

A history of the hippies in Takilma: by Kindi Fahrnkopf

Part 18- Solutions and Economic Development

Another Takilma resident who found success after settling in the remote commune just over the border in California was Kenny H. He also found Sun Star from word of mouth, after hitchhiking up in 1974. After college and work down south he and his wife Marilyn at the time were able to keep their connection and eventually bought their first share in the alternative country club. This led to Kenny becoming a "serial entrepreneur" and buying a mobile coffee cart from John and River, named "On Common Grounds." His knowledge of the import-export business and Marilyn's experience from working at Hammer's Market and Captain Mike's Fish House, led them to buy the business. He gives lots of credit to Jeff and Karen of the Chevron Station for letting them open the Coffee Heaven Shop on the corner of their lot. It had a small shed which had previously been a kiosk for visitors. Marilyn took on the business and has created a beautiful oasis out of that shed and a place where rock work and botanical gardens decorate the shady enclave of tables and a swing. Her success as a business owner by selling organic coffee and other drinks and products has been steady for the last 20 years.

Kenny continued working as a wood worker, making custom cabinets, shelves, etc. In 2010 after years of involvement with the Siskiyou Field Institute and their move to the Deer Creek Center, Kenny was recruited to the Board of the Illinois Valley Community Response Team. This group was formed from a Clinton era government grant to create one of 33 Enterprise Zones in Oregon which would help foster economic development. Over the years Kenny has worked with other community leaders, on the Siskiyou Community Health Center, the Airport Industrial park, the Family Coalition Building and many other projects. After the IVCRT changed into the Illinois Valley Community Development Or-

ganization, by forming a partnership with Rogue Community College, it opened a satellite office in the newly remodeled Kerby Belt Building. Now called the RCC Building, the Small Business Development Center helped people with a business incubator program and a revolving loan fund. Kenny has been instrumental in helping others start small businesses in the Illinois Valley.

The IVCDO helped broker a contract with the National Park Service, to run the Oregon Cave's Chateau restaurant and gift shop. It sells artwork and crafts selected from many local artists and employs people seasonally, thereby keeping those tourism dollars in the Valley. The IVCDO is a real success story because it is the only one of those original Enterprise Zones which is still functioning.

Kenny is hopeful about the local economy because he sees "signs that property values are rebounding." Kenny loves his work in the valley, but admits it has been challenging living so far out in the woods. He and his new wife Emily are able to spend more time doing the things they love these days. Kenny says, "Being able to get out in the winters and travel is what makes it all possible."

Kenny is the drummer for Altered States in his spare time and plays all kinds of percussion instruments. The types of music the group plays has changed over the years and now has a more Latin flair, with salsa and up tempo dance music added to the rock and roll. It has a decidedly new age, retro flavor these days. With Charlie's guitar genius, Dave's bass and Donny's trumpet, they are one of the most popular bands in Southern Oregon and played two Mardi Gras gigs just recently. People wait all year to hear them perform outdoors at the Annual Sun Star Picnic; a benefit for Sun Star's fire prevention truck and equipment.

As people faced different challenges, they also created networks and friendships which helped them connect to the solutions. There was definitely a great feeling neighborly support given to local small business-

es and organizations. In fact, there were many opportunities available for people to diversify their income through arts, crafts, local foods, music and teaching their skills.

Other ways that people found involvement and solutions in Takilma were through bartering and sharing. They created and volunteered for events which supported the Dome School and Community Building improvements, while allowing for an alternative economy to take root. They decided to make the events as fun and imaginative as possible, using the hippie ideals of solar energy, recycling and zero-waste among others. First an organization calling itself the Shining Stars, started having an annual festival every summer. In 2008, the Barter Faire Committee, (now known as Youth Empowerment & Support) took over and continued the 3 day music festival called Barter Faire which still is put on every year in the Illinois Valley. (The original Barter Faire started out in Ruch and Williams) This annual benefit for the Dome School also helps local business and tourism, bringing in hundreds of visitors every summer.

The Spiral Living Center has sprung up in more recent years to foster the growing home gardening and farming movement. To be able to produce some food locally has been the dream of many Takilma residents, who are working towards a more sustainable and self-sufficient community. Indeed the challenge of growing healthy organic gardens has been the life's work of many who settled here as part of the back-to-the-land movement.

Debbie L., the Director of the Spiral Living Center, started the small non-profit as a way to "live her dream." She explained how she and others, "wanted to help our community to attain self-sufficiency with permaculture, using lessons on creating a forest garden, with diverse interconnections, to support more than our human species. It is a way for us to give back." Her extensive home gardens are an example of people working hard at their dreams. One

of the programs of the Spiral Living Center is called Toolshare and helps people donate, share and borrow tools which they need. One of those tools is an apple press which can quickly turn those excess apples into juice or cider; a delicious reward for country living.

Debbie first moved here in 1987, to have her son Jacob and lived through hard times in a tent and a small Dome, before finding her own land. She started her small business, Siskiyou Mountain Herbs, using her lifetime of botanical learning and skills at organizing. She creates and preserves many different types of herbal and medicinal healing products which she lovingly crafts at her workshop. Not only does she grow many of the herbs she uses but she gathers many others and takes folks out to learn on herb walks and teaches classes.

If her wealth of knowledge doesn't keep her busy enough, she and her husband Steve also work on

their "Frog Farm" where they raise organic goats, chickens and all of the by-products, like eggs, milk, meat and cheese. Debbie clearly is happy, even though she is often tired from working hard. "This is poor man's land. We can love it because we can choose it. I had to go through a journey of healing myself here, to make myself feel whole. I feel cradled by this little valley here." From the look on Debbie's face, one can see that she feels contented with her life in Takilma and has found great joy. The Spiral Living Center formed a group which puts on an annual Farm and Garden Festival in Cave Junction, to help people sell their produce and share skills, among other programs.

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 small children to open the Cave's Cobbler shoe repair and Birkenstock shop.



Deb Lukas (left) at her booth and teaching a workshop on seaweed ID, for the Spiral Living Center.

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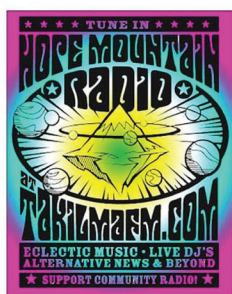
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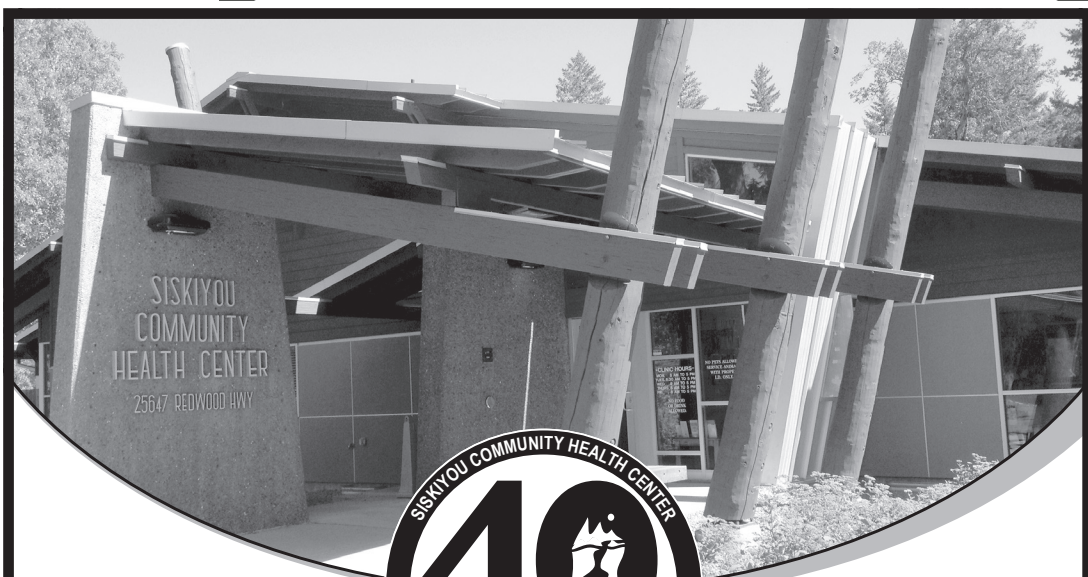
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