

History of the Hippies of Takilma: by Kindi Fahrnkopf

Part 21-of 21 The Hippies Looking to the Future

Since 2008, things have changed quickly in Takilma, where people have always adapted and tried new things. The economy is more lucrative for ambitious entrepreneurs who are able to somehow make a living and work in the remote beauty of Takilma. As Sheila explained, “The difference between those times and these times is a lot of people now can have jobs through the computer. So, now they can live in this beautiful place and still bring in an income, where before you had to leave. So that’s a big change for the area.” Some of the hippie’s children have stayed on and made homes for their young families. Their children now attend the Dome School. It is obvious that many appreciate the framework of community that exists there. Often they find housing close to home and are able to have the benefits of an extended family.

Joya said, “I’ve appreciated a new group of 20-30 year olds taking ownership of the Dome School and taking over the fundraising and many other responsibilities.” Joya added when asked about her future plans, “We’re hoping to finish our years here on the land. We’re hoping to bring another younger family in, to learn from us and take over.”

Joya, who is still working for the Siskiyou Community Health Center, the IVHS Student Health Center, and the Josephine County Health Department, was honored by the State of Oregon in 2011 for being the “Family Planning Clinician of the Year.” Joya exemplifies the loving Takilma spirit when she says, “I have much gratitude for three major influences upon my life. The first was my move to Takilma and the opportunity to join the Takilma Clinic’s amazing staff and share in those exciting days of discovery and learning as a midwife in training. The second important influence upon my life was the birth of my son Danya, whose love carried me through many challenging years as a single mother and was instrumental in my growth and maturation. Danya continues to bring me joy, as does his son, Eli. The third important influence on my life is my husband Bill, who has been an incredible teacher to me about the wonders of the natural world, and who has provided me with continuous support and love through all of my life changes and challenges.”

Robert, who has served as the Chairman of the Dome School Board for 11 years, said, “I am very hopeful the new generation of Takilma’s young adults are going to take over and carry on the traditions and go on from where we

started. My hopes are it will be different, but it will still be here. They’ve absorbed the spirit!” As Charlie put it, “It looks like we are ready for another wave of consciousness.” As an example of that he told me of Robin’s daughter. “So, now Robin’s daughter is going to SOU with a major in music; that’s coming full circle!”

Delbert stresses that Takilma has assimilated into the rest of the Valley, and contributed a great deal to its development. Robert who agrees with that said, “The spirit of togetherness has spread from Takilma to the wider Valley. The most wonderful thing that has happened is that; if there is an ‘us and them’, now the Illinois Valley is ‘us’.”

One might ask was the hippie experiment successful? Did they live up to their ideals? Is the dream still alive? Well let’s start with what those hippie ideals were.

1) Environmental Activism-trying to save the world’s forests, oceans, rivers, intact ecosystems and indigenous peoples. Promoting alternative and renewable energy sources and a return to local, organic food production.

2) Pollution Activism-warning of the threats of chemical and petroleum pollution causing widespread damage and disease. The promotion of recycling as a way of life. The protection of the oceans, forests and all of the world’s creatures and a reverence for clean water.

3) Lifestyle Activism-leading the world in culture, styles, music, arts, alternative health practices, and a liberalization of drug laws.

I’ve got nothing, but the history I’ve set down here to base my conclusions on, but my heart tells me that yes, the hippie experiment was successful in creating an alternative community in the foothills of the Siskiyou. And yes, they did live up to their ideals of loving the earth and protecting the land, air and water, living simply in a natural, organic and renewable way, and working in teams to build a sustainable community. They worked hard to use the democratic system to build consensus and alliances and oppose oppressive laws and actions. Their dedication to creating the structure and framework that could stand the test of time will certainly benefit the next generation. They fought for their own freedom and the natural world around them with ingenuity, persistence and courage. They did not always like or agree with each other, but they still communicated with openness and accepted and tolerated each others differences. So yes, the Takilma dream is still alive, even as the community is changing very quickly and who knows what will come of it.

Solutions have always been found in Takil-

ma by people working together. When asked what were some of the greatest achievements of Takilma, Robert reflected that, “Over the years we have demonstrated our abilities to be leaders for positive change.” When asked what his biggest accomplishment was, he looked down humbly and said, “I’ve learned so much here that it’s more about what was contributed to me, than the other way around. I’m having the best time of my life-I’m free from all the struggles. All I hope for my future is to be buried up in those trees,” as he pointed lovingly into the forest above his home.

In 2008, Robert refinanced his house and set out on a fantastic rail journey with his long term friend Donalee. Needing to fulfill a life-long dream they boarded the Trans-Siberian Express and rode 12 days from the Sea of Japan to the Baltic (with a side trip in and out of Mongolia along the way), 9,000 miles across Asia and European Russia. Robert said he wants his headstone to read, ‘There isn’t a train I wouldn’t ride, no matter where it’s going.’ From a poem by Edna St. Vincent-Millay.

Charley, looking around at all the cars he has built, summed it up by saying, “What’s special about Takilma is you don’t have to take the standard prescription, you can make your own medicine.” His unique inventions all around him seem to illustrate Charley’s vision of a better world and his gift to future generations.

Michael G. thinks Takilma, “Is still on an upward trajectory, There’s a whole new generation now. It’s still a healthy and vibrant community. Potentially it could explode into hyperspace. It all depends on what people do.” Michael is an inspiration to many people who also hope to find a way to make money without cutting down the trees.

Doug and Alyce were both lucky to have their parents move to the Illinois Valley during their later years. Their parents made many friends and enjoyed being able to be close to their children and grandchildren at the end of their lives. Doug said, “What is exciting to me is that the Valley is continuing to be multi-generational.”

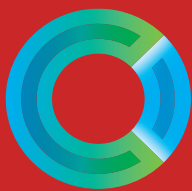
His neighbor, Sue agreed, saying that, “It just seems right for me to be doing this here. To be able to come home and walk to the river is what makes it all possible. Just to have that peace, that many people don’t have, is a blessing! My grandchildren love to come here and visit. Every time I see them, they always ask me to tell them stories of what it was like.”

Sheila, now retired with her husband Kerry, concludes that, “I feel like I have more than I can imagine. I have everything. For me one of the best things we did was teaching ourselves how to do sustainable living, without hurting the land, and being on the highest possible spiritual level. And we were constantly debating that issue, and I love that!” Kerry, who runs a business called Renewable Energy Systems, since 2003, designs and installs solar and hydro systems, so he can address many of those issues for the people in Takilma and the I.V. who want alternative energy. He jokes that, “Yes, you can go on vacation somewhere, to someplace that’s supposed to be paradise; but THIS is paradise!” Sheila is content to enjoy her time, free of responsibilities. She adds that, “I am living the dream of my life! I’ve been into art all my life, but I had to be a weekend artist. Now I have a two acre art garden and all these sculptures are mine and I paint. It’s been amazing to actually have the time to paint!”

See Hippy on A-12



Robert H. and Donalee on the Trans-Siberian Express Railway.

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