that about half of the kids had taken their kites home and (surprise!) many of them had forgotten to bring them back to the school for fly day! But while some kids were disappointed, others were happy to run around the track with any kite, and many kids were happy to



Participants in the after-school “Go Fly a Kite” program at Williams School. Photo: Laird Funk.



Students learned how to construct a kite under the direction of Greg Cox (right). Photo: Laird Funk.

share with those whose kites were stranded at home.

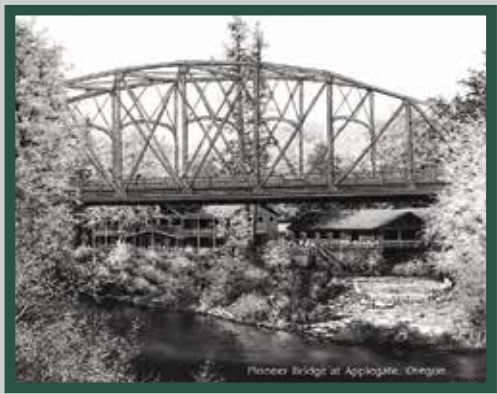
Because many kids had never flown a kite, it took a while for them to learn just how much flying line to unreel to start and how fast and in which direction to run. The latter ultimately made little difference because, in spite of the day being the most beautiful in months, the wind was somewhere else—not at Williams School.

That they could not get their kites to show their full potential seemed to matter little to the kite kids. What seemed important to them and the adults was that the group was having a great time playing together, with a kite or not. Do you need a kite to have fun running with your friends? No, sometimes just the fun of running with friends is enough.

We do not know what the next activity will be, but, judging from the kids, the important thing is to learn, build, and have fun together!

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