

# Applegater

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Celebrating  
~27~  
Years

## The Applegate River Lodge is for sale — to the right person

BY DIANA COOGLE

For 29 years the Applegate River Lodge has been iconic to the Applegate: beautiful log-trimmed buildings, green lawns to the river, music nights, dinner on the deck. For 29 years it has been a community partner: providing a venue for *Applegater* events, donations of overnight stays to nonprofits' auctions, free meals during the pandemic.

Now it's for sale.

"This was a way of life, a sanctuary for the community," co-owner Joanna Davis says. "I'll only sell to someone who will continue that legacy."

On January 21, 1992, Joanna, her then husband, Richard, and their sons, six-year-old Dusty and seven-year-old Duke, moved here from California and opened the restaurant.

But it's hard to make a restaurant profitable. After five years they decided to run a lodge as well.

Eight local banks refused them a loan, thinking it crazy to build a lodge "way out there." (Valley View was the Applegate's only winery at the time.)

"We started literally on a wing and a prayer," Joanna says. "We hawked

everything— savings, jewelry, a stamp collection. I sold everything but my body."

That got them a foundation.

Joanna's motto is posted on a wall of the lodge: "Where there's a will there's a way." The will to build the Applegate Lodge was strong.

The way opened when Applegaters Jack and Margaret Kramer loaned the family \$250,000, paid task by task as the lodge was built.

Another way opened when Jacksonville Lumber fronted \$200,000 in materials.

For decorating the rooms, Joanna joined the Applegate Historical Society to learn about the early settlers: Native Americans, miners, cattlemen, sportsmen, loggers. Each room honors an Applegate group.

People in the Applegate donated bear rugs, old tables, and other historic items. Delbert Kaufman from Kaufman Woods traded furniture for meals at the restaurant.

"Trade was my middle name," Joanna says.

The family created Applegate Bucks to raise money, a scheme that also benefited the community: buy a booklet of Applegate

Bucks for \$100 and get \$110 worth of Applegate merchandise or services.

Taxes were enormous, and the family didn't know how they were going to pay off their debts, but from a wing and a prayer and out of the blue, Pacific Continental from Eugene offered a buyout loan for \$300,000. Joanna and Richard paid everyone back.

Each member of the family contributed to the success of the lodge. Richard designed it. They all peeled logs. Dusty and Duke both ran the restaurant. Dusty did the landscaping and rock walls. Duke, who at 12 years old played the saxophone and started the Applegation music group to play for Wednesday night dinners, runs the music scene. Joanna runs the lodge and the business.



Joanna Davis on the balcony of the Applegate River Lodge.  
Photo: Diana Coogle.

Until four years ago, Joanna also coordinated weddings at the lodge, sometimes three in a single weekend. "I loved helping my brides make their weddings special," she says, but she is

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## Paragliding race set to return June 19-26

BY TERRI STEWART

Nearly one year after a massive US shutdown, we all recognize that life is a little bit different in the Applegate Valley and beyond. We greet each other with smiles in our eyes because the ones across our cheeks are covered; we forgo the handshake and instead give an elbow bump; but, most importantly, we recognize that we have all struggled tremendously in the past year and offer a little more kindness towards one another as a result.

Planning a national championship paragliding event during a pandemic makes you appreciate the simple things in life. When COVID-19 emerged in 2020, it was apparent that the annual paragliding race had to be canceled due to public health concerns and travel restrictions. Fast



Paragliders take flight during an event at Woodrat Mountain. Photo: Terri Stewart.

forward to 2021. With the understanding that those face coverings really do make a difference, and crossing our fingers that vaccinations worldwide will bring this bad dream to a halt, the new year offers us a glimmer of hope that we will be able to hold our traditional event in a safe manner.

The Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (RVHPA) wants local businesses and residents to know that every precaution will be taken

during race week to be certain public health and safety are not compromised. We will be upholding any orders given by the governor, in addition to following Centers for Disease Control guidelines. These seemingly change by the minute and hour, but some of the precautions we already plan to have in place include the requirement for registering pilots to be fully vaccinated prior to the race. In other

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## 'Volunteers Needed' for what?

BY SANDY SHAFFER

I've been a member of our Applegate Valley Rural Fire District's (AVRFD) Board of Directors for more than five years, and lately I've had several folks ask me about the multitude of "Volunteers Needed" signs that we are again seeing along most of the roads in the valley.

"Why do they always need volunteers?"

"We see these signs every year!"

There are many reasons the AVRFD needs volunteers, but first—a little bit of history from an interview with former Fire Chief Brett Fillis.

Brett explained that, early on, the west side of the Applegate Valley was protected by a private company, the Grants Pass Rural Fire Department (GPRFD). A private resident had to sign a contract with GPRFD for protection; but Applegaters soon realized that residents of Grants Pass were receiving better responses than they were! Huh!

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