

History of the Hippies of Takilma:

Part 15-Making Dreams Come True

Katherine from Sun Star remembers how she overcame her financial challenges in Takilma. “First I was a cook at Captain Mike’s restaurant and ever since I’ve been working at the Dome School over twenty years. Actually I continued to work on my college degree for many years and ended up getting my degree from Eastern Oregon University. My mother was a teacher in the East Bay. We toured Montessori schools throughout Italy, and lived there for about a year. So later I taught in the Bay area with her, in her schools. So I’ve brought those skills to The Dome School. The Dome School is a school for people that want to be involved with their children and it’s a place for our community to be involved, to have a chance to interact. We have such a variety of age groups. We are so rich, in talent, education and knowledge and experience. So that’s why we are such a rich school, because we draw constantly from our community. It never fails.”

Katherine, helps put on the Martin Luther King Day benefit every year for the Dome School, and explains why she does it, “I am a person of culture. I am attracted to and reach out to and facilitate and celebrate culture. So whoever has some traditions to share, and different insights to share; that’s something that I really go after. That we have children as the center of our community, I think is what keeps us inspired and young and strong.”

“We always studied Martin Luther King Day in school and the civil rights era was a big part of my growing up; non violence and civil disobedience. These were the highlights of our lives; celebrating environmental and social diversity. This is what our generation got to participate in. Martin Luther King continues to inspire me and be relevant. This is going be our 7th year, of doing this event with the children and they especially love the story of Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks, and a lot of the women that were part of the movement. Rosa Parks started the whole freedom movement. So we go through the speeches of Martin Luther King and we have been singing songs with

Libby, about the Underground Railroad and it brings up a lot of important questions that we discuss. So the children have a chance to perform, memorize and sing songs. It’s just a good social studies theme in American history. We also give to a small charity in Zimbabwe, and talk to the kids that there are people who have less than us. So we have been sending, when we can, support to this little school in Africa. We’ve had many different artists coming in to teach our kids.”

Katherine believes in the people here and the future. She’s given everything that she has to give. And she feels that Takilma has given her back so much more honor. She believes in cooperatives and thinks more people should form land co-operatives. She implores the children to “Keep this Dream Alive!!” Looking back she remembers all the achievements of Takilma. “We did the unimaginable. We made it and we are doing it all. We even die here. All we need is our own little cemetery.”

Another lady summed up her love for Takilma in one sentence, “I was enthralled every day, with the beauty and the people.” I think that sentiment was shared by many of the residents.

Sometimes a big issue brought all sides together to oppose something nobody wanted. Such was the case of a Prison proposal that was brought to Cave Junction in 1996 by a company which planned to buy an old farm on Rockydale Rd. and turn it into a 1,600 bed, minimum security prison. This plan was huge and would have dramatically impacted the local community. People under the leadership of Dave Toler and others banded together, to form the Rockydale Association to oppose the plans. Their supporters grew to over 500 people and filled the IV High School auditorium on one occasion with impassioned speakers, and people from both sides of the aisle united in opposition. They were able to stop the development and within a decade, Dave Toler was elected as Josephine County Commissioner. Takilma finally had one of their own rise to prominence in public office. Later, Dave Toler was also instrumental in writing a grant to build the Senior Center and another grant for the Takilma Community Building kitchen addition and ADA bathrooms.

Other bridges were built through the opportunities for people to further their education during the Clinton years. There were grants to go back to college and many did avail themselves of further classes in their chosen careers. Robert got his plumber’s license, and went on to open Country Plumbing which has served the IV for over 30 years. Delbert took the opportunity to expand his business to town, when he opened Kauffman Wood Products, in Kerby. Kerry W. opened an alternative energy company, called Energy Outfitters which installs solar and hydro energy systems. The economy was thriving in the 90’s, and many people found jobs and more prosperity.

Guys like Lance and Kenny built an overseas dream in Mexico; they are the perennial travelers of Takilma who travel to warmer climates each winter. Another group of people migrated to Hawaii’s Big Island, where they found cheap land, not unlike in Oregon. Some like Newman have literally joined a new culture. He is now a resident of Bali, after he traveled there to learn more about mask-making. Others have professional careers which take them away on adventures like Jenny May, a vibrant singer and actress who teaches music to many Takilma kids and adults. Her husband Menno, is the manager of the Oregon Caves Chateau, and is involved in many projects of economic betterment for the Illinois Valley.

Doug K. opened his own building design business in 1978. Since then he has designed or remodeled over 500 projects in the IV. His projects have graced the town of Cave Junction from Dave’s Outdoor, to Carlo’s Restaurant, to Radio Shack to Wild River Pizza, adding immeasurably to the beauty of our town. He has also developed plans for Out n About tree houses, including Michael G.’s personal residence. In the earlier days he volunteered to design and draft plans and remodels for the present day Dome School/Community Building where he continues to serve on the Build Committee Advisory Board.

Jim R. is now much more than the village blacksmith. He is the artistic director of the Jefferson Baroque Orchestra, a group of people with a passion for ancient musical instruments and the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. His group performs a variety of composers from the Baroque

time period. Jim, who is known for his work featured in the “Pirates of the Caribbean” movies, also helped make some unique brooms for the Harry Potter movies. Jim, whose ancestor Charles Brooking was a sea captain, said. “I’d like to achieve as much self-sufficiency as possible. It has been nice to integrate all of my interests like sailing and music.” He spent over 520 days at sea, training on the Lady Washington, an old sailing ship anchored in Washington State. He recently accepted his Captain’s License, and a position on a ship called the Royaliste. Surprisingly, when asked about his greatest achievement, Jim is proudest of all the durable hardware he has created to grace people’s homes.

Things really changed quickly in Takilma during the 90s. You could say it was because people’s kids were growing up in the local schools and getting to know the other kids in the town. Maybe you could conjecture that it was the kids that all played sports together since they were little kids that made people come together. It may have been during the years that the boy’s basketball team went to the State championship or maybe it was the year when the girl’s basketball team went to State, but there were many games when the entire town turned out and cheered the house down in wild enthusiasm. Those were times when people looked down the bleachers and saw their neighbors and realized that they were all on the same side. It was a great feeling of pride and acceptance.

That was also true when some of the hippie kids became the valedictorian’s of the Illinois Valley High School. Russell, Helen and Delbert’s son, was the first one to achieve the honor in 1980 and went on to earn a degree in High Energy Particle Phys-

ics at Stanford University. Since then he has taught college physics and now works for an aerospace company. Certainly, since then Takilma has had a surprisingly large group of high achieving students. The valley is replete with many success stories of the hippie’s children who went on to great lives away from home, yet who still appreciate their upbringing in Takilma. As Delbert recalled, “It was a great environment for raising kids, because everybody in the community took an interest in the kids. They do a pretty good job at the Dome School. There have been a remarkable number of Dome School students that end up at the head of the class at Illinois Valley High School.”

Some of those Dome School graduates have gone on to careers as varied as manager of Eco-Haus Business, IT in Computer Science Engineering, Biology Consultant for Watershed Health, Dental Health Director, Lawyer, Whitewater River Guide, Registered Nurse, Renewable Energy System designer, real estate appraiser, Dome School teacher and environmental educator.

As these young people face different challenges out in the world they will create networks and friendships which help them succeed. The way they were raised perhaps is a great advantage to them because it gave them such a caring relationship to their families and a big community to fall back on. They definitely have made everyone proud.

Author Kindi Fahrnkopf is a poet and flower child of the 60s who has lived in Takilma for 33 years. She moved to Cave Junction in 1979 with her husband and two little children to open the Cave’s Cobbler shoe repair and Birkenstock shop.



Captain Jim Rich with his crew on the “Royaliste”, docked in Pirate’s Cove, WA

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